

The background is a gradient of green and blue. It features several abstract circular elements: a large scale on the left with numbers from 150 to 260, and several smaller circles with arrows indicating clockwise or counter-clockwise movement. The text is centered in a white, sans-serif font.

EMBODIMENT, BIOLOGICAL PROCESS AND BODILY PRACTICE – PART 2

ANTHRO 208 MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

WEEK 7, 2020

HEATHER BATTLES

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

READINGS FOR WEDNESDAY DISCUSSION

- Spray, Julie. 2020. (Chapter 1: Introduction to Chapter 5: Responsibilizing Care)
- Horton, S., & Barker, J. C. (2010). Stigmatized biologies. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 24(2), 199-219.

OUTLINE – MONDAY LECTURE

- **The 3 Bodies framework**
- **Culture-bound syndromes/culture-specific illnesses**
- **Stigma and stigmatized biologies**

CULTURE-BOUND ILLNESS

- “culture-specific” illnesses; “folk illnesses;”
- Often related to stress/distress; ‘idioms of distress’
- May be acts of critique or resistance
- Many examples; e.g. “*nervios*”; “school-refusal syndrome” in Japan
- Collapse the mind/body binary → a “mindful body” (or embodied mind) + social life → biocultural body (or body as biocultural artefact) (Oths 1999: 288)

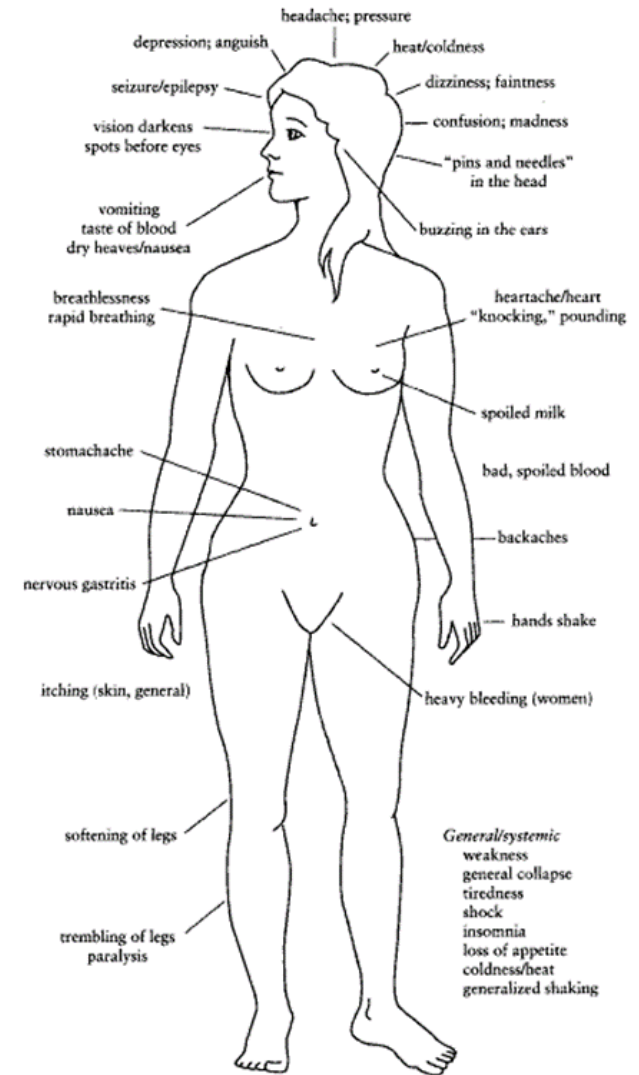
THE THREE BODIES

(SCHEPER-HUGHES AND LOCK 1987)

1. Individual body-self
2. Social body
3. Body politic

SCHEPER-HUGHES: *NERVOSO*

- Nerves/nervousness = idiom through which people of Alto do Cruzeiro reflect on their hunger and hunger anxiety
- a **conceptual scheme** for describing relations among mind, body, and social body



Common sites and symptoms of *nervos*.

ATAQUES DE NERVIOS

- Idiom of distress among Latinx
- Loss of control in several important domains of experience: emotional expressions (e.g. screaming, crying, depression), bodily sensations (e.g. breathlessness), action dimensions (e.g. aggressive, unable to sleep or eat), and alterations in consciousness (e.g. dizziness, fainting)
- Sense of being out of control, which *responds to* and *reflects* a social world which is out of control

Guarnaccia, P.J., Rivera, M., Franco, F. *et al.* The experiences of *Ataques de nervios*: Towards an anthropology of emotions in Puerto Rico. *Cult Med Psych* **20**, 343–367 (1996).

ATAQUES DE NERVIOS

Pues yo he visto personas, pues he visto que ellos gritan, muchas hasta se caen al piso. He visto botando babas aunque no sean epilépticos, se trincan bien trincos. Hay quienes viran hasta los ojos (sin ser epilépticos, sino de nervios) se le vira hasta la boca.

[Well, I have seen people, I have seen that they scream, many even fall to the floor. I have seen them foaming at the mouth even though they are not epileptic, they become very rigid. There are people whose eyes roll back (without being attacks of epilepsy, but of nerves), even their mouths become twisted.]

ATAQUES DE NERVIOS IN PUERTO RICO

- As embodiment of that resistance to the multitude of forces that control working class and poor women's lives in Puerto Rico (Guarnaccia et al. 1996)
- As protest against the neo-colonial transformations of Puerto Rico; commentary on the distortion of the family by these capitalist transformations (Guarnaccia et al. 1996)

JAPANESE SCHOOL REFUSAL SYNDROME

- “*tōkōkyohi*”
- “phenomenon where students do not go to school or cannot go to school, despite a desire to go to school, due to some psychological, emotional, physical and/or social factor, and environment, with the exception of illness or economic factors”

UPPGIVENHETSSYNDROM, OR RESIGNATION SYNDROME

- Refugees in Sweden - with rejected applications for asylum
- Emigrants from former Soviet and Yugoslav states, disproportionately Roma or Uyghur
- Started in early 2000s
- No underlying physical or neurological disease
- Described as “apathetic” - having lost the will to live
- A “culture-bound” syndrome?

GEORGI

‘... he had wanted to lie in bed all day, a decision born in part of anger at his parents. He felt that they should have worked harder to convince the board that they belonged in Sweden.... “The only country I know—the only country where I can have a life—is here in Sweden.”

The protest took on a momentum of its own. “All my will—I didn’t have it anymore,” he said. “It felt like I was deep under water.”

‘He said that his body began to feel as if it were entirely liquid. His limbs felt soft and porous. All he wanted to do was close his eyes. Even swallowing required an effort that he didn’t feel he could muster. He felt a deep pressure in his brain and in his ears.’

‘During his months in bed, he said, he had felt as if he were in a glass box with fragile walls, deep in the ocean. If he spoke or moved, he thought, it would create a vibration, which would cause the glass to shatter. “The water would pour in and kill me,” he said.’

STIGMA

- **Origins:** Greek; a mark made on a criminal, traitor, etc. to identify and signal avoidance
- **Dictionary:** disapproval; disgrace
- Erving **Goffman:** social stigma
 - a **socially discrediting** attribute; not ‘normal’
 - leads to ostracism, devaluation of the stigmatized person, and social rejection (**stigmatization**)
 - and “**spoiled identity**” (as the individual is disqualified from full social acceptance)

STIGMATIZED BIOLOGIES

(HORTON & BARKER 2010)

- Critique of emphasis of culture over class and race
- Social inequality, bodies/biology, and stigma
- Early life -> long term health and social effects

EMBODIMENT

- Biological expression of social relations
- The three bodies: the individual body, the body social, and the body politic
- Linked to structural violence and social suffering (see Joralemon pgs 47-49 for overview)