

### BODY AS A LOCUS OF CULTURAL RESISTANCE

Body, Health and Society

## FINAL ESSAY

- deadline: topic and bibliography in moodle
- name
- questions?

### OUTLINE

- Aihwa Ong
- reading reflections
- discussion



# AIHWA ONG HTTPS://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/AIHWA\_ONG



- \* 1950
- Professor of Anthropology at University of California, Berkeley
- topic: entanglements of politics, technology, ethics and affects in rapidly changing situations on the Asia Pacific rim
- Work
  - Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty, Duke University Press, 2006.
  - Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems, ed. with Stephen J. Collier, Blackwell Publishers, 2005.
  - Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty, Duke University Press, 2006.

#### ONG: THE PRODUCTION OF POSSESSION

• How was the texts for reading?

#### Situating the reading

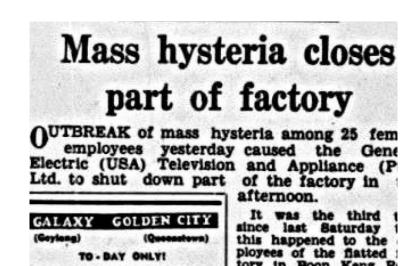
- genre
- time
- space
- field
- methodology
- What is the text about? (where to search for it?)
  - Summary vs. Story (economic development and a medical...)
- What is the main argument? (where to search for it?)
- Questions (smth. not clear)/ Comments (smth. not agreed with)?
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### UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT:

ONG, AIHWA (1988): THE PRODUCTION OF POSSESSION: SPIRITS AND THE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION IN MALAYSIA. AMERICAN ETHNOLOGIST 15/1: 28-42

- Define what is a spirit attack VS. hysteria?
- How is spirit possession interpreted, managed by .... and what is their aim:
  - psychologists
  - medical doctor
  - managers/policy makers
  - anthropologists
- Ong: spirit beliefs the case?
- hantu, bomoh, social order, culture and industrialization/urbanization and western medicine
- Mary Douglas and taboos?
- What is the main difference between Ong's and all the others' approach to it?
- Power relationsn (p 37): What is medicalization?
  - example
- How the nature-culture relation could be interpreted on the basis of this study?
- What is the relation between body, culture, and power in the example described?



https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/from-the-straits-times-archives-past-mass-hysteria-cases-in-singapore

### DISCUSSION

- Relate the paper to the Douglas' (social b.), Foucault's (self-regulation), Murphy's/Merleu-Ponty's and Martin's (gender politics) approach to the body.
  - i.e. apply the theory of social body, docile bodies and embodiment on the example analyzed by Ong.

### **NEXT CLASS**

#### Topic

Body – a central nod in a symbolic and social structure

#### Reading

• Scheper-Hughes, N. ([1989] 2006): Mother's Love: Death without Weeping. In: Spradley, James P. & McCurdy, David W. (Eds.): Conformity & conflict: Readings in cultural anthropology. 14th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson, 156-162.

#### Guiding questions

- What is an angel child?
- What factors are causing high child morbidity in the environment described?
- What is the relation between high child morbidity and mothers' love (kinship system) there?
- What meaning is ascribed to and social mechanisms relate to child's death in the study?
- In summary: what causes the phenomenon of common child's death and what this phenomenon further causes in the environment under study?

#### Discussion questions

- Explain, how the power, social system, culture, and nature are entangled on the example of this case.
- Relate the paper to the Douglas', Bourdieu's and Csordas' approach to the body.
  - i.e. apply the theory of social body, habitus, and embodiment on the example analyzed by Scheper-Hughes