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# The Logic of Practice

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## Belief and the Body

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Practical sense is a quasi-bodily involvement in the world which presupposes no representation either of the body or of the world, still less of their relationship. It is an immanence in the world through which the world imposes its imminence, things to be done or said, which directly govern speech and action. It orients 'choices' which, though not deliberate, are no less systematic, and which, without being ordered and organized in relation to an end, are none the less charged with a kind of retrospective finality. A particularly clear example of practical sense as a proleptic adjustment to the demands of a field is what is called, in the language of sport, a 'feel for the game'. This phrase (like 'investment sense', the art of 'anticipating' events, etc.) gives a fairly accurate idea of the almost miraculous encounter between the *habitus* and a field, between incorporated history and an objectified history, which makes possible the near-perfect anticipation of the future inscribed in all the concrete configurations on the pitch or board. Produced by experience of the game, and therefore of the objective structures within which it is played out, the 'feel for the game' is what gives the game a subjective sense – a meaning and a *raison d'être*, but also a direction, an orientation, an impending outcome, for those who take part and therefore acknowledge what is at stake (this is *illusio* in the sense of investment in the game and the outcome, interest in the game, commitment to the presuppositions – *doxa* – of the game). And it also gives the game an objective sense, because the sense of the probable outcome that is given by practical mastery of the specific regularities that constitute the economy of a field is the basis of 'sensible' practices, linked intelligibly to the conditions of their enactment, and also among themselves, and therefore immediately filled with sense and rationality for every individual who has the feel for the game (hence the effect of consensual validation which is the basis of collective belief in the game and its fetishes). Because native membership in a field implies a feel for the game in the sense of a capacity for practical anticipation of the 'upcoming' future contained in the present, everything that takes place in it seems *sensible*: full of sense and objectively directed in a judicious direction. Indeed, one only has to suspend the commitment to the game that is implied in the feel for the game in order to reduce the world, and the actions performed

in it, to absurdity, and to bring up questions about the meaning of the world and existence which people never ask when they are caught up in the game – the questions of an aesthete trapped in the instant, or an idle spectator. This is exactly the effect produced by the novel when, aiming to be a mirror, pure contemplation, it breaks down action into a series of snapshots, destroying the design, the intention, which, like the thread of discourse, would unify the representation, and reduces the acts and the actors to absurdity, like the dancers observed silently gesticulating behind a glass door in one of Virginia Woolf's novels (cf. Chastaing 1951: 157–9).

In a game, the field (the pitch or board on which it is played, the rules, the outcome at stake, etc.) is clearly seen for what it is, an arbitrary social construct, an artefact whose arbitrariness and artificiality are underlined by everything that defines its autonomy – explicit and specific rules, strictly delimited and extra-ordinary time and space. Entry into the game takes the form of a quasi-contract, which is sometimes made explicit (the Olympic oath, appeals to 'fair play', and, above all, the presence of a referee or umpire) or recalled to those who get so 'carried away by the game' that they forget it is 'only a game'. By contrast, in the social fields, which are the products of a long, slow process of autonomization, and are therefore, so to speak, games 'in themselves' and not 'for themselves', one does not embark on the game by a conscious act, one is born into the game, with the game; and the relation of investment, *illusio*, investment, is made more total and unconditional by the fact that it is unaware of what it is. As Claudel put it, 'connaître, c'est naître avec', to know is to be born with, and the long dialectical process, often described as 'vocation', through which the various fields provide themselves with agents equipped with the *habitus* needed to make them work, is to the learning of a game very much as the acquisition of the mother tongue is to the learning of a foreign language. In the latter case, an already constituted disposition confronts a language that is perceived as such, that is, as an arbitrary game, explicitly constituted as such in the form of grammar, rules and exercises, expressly taught by institutions expressly designed for that purpose. In the case of primary learning, the child learns at the same time to speak the language (which is only ever presented in action, in his own or other people's speech) and to think *in* (rather than with) the language. The earlier a player enters the game and the less he is aware of the associated learning (the limiting case being, of course, that of someone born into, born with the game), the greater is his ignorance of all that is tacitly granted through his investment in the field and his interest in its very existence and perpetuation and in everything that is played for in it, and his unawareness of the unthought presuppositions that the game produces and endlessly reproduces, thereby reproducing the conditions of its own perpetuation.

Belief is thus an inherent part of belonging to a field. In its most accomplished form – that is, the most naive form, that of native membership – it is diametrically opposed to what Kant, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, calls 'pragmatic faith', the arbitrary acceptance, for the purposes of action, of an uncertain proposition (as in Descartes's paradigm of the travellers

lost in a forest who stick to an arbitrary choice of direction). Practical faith is the condition of entry that every field tacitly imposes, not only by sanctioning and debarring those who would destroy the game, but by so arranging things, in practice, that the operations of selecting and shaping new entrants (rites of passage, examinations, etc.) are such as to obtain from them that undisputed, pre-reflexive, naive, native compliance with the fundamental presuppositions of the field which is the very definition of doxa.<sup>1</sup> The countless acts of recognition which are the small change of the compliance inseparable from belonging to the field, and in which collective misrecognition is ceaselessly generated, are both the precondition and the product of the functioning of the field. They thus constitute investments in the collective enterprise of creating symbolic capital, which can only be performed on condition that the logic of the functioning of the field remains misrecognized. That is why one cannot enter this magic circle by an instantaneous decision of the will, but only by birth or by a slow process of co-option and initiation which is equivalent to a second birth.

One cannot really *live* the belief associated with profoundly different conditions of existence, that is, with other games and other stakes, still less give others the means of reliving it by the sheer power of discourse. It is correct to say in this case, as people sometimes do when faced with the self-evidence of successful adjustment to conditions of existence that are perceived as intolerable: 'You have to be born in it.' All the attempts by anthropologists to bewitch themselves with the witchcraft or mythologies of others have no other interest, however generous they may sometimes be, than that they realize, in their voluntarism, all the antinomies of the decision to believe, which make arbitrary faith a continuous creation of bad faith. Those who want to believe with the beliefs of others grasp neither the objective truth nor the subjective experience of belief. They cannot exploit their exclusion in order to construct the field in which belief is constituted and which membership makes it impossible to objectify; nor can they use their membership of other fields, such as the field of science, to objectify the games in which their own beliefs and investments are generated, in order to appropriate, through this participant objectification, the equivalent experiences of those they seek to describe and so obtain the means of accurately describing both.<sup>2</sup>

Practical belief is not a 'state of mind', still less a kind of arbitrary adherence to a set of instituted dogmas and doctrines ('beliefs'), but rather a state of the body. Doxa is the relationship of immediate adherence that is established in practice between a *habitus* and the field to which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that flows from practical sense. Enacted belief, instilled by the childhood learning that treats the body as a living memory pad, an automaton that 'leads the mind unconsciously along with it', and as a repository for the most precious values, is the form *par excellence* of the 'blind or symbolic thought' (*cogitatio caeca vel symbolica*) which Leibniz (1939b: 3) refers to, thinking initially of algebra, and which is the product of quasi-bodily dispositions,

operational schemes, analogous to the rhythm of a line of verse whose words have been forgotten, or the thread of a discourse that is being improvised, transposable procedures, tricks, rules of thumb which generate through transference countless practical metaphors that are probably as 'devoid of perception and feeling' as the algebraist's 'dull thoughts' (Leibniz 1866b: 163).<sup>3</sup> Practical sense, social necessity turned into nature, converted into motor schemes and body automatisms, is what causes practices, in and through what makes them obscure to the eyes of their producers, to be *sensible*, that is, informed by a common sense. It is because agents never know completely what they are doing that what they do has more sense than they know.

Every social order systematically takes advantage of the disposition of the body and language to function as depositories of deferred thoughts that can be triggered off at a distance in space and time by the simple effect of re-placing the body in an overall posture which *recalls* the associated thoughts and feelings, in one of the inductive states of the body which, as actors know, give rise to states of mind. Thus the attention paid to staging in great collective ceremonies derives not only from the concern to give a solemn representation of the group (manifest in the splendour of baroque festivals) but also, as many uses of singing and dancing show, from the less visible intention of ordering thoughts and suggesting feelings through the rigorous marshalling of practices and the orderly disposition of bodies, in particular the bodily expression of emotion, in laughter or tears. Symbolic power works partly through the control of other people's bodies and belief that is given by the collectively recognized capacity to act in various ways on deep-rooted linguistic and muscular patterns of behaviour, either by neutralizing them or by reactivating them to function mimetically.

Adapting a phrase of Proust's, one might say that arms and legs are full of numb imperatives. One could endlessly enumerate the values given body, *made* body, by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy which can instil a whole cosmology, through injunctions as insignificant as 'sit up straight' or 'don't hold your knife in your left hand', and inscribe the most fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of a culture in seemingly innocuous details of bearing or physical and verbal manners, so putting them beyond the reach of consciousness and explicit statement. The logic of scheme transfer which makes each technique of the body a kind of *pars totalis*, predisposed to function in accordance with the fallacy of *pars pro toto*, and hence to recall the whole system to which it belongs, gives a general scope to the apparently most circumscribed and circumstantial observances. The cunning of pedagogic reason lies precisely in the fact that it manages to extort what is essential while seeming to demand the insignificant, such as the respect for forms and forms of respect which are the most visible and most 'natural' manifestation of respect for the established order, or the concessions of politeness, which always contain political concessions.<sup>4</sup>

Bodily hexis is political mythology realized, *em-bodied*, turned into a

permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking. The opposition between male and female is realized in posture, in the gestures and movements of the body, in the form of the opposition between the straight and the bent, between firmness, uprightness and directness (a man faces forward, looking and striking directly at his adversary), and restraint, reserve and flexibility. As is shown by the fact that most of the words that refer to bodily postures evoke virtues and states of mind, these two relations to the body are charged with two relations to other people, time and the world, and through these, to two systems of values. 'The Kabyle is like the heather, he would rather break than bend.' The man of honour walks at a steady, determined pace. His walk, that of a man who knows where he is going and knows he will get there on time, whatever the obstacles, expresses strength and resolution, as opposed to the hesitant gait (*thikli thamahmahth*) announcing indecision, half-hearted promises (*awal amahmah*), the fear of commitments and inability to fulfil them. It is a measured pace, contrasting as much with the haste of the man who 'walks with great strides', like a 'dancer', as with the sluggishness of the man who 'trails along'.

The same oppositions reappear in ways of eating. First, in the use of the mouth: a man should eat with his whole mouth, wholeheartedly, and not, like women, just with the lips, that is, halfheartedly, with reservation and restraint, but also with dissimulation, hypocritically (all the dominated 'virtues' are ambiguous, like the very words that designate them; both can always turn to evil). Then in rhythm: a man of honour must eat neither too quickly, with greed or gluttony, nor too slowly – either way is a concession to nature.

The manly man who goes straight to his target, without detours, is also a man who refuses twisted and devious looks, words, gestures and blows. He stands up straight and looks straight into the face of the person he approaches or wishes to welcome. Ever on the alert, because ever threatened, he misses nothing of what happens around him. A gaze that is up in the clouds or fixed on the ground is that of an irresponsible man, who has nothing to fear because he has no responsibilities in his group. Conversely, a well brought-up woman, who will do nothing indecorous 'with her head, her hands or her feet' is expected to walk with a slight stoop, avoiding every misplaced movement of her body, her head or her arms, looking down, keeping her eyes on the spot where she will next put her foot, especially if she happens to have to walk past the men's assembly. She must avoid the excessive swing of the hips that comes from a heavy stride; she must always be girdled with the *thimeh'remth*, a rectangular piece of cloth with yellow, red and black stripes worn over her dress, and take care that her headscarf does not come unknotted, uncovering her hair. In short, the specifically feminine virtue, *lah'ia*, modesty, restraint, reserve, orients the whole female body downwards, towards the ground, the inside, the house, whereas male excellence, *nif*, is asserted in movement upwards, outwards, towards other men.

A complete account of this one dimension of the male and female uses

of the body would require a full analysis of the division of labour between the sexes and also of the division of sexual labour. But a single example, that of the division of tasks in olive gathering, will suffice to show that the systems of oppositions, which it would be wrong to describe as value systems (informants always give them the performative self-evidence of naturalized arbitrariness: a man does this – he ties up animals – a woman does that . . . ) derive their symbolic efficacy from their practical translation into actions that go without saying, like that of the woman who offers a man a stool or walks a few paces behind him. Here, the opposition between the straight and the bent, the stiff and the supple, takes the form of the distinction between the man who stands and knocks down the olives (with a pole) and the woman who stoops to pick them up. This practical, that is, simultaneously logical and axiological, principle, which is often stated explicitly – ‘woman gathers up what man casts to the ground’ – combines with the opposition between big and small to assign to women the tasks that are low and inferior, demanding submissiveness and suppleness, and minute, but also petty (‘the lion does not pick up ants’), such as picking up the splinters of wood cut by men (who are responsible for everything that is discontinuous or produces discontinuity). It can be seen, incidentally, how such a logic tends to produce its own confirmation, by inducing a ‘vocation’ for the tasks to which one is assigned, an *amor fati* which reinforces belief in the prevailing system of classification by making it appear to be grounded in reality – which it actually is, since it helps to produce that reality and since incorporated social relations present themselves with every appearance of nature – and not only in the eyes of those whose interests are served by the prevailing system of classification.

When the properties and movements of the body are socially qualified, the most fundamental social choices are naturalized and the body, with its properties and its movements, is constituted as an analogical operator establishing all kinds of practical equivalences among the different divisions of the social world – divisions between the sexes, between the age groups and between the social classes – or, more precisely, among the meanings and values associated with the individuals occupying practically equivalent positions in the spaces defined by these divisions. In particular, there is every reason to think that the social determinations attached to a determinate position in the social space tend, through the relationship to one’s own body, to shape the dispositions constituting social identity (ways of walking, speaking, etc.) and probably also the sexual dispositions themselves.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, when the elementary acts of bodily gymnastics (going up or down, forwards or backwards, etc.) and, most importantly, the specifically sexual, and therefore biologically preconstructed, aspect of this gymnastics (penetrating or being penetrated, being on top or below, etc.) are highly charged with social meanings and values, socialization instils a sense of the equivalences between physical space and social space and between movements (rising, falling, etc.) in the two spaces and thereby roots the most fundamental structures of the group in the primary experiences of the body which, as is clearly seen in emotion, takes



metaphors seriously.<sup>6</sup> For example, the opposition between the straight and the bent, whose function in the incorporated division of labour between the sexes has been indicated, is central to most of the marks of respect or contempt that politeness uses in many societies to symbolize relations of domination. On the one hand, lowering or bending the head or forehead as a sign of confusion or timidity, lowering the eyes in humility or timidity, and also shame or modesty, looking down or underneath, kneeling, curtsying, prostration (before a superior or a god); on the other hand, looking up, looking someone in the eyes, refusing to bow the head, standing up to someone, getting the upper hand . . . Male, upward movements and female, downward movements, uprightness versus bending, the will to be on top, to overcome, versus submission – the fundamental oppositions of the social order, whether between the dominant and the dominated or between the dominant-dominant and the dominated-dominant – are always sexually overdetermined, as if the body language of sexual domination and submission had provided the fundamental principles of both the body language and the verbal language of social domination and submission.<sup>7</sup>

Because the classificatory schemes through which the body is practically apprehended and appreciated are always grounded twofold, both in the social division of labour and in the sexual division of labour, the relation to the body is specified according to sex and according to the form that the division of labour between the sexes takes depending on the position occupied in the social division of labour. Thus, the value of the opposition between the big and the small, which, as a number of experiments have shown, is one of the fundamental principles of the perception that agents have of their body and also of their whole relation to the body, varies between the sexes, which are themselves conceived in terms of this opposition (the dominant representation of the division of labour between the sexes gives the man the dominant position, that of the protector who embraces, encompasses, envelops, oversees, etc.); and the opposition thus specified receives in turn different values depending on the class, that is, depending on how strongly the opposition between the sexes is asserted within it, in practices or in discourses (ranging from clear-cut alternatives – ‘macho’ (*mec*) or ‘fairy’ (*tante*) – to a continuum) and depending on the forms that the inevitable compromise between the real body and the ideal, legitimate body (with the sexual characteristics that each social class assigns to it) has to take in order to adjust to the necessities inscribed in each class condition.

The relation to the body is a fundamental dimension of the *habitus* that is inseparable from a relation to language and to time. It cannot be reduced to a ‘body image’ or even ‘body concept’ (the two terms are used almost interchangeably by some psychologists), a subjective representation largely based on the representation of one’s own body produced and returned by others. Social psychology is mistaken when it locates the dialectic of incorporation at the level of *representations*, with body image, the descriptive and normative ‘feed-back’ supplied by the group (family, peers,

etc.) engendering self-image (or the 'looking-glass self'), that is, an agent's own representation of his/her social 'effects' (seduction, charm, etc.). This is firstly because all the schemes of perception and appreciation in which a group deposits its fundamental structures, and the schemes of expression through which it provides them with the beginnings of objectification and therefore of reinforcement, intervene between the individual and his/her body. Application of the fundamental schemes to one's own body, and more especially to those parts of the body that are most pertinent in terms of these schemes, is doubtless one of the privileged occasions for the incorporation of the schemes, because of the heavy investments placed in the body.<sup>8</sup> But secondly, and more importantly, the process of acquisition – a practical *mimesis* (or mimeticism) which implies an overall relation of identification and has nothing in common with an *imitation* that would presuppose a conscious effort to reproduce a gesture, an utterance or an object explicitly constituted as a model – and the process of reproduction – a practical reactivation which is opposed to both memory and knowledge – tend to take place below the level of consciousness, expression and the reflexive distance which these presuppose. The body believes in what it plays at: it weeps if it mimes grief. It does not represent what it performs, it does not memorize the past, it *enacts* the past, bringing it back to life. What is 'learned by body' is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is. This is particularly clear in non-literate societies, where inherited knowledge can only survive in the incorporated state. It is never detached from the body that bears it and can be reconstituted only by means of a kind of gymnastics designed to evoke it, a *mimesis* which, as Plato observed, implies total investment and deep emotional identification. As Eric Havelock (1963), from whom this argument is borrowed, points out, the body is thus constantly mingled with all the knowledge it reproduces, and this knowledge never has the objectivity it derives from objectification in writing and the consequent freedom with respect to the body.

And it could be shown that the shift from a mode of conserving the tradition based solely on oral discourse to a mode of accumulation based on writing, and, beyond this, the whole process of rationalization that is made possible by (*inter alia*) objectification in writing, are accompanied by a far-reaching transformation of the whole relationship to the body, or more precisely of the use made of the body in the production and reproduction of cultural artefacts. This is particularly clear in the case of music, where the process of rationalization as described by Weber has as its corollary a 'disincarnation' of musical production or reproduction (which generally are not distinct), a 'disengagement' of the body which most ancient musical systems use as a complete instrument.

So long as the work of education is not clearly institutionalized as a specific, autonomous practice, so long as it is the whole group and a whole symbolically structured environment, without specialized agents or specific occasions, that exerts an anonymous, diffuse pedagogic action, the essential part of the *modus operandi* that defines practical mastery is transmitted through practice, in the practical state, without rising to the level of

discourse. The child mimics other people's actions rather than 'models'. Body hexis speaks directly to the motor function, in the form of a pattern of postures that is both individual and systematic, being bound up with a whole system of objects, and charged with a host of special meanings and values. But the fact that schemes are able to pass directly from practice to practice without moving through discourse and consciousness does not mean that the acquisition of *habitus* is no more than a mechanical learning through trial and error. In contrast to an incoherent sequence of numbers which can only be learnt gradually, through repeated attempts and continuous, predictable progress, a numerical series is mastered more easily because it contains a structure that makes it unnecessary to memorize all the numbers mechanically one by one. Whether in verbal products such as proverbs, sayings, gnomic poems, songs or riddles, or in objects such as tools, the house or the village, or in practices such as games, contests of honour, gift exchange or rites, the material that the Kabyle child has to learn is the product of the systematic application of a small number of principles coherent in practice, and, in its infinite redundancy, it supplies the key to all the tangible series, their *ratio*, which will be appropriated in the form of a principle generating practices that are organized in accordance with the same rationality.<sup>9</sup>

Experimental analyses of learning which establish that 'neither the formation nor the application of a concept requires conscious recognition of the common elements or relationship involved in the specific instances' (Berelson and Steiner 1964: 193) enable us to understand the dialectic of objectification and incorporation whereby practices and artefacts, systematic objectifications of systematic dispositions, tend in turn to engender systematic dispositions. When presented with a series of symbols – Chinese characters (in Hull's experiments) or pictures in which the colour, nature and number of the objects represented vary simultaneously (Heidbreder) – distributed into classes that were given arbitrary but objectively grounded names, subjects who were unable to state the principle of classification none the less achieved higher scores than they would if they were guessing at random. They thereby demonstrated that they had attained a practical mastery of the classificatory schemes that in no way implied symbolic mastery, that is, consciousness and verbal expression, of the procedures actually applied. These experimental findings are entirely confirmed by Albert B. Lord's analysis of the acquisition of structured material in the natural environment, based on his study of the training of the *guslar*, the Yugoslav bard. Practical mastery of what he calls the 'formula method', that is, the ability to improvise by combining 'formulae', ~~sequences of words regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to~~ express a given idea, is acquired through sheer familiarization, simply 'by hearing the poems', without the learner having 'the sense of learning and subsequently manipulating this or that formula or any set of formulae' (1960: 30–4). The constraints of rhythm or metre are internalized at the same time as melody and meaning, without ever being perceived in their own right.

Between learning through sheer familiarization, in which the learner insensibly and unconsciously acquires the principles of an 'art' and an art of living, including those that are not known to the producer of the practices or artefacts that are imitated, and explicit and express transmission

by precept and prescription, every society provides structural exercises which tend to transmit a particular form of practical mastery. In Kabylia, there are the riddles and ritual contests that test the 'sense of ritual language' and all the games, often structured according to the logic of the wager, the challenge or the combat (duels, group battles, target-shooting, etc.), which require the boys to apply the generative schemes of the conduct of honour, in the 'let's pretend' mode;<sup>10</sup> there is daily participation in gift exchanges and their subtleties, in which small boys play the role of messengers, and particularly of intermediaries between the world of women and that of men. There is silent observation of discussions in the men's assembly, with their effects of eloquence, their rituals, their strategies, their ritual strategies and their strategic uses of ritual. There are interactions with kinsmen in which objective relationships are explored in all directions, by means of reversals requiring the same person who in one context behaved as a nephew to behave in another as a paternal uncle, so acquiring practical mastery of the transformational schemes that allow the shift from the dispositions associated with one position to those appropriate to the other. There are lexical and grammatical commutations ('I' and 'you' designating the same person according to the relation to the speaker) which teach the sense of the interchangeability and reciprocity of positions and the limits of both. At a deeper level, there are relations with the father and the mother which, through their asymmetry in antagonistic complementarity, constitute one of the occasions for internalizing inseparably the schemes of the sexual division of labour and the division of sexual labour.

But in fact all the actions performed in a structured space and time are immediately qualified symbolically and function as structural exercises through which practical mastery of the fundamental schemes is constituted. Social disciplines take the form of temporal disciplines and the whole social order imposes itself at the deepest level of the bodily dispositions through a particular way of regulating the use of time, the temporal distribution of collective and individual activities and the appropriate rhythm with which to perform them.

'Don't we all eat the same wheatcake (or the same barley)?' 'Don't we all get up at the same time?' These formulae, commonly used to reassert solidarity, contain an implicit definition of the fundamental virtue of conformity, the opposite of which is the desire to stand apart from others. Working when others are resting, lurking at home when others are working in the fields, travelling on deserted roads, loitering in the streets of the village when others are asleep or at the market – these are all suspicious forms of behaviour. 'There is a time for every thing' and it is important to do 'each thing in its time' (*kul waqth salwaqth-is* – 'each time in its time'). Thus a responsible man must be an early riser: 'He who does not finish his business early in the morning will never finish it.'<sup>11</sup> Getting up early to take out the livestock, to go to Koran school or simply to be outdoors with the men, at the same time as the men, is a duty of honour that boys are taught to respect from a young age. A man who leaves on time will arrive at the right place at the right time, without having to rush. There is mockery for the man who hurries, who runs to catch up with someone, who works so hastily that he is

likely to 'maltreat the earth'. The tasks of farming, *horia erga* as the Greeks called them, are defined as much in their rhythm as in their moment.<sup>12</sup> The vital tasks, like ploughing and sowing, fall to those who are capable of treating the land with the respect it deserves, of approaching it (*qabel*) with the measured pace of a man meeting a partner whom he wants to greet and honour. This is underlined by the legend (told by a *t'aleb* of the Matmata tribe) of the origin of wheat and barley. Adam was sowing wheat; Eve brought him some wheatcake. She saw Adam sowing grain by grain, 'covering each seed with earth' and invoking God each time. She accused him of wasting his time. While he was busy eating, she started to broadcast the grain, without invoking the name of God. When the crop came up, Adam found his field full of strange ears of corn that were delicate and fragile, like woman. He called this plant (barley) *châir*, 'weak'.<sup>13</sup> To control the moment, and especially the tempo, of practices, is to inscribe durably in the body, in the form of the rhythm of actions or words, a whole relationship to time, which is experienced as part of the person (like the *gravitas* of Roman senators). It helps, for example, to discourage all forms of racing, seen as competitive ambition (*thab'raymith*), which would tend to transform circular time into linear time, simple reproduction into endless accumulation.

In a universe such as this, people never deal with 'nature' as science understands it – a cultural construct which is the historical product of a long process of 'disenchantment'. Between the child and the world, the whole group intervenes, not just with the warnings that inculcate a fear of supernatural dangers (cf. Whiting 1941: 215), but with a whole universe of ritual practices and utterances, which people it with meanings structured in accordance with the principles of the corresponding *habitus*. Inhabited space – starting with the house – is the privileged site of the objectification of the generative schemes, and, through the divisions and hierarchies it establishes between things, between people and between practices, this materialized system of classification inculcates and constantly reinforces the principles of the classification which constitutes the arbitrariness of a culture. Thus, the opposition between the sacred of the right hand and the sacred of the left hand, between *nif* and *h'aram*, between man, invested with protective and fertilizing powers, and woman, who is both sacred and invested with maleficent powers, is materialized in the division between masculine space, with the assembly place, the market or the fields, and female space, the house and the garden, the sanctuaries of *h'aram*; and, secondarily, in the opposition which, within the house itself, assigns regions of space, objects and activities either to the male universe of the dry, fire, the high, the cooked, the day, or the female universe of the moist, water, the low, the raw, the night. The world of objects, a kind of book in which each thing speaks metaphorically of all others and from which children learn to read the world, is read with the whole body, in and through the movements and displacements which define the space of objects as much as they are defined by it.<sup>14</sup> The structures that help to construct the world of objects are constructed in the practice of a world of objects constructed in accordance with the same structures. The 'subject' born of the world of objects does not arise as a subjectivity facing an objectivity: the objective universe is made up of objects which are the

product of objectifying operations structured according to the same structures that the *habitus* applies to them. The *habitus* is a metaphor of the world of objects, which is itself an endless circle of metaphors that mirror each other *ad infinitum*.

All the symbolic manipulations of body experience, starting with displacements within a symbolically structured space, tend to impose the integration of body space with cosmic space and social space, by applying the same categories (naturally at the price of great laxity in logic) both to the relationship between man and the natural world and to the complementary and opposed states and actions of the two sexes in the division of sexual labour and the sexual division of labour, and therefore in the labour of biological and social reproduction. For example, the opposition between movement outwards, towards the field or the market, towards the production and circulation of goods, and movement inwards, towards the accumulation and consumption of the products of labour, corresponds symbolically to the opposition between the male body, self-enclosed and directed towards the outside world, and the female body, which is akin to the dark, damp house full of food, utensils and children, entered and left by the same, inevitably soiled opening.<sup>15</sup>

The opposition between the centrifugal male orientation and the centripetal female orientation, which is the principle of the organization of the internal space of the house, no doubt also underlies the relationship that the two sexes have to their own bodies, and more specifically to their sexuality. As in every society dominated by male values – and European societies, which assign men to politics, history or war, and women to the hearth, the novel and psychology, are no exception to this – the specifically male relationship to the body and sexuality is that of sublimation. The symbolism of honour tends both to refuse any direct expression of nature and sexuality and to encourage its transfigured manifestation in the form of manly prowess. Kabyle men, who are neither aware of nor concerned with the female orgasm, but who seek the confirmation of their potency in repetition rather than prolongation of intercourse, cannot forget that, through the female gossip that they both fear and despise, the eyes of the group always threaten their privacy. As for the women, it is true to say, as Erikson (1945) does, that male domination ‘tends to restrict their verbal consciousness’, only so long as this is taken to mean, not that they are denied all talk of sex, but that their discourse is dominated by the male values of virility, so that any reference to specifically female sexual ‘interests’ is excluded from this aggressive and shame-filled cult of male potency.

Psychoanalysis, a disenchanting product of the disenchantment of the world, which tends to constitute *as such* a mythically overdetermined area of signification, too easily obscures the fact that one’s own body and other people’s bodies are always perceived through categories of perception which it would be naive to treat as sexual, even if, as is confirmed by the women’s suppressed laughter during conversations and the interpretations they give of graphic symbols in wall paintings, pottery or carpet motifs, etc., these categories always relate back, sometimes very concretely, to the

opposition between the biologically defined properties of the two sexes. This would be as naive as it would be to reduce to their strictly sexual dimension the countless acts of diffuse inculcation through which the body and the world tend to be set in order, by means of a symbolic manipulation of the relation to the body and the world aimed at imposing what has to be called, in Melanie Klein's term (1948), a 'body geography', a particular case of geography, or rather of cosmology. The child's initial relation to its father and mother, or, to put it another way, to the paternal body and the maternal body, which provides the most dramatic opportunity to experience all the fundamental oppositions of mythopoeic practice, cannot be identified as the basis of the acquisition of the principles of the structuring of the self and the world, and in particular of every homosexual and heterosexual relationship, except in so far as that primary relationship is understood as being set up with objects whose sex is defined symbolically and not biologically. The child constructs its sexual identity, a central aspect of its social identity, at the same time as it constructs its representation of the division of labour between the sexes, on the basis of the same socially defined set of indissolubly biological and social indices. In other words, the growth of awareness of sexual identity and the incorporation of the dispositions associated with a particular social definition of the social functions assigned to men and women come hand in hand with the adoption of a socially defined vision of the sexual division of labour.

Psychologists' work on the perception of sexual differences makes it clear that children establish clear-cut distinctions very early (about age five) between male and female tasks, assigning domestic tasks to women and mothers and economic activities to men and fathers. (See, for example, Mott 1954. Hartley [1960] shows that when the father performs 'female' tasks or the mother 'male' tasks, they are seen as 'helping'.) Everything suggests that the awareness of sexual differences and the distinction between paternal and maternal functions are constituted simultaneously (see Dubin and Dubin 1965; Kohlberg 1967). The numerous analyses of the differential perception of father and mother indicate that the father is generally seen as more competent and more severe than the mother, who is regarded as 'gentler' and more affectionate than the father and is the object of a more emotionally charged and more agreeable relationship (see Dubin and Dubin 1965 for references). In fact, as Emmerich (1959, 1961) points out, underlying all these differences is the fact that children attribute more power to the father than to the mother.

It is not hard to imagine the weight that the opposition between masculinity and femininity must bring to bear on the construction of self-image and world-image when this opposition constitutes the fundamental principle of division of the social and the symbolic world. As is underlined by the twofold meaning of the word *nif*, physical potency inseparable from social potency, what is imposed through a certain social definition of maleness (and, consequently, of femaleness) is a political mythology, which governs all bodily experiences, not least sexual experiences themselves. Thus, the opposition between male sexuality – public and sublimated – and female sexuality – secret and, so to speak, 'alienated' (with respect to

Erikson's 'utopia of universal genitality', the 'utopia of full orgasmic reciprocity') is no more than a specific form taken by the opposition between the extraversion of politics or public religion and the introversion of private magic, the secret, hidden weapon of the dominated, made up for the most part of rites aimed at domesticating the male partners.

Everything takes place as if the *habitus* forged coherence and necessity out of accident and contingency; as if it managed to unify the effects of the social necessity undergone from childhood, through the material conditions of existence, the primary relational experiences and the practice of structured actions, objects, spaces and times, and the effects of biological necessity, whether the influence of hormone balances or the weight of the visible characteristics of physique; as if it produced a biological (and especially sexual) reading of social properties and a social reading of sexual properties, thus leading to a social re-use of biological properties and a biological re-use of social properties. This is seen very clearly in the equivalences it establishes between position in the division of labour and position in the division of the sexes. These equivalences are probably not peculiar to societies in which the divisions produced by these two principles coincide almost exactly. In a society divided into classes, all the products of a given agent, by an essential overdetermination, speak inseparably and simultaneously of his/her class – or, more precisely, his/her position and rising or falling trajectory within the social structure – and of his/her body – or, more precisely, of all the properties, always socially qualified, of which he/she is the bearer: sexual ones, of course, but also physical properties that are praised, like strength or beauty, or stigmatized.



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## ABBREVIATIONS

- ARSS = *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*  
BEI = *Bulletin de l'enseignement des indigènes*  
FDB = Fichier de documentation berbère (published at Fort-National)  
RA = *Revue africaine*

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