

IN JONATHAN CIZRY AND SANFORD KWINTER, eds.
INCORPORATIONS. NEW YORK: ZONE, 1992

Reprinted by permission via the Copyright
Clearance Center.

Introduction

I use the term "body techniques" in the plural advisedly because it is possible to produce a theory of the technique of the body on the basis of a study, an exposition, a description pure and simple of techniques of the body in the plural. By this expression I mean the ways in which, from society to society, men know how to use their bodies. In any case, it is essential to move from the concrete to the abstract and not the other way around.

I want to convey to you what I believe to be one of the parts of my teaching that is not to be found elsewhere, which I have rehearsed in a course of lectures on descriptive ethnology (the books containing the *Summary Instructions* and *Instructions for Ethnographers* are to be published¹) and have tried out several times in my teaching at the Institute of Ethnology of the University of Paris.

When a natural science makes advances, it does so only in the direction of the concrete and always in the direction of the unknown. Now, the unknown is found at the frontiers of the sciences, where the professors are at each other's throats, as Goethe put it (though he did so less politely). It is generally in these ill-demarcated domains that the urgent problems lie. However, these uncleared lands are marked. In the natural sciences, at present, there is always one obnoxious rubric. There is always a moment when, the science of certain facts not yet being reduced to concepts, the facts not even being grouped together organically, these masses of facts receive that signpost of ignorance: "miscellaneous." This is where we have to penetrate. We can be certain that this is where there are truths to be discovered: first, because we know that we are ignorant, and second, because we have a lively sense of the quantity of the facts. For many years in my course in descriptive ethnology, I have had to teach in the shadow of the disgrace and opprobrium of the "miscellaneous," in a matter in which, in ethnography, this rubric was truly heteroclit. I was well aware that walking or swimming, for example, and all sorts of things of the same type are specific to determinate societies; that the Polynesians do not swim as we do, that my generation did not swim as the present generation does. But what

social phenomena did these represent? They were "miscellaneous" social phenomena, and, since this rubric is such a horrible one, I have often thought about this "miscellaneous" — at least as often as I have been obliged to discuss it, and often in between.

Forgive me if, in order to give shape to this notion of body techniques for you, I tell you about the occasions on which I pursued this general problem and how I managed to pose it clearly. It was a series of steps taken consciously and unconsciously.

First, in 1898, I came into contact with someone whose initials I still know, but whose name I can no longer remember (I have been too lazy to look it up). It was the man who wrote an excellent article on swimming for the 1902 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, then in preparation.² (The articles on swimming in the two later editions are not so good.) He revealed to me the historical and ethnographic interest of the question. It was a starting point, an observational framework. Subsequently — I noticed it myself — we have seen swimming techniques undergo a change in our generation's lifetime. An example will put us in the picture straightaway: us, the psychologists, as well as the biologists and sociologists. Previously, we were taught to dive after having learned to swim. And when we were learning to dive, we were taught to close our eyes and then to open them underwater. Today the technique is the other way around. The whole training begins by getting the children accustomed to keeping their eyes open underwater. Thus, even before they can swim, particular care is taken to get the children to control their dangerous but instinctive ocular reflexes; before all else they are familiarized with the water, their fears are suppressed, a certain confidence is created, suspensions and movements are selected. Hence, there is a technique of diving and a technique of education in diving that have been discovered in my day. And you can see that it really is a technical education and, as in every technique, there is an apprenticeship in swimming. On the other hand, our generation has witnessed a complete change in technique: we have seen the breaststroke with the head out of the water replaced by the different sorts of crawl. Moreover, the habit of swallowing water and spitting it out again has gone. In my day, swimmers thought of themselves as a kind of steamboat. It was stupid, but in fact I still do this: I cannot get rid of my technique. Here, then, we have a specific technique of the body, a gymnastic art perfected in our own day.

But this specificity is characteristic of all techniques. For example, during the war I was able to make many observations on this specificity of techniques, in particular, the technique of *digging*. The English troops I was with did not know how to use French spades, which forced us to change eight thousand spades per division when we relieved a French division, and vice versa. This plainly shows that a manual knack can only be learned slowly. Every technique, properly so called, has its own form.

But the same is true of every attitude of the body. Each society has its own special habits. In the same period, I had many opportunities to note the differences between the various armies. An anecdote about *marching*: You all know that the British infantry marches with a step different from the French — with a different frequency and a different stride. For the moment, I am not talking about the English swing or the action of the knees and so on. The Worcester Regiment, having achieved considerable glory alongside French infantry in the Battle of the Aisne, requested royal permission to have French trumpets and drums, a band of French buglers and drummers. The result was not very encouraging. For nearly six months, in the streets of Bailleul, long after the Battle of the Aisne, I often saw the following sight: the regiment had preserved its English march but had set it to a French rhythm. It even had at the head of its band a little French light infantry regimental sergeant major who could blow the bugle and sound the march even better than his men. The unfortunate regiment of tall Englishmen could not march. Their gait was completely at odds. When they tried to march in step, the music would be out of step, with the result that the Worcester Regiment was forced to give up its French buglers. In fact, the bugle calls adopted earlier, army by army, in the Crimean War, were the calls "at ease" and "retreat." Thus, I often saw, in a very precise fashion, not only in the ordinary march, but also in the double and so on, the differences in elementary as well as sporting techniques between the English and the French. Professor Curt Sachs, who is living here in France at present, made the same observation. He has discussed it in several of his lectures. He could recognize the gait of an Englishman and a Frenchman from a long distance.

But these were only approaches to the subject.

A kind of revelation came to me in the hospital. I was ill in New York. I wondered where I had seen girls walking the way my nurses walked. I had the time to think

about it. At last I realized that it was in movies. Returning to France, I noticed how common this gait was, especially in Paris; the girls were French and they too were walking in this way. In fact, American walking fashions had begun to arrive over here, thanks to the movies. This was an idea I could generalize. The positions of the arms and hands while walking form a social idiosyncrasy — they are not simply a product of some purely individual, almost completely psychic, arrangements and mechanisms. For example, I think I can also recognize a girl who has been raised in a convent. In general, she will walk with her fists closed. And I can still remember my third-form teacher shouting at me: "Idiot! Why do you walk around the whole time with your hands flapping wide open?" Thus, there exists an education in walking, too.

Another example: There are polite and impolite *positions for the hands* at rest. Thus, you can be certain that if a child at table keeps his elbows in when he is not eating, he is English. A young Frenchman has no idea how to sit up straight; his elbows stick out sideways; he puts them on the table and so on.

Finally, in *running*, too, I have seen, you all have seen, the change in technique. Imagine, my gymnastics teacher, one of the top graduates of Joinville around 1860, taught me to run with my fists close to my chest — a movement completely contradictory to all running movements. I had to see the professional runners of 1890 before I realized the necessity of running in a different fashion.

Hence, I have had this notion of the social nature of the *habitus* for many years. Please note that I use the Latin word — it should be understood in France — "*habitus*." The word translates infinitely better than "*habitude*" (habit or custom), the "*exis*," the "acquired ability" and "faculty" of Aristotle (who was a psychologist). It does not designate those metaphysical *habitudes*, that mysterious memory, the subjects of volumes or short and famous theses. These "habits" do not vary just with individuals and their imitations; they vary especially between societies, educations, proprieties and fashions, types of prestige. In them, we should see the techniques and work of collective and individual practical reason rather than, in the ordinary way, merely the soul and its repetitive faculties.

Thus, everything tended toward the position that we in this society are among those who have adopted, following Auguste Comte's example: the position of Georges Dumas, for example, who, in the constant shuttlings between the biological and the

sociological, leaves but little room for the psychological mediator. And I concluded that it was not possible to have a clear idea of all these facts about running, swimming and so on, unless one introduced a triple consideration instead of a single consideration — be it mechanical and physical, like an anatomical and physiological theory of walking, or on the contrary psychological or sociological. It is the triple viewpoint, that of the total man, that is needed.

Finally, another series of facts impressed itself upon me. In all these elements of the art of using the human body, the facts of *education* are dominant. The notion of education could be superimposed on that of imitation. For there are particular children with very strong imitative faculties, others with very weak ones, but all of them go through the same education, such that we can understand the continuity of the concatenations. What takes place is a prestigious imitation. The child, the adult, imitates actions that have succeeded, which he has seen successfully performed by people in whom he has confidence and who have authority over him. The action is imposed from without, from above, even if it is an exclusively biological action, involving his body. The individual borrows the series of movements of which he is composed from the action executed in front of him, or with him, by others.

It is precisely this notion of the prestige of the person who performs the ordered, authorized, tested action vis-à-vis the imitating individual, that contains all the social element. The imitative action that follows contains the psychological element and the biological element.

The whole, the ensemble, though, is conditioned by the three elements indissolubly mixed together.

All this is easily linked to a number of other facts. In a book by Elsdon Best that reached here in 1925, there is a remarkable document on the way Maori women in New Zealand walk. (Do not say that they are primitives, for in some ways I think they are superior to the Celts and Germans.)

Native women adopted a peculiar gait [the English word is delightful] that was acquired in youth, a loose-jointed swinging of the hips that looks ungainly to us, but was admired by the Maori. Mothers drilled their daughters in this accomplishment, termed *onioni*.

and I have heard a mother say to her girl: "*Ha! Kaore koe e onioni*" ("you are not doing the *onioni*") when the young one was neglecting to practise the gait.³

This was an acquired, not a natural way of walking. To sum up, there is perhaps no "natural way" for the adult. A fortiori when other technical facts intervene: to take ourselves, the fact that we wear shoes to walk transforms the positions of our feet: we certainly feel it when we walk without them.

On the other hand, this same basic question arose for me in a different region, vis-à-vis all the notions concerning magical power, beliefs in the not only physical but also moral, magical and ritual effectiveness of certain actions. Here I am perhaps even more on my own terrain than on the adventurous terrain of the psychophysiology of modes of walking, which is a risky one for me in this company.

Here is a more "primitive" fact, Australian this time: a ritual formula for both hunting and running. As you well know, the Australian manages to outrun kangaroos, emus and wild dogs. He manages to catch the opossum at the top of its tree, even though the animal puts up a remarkable resistance. One of these running rituals, observed a hundred years ago, is that of the hunt for the dingo, or wild dog, among the tribes near Adelaide. The hunter constantly shouts the following formula:

Strike [him, i.e., the dingo] with the tuft of eagle feathers [used in initiation, etc.]

Strike [him] with the girdle

Strike [him] with the string round the head

Strike [him] with the blood of circumcision

Strike [him] with the blood of the arm

Strike [him] with menstrual blood.

Send [him] to sleep, etc.⁴

In another ceremony, that of the opossum hunt, the individual carries in his mouth a piece of rock crystal (*kawemukka*), a particularly magical stone, and chants a formula of the same kind, and it is with this support that he is able to dislodge the opossum, that he climbs the tree and can stay hanging on to it by his belt, that he can outlast and catch and kill this difficult prey.

The relations between magical procedure and hunting techniques are clear, too, universal to need to be stressed.

The psychological phenomenon I am reporting at this moment is clearly only too

easy to grasp and understand from the normal viewpoint of the sociologist. But what I want to get at now is the confidence, the psychological *momentum* that can be linked to an action that is primarily a fact of biological resistance, obtained thanks to some works and a magical object.

Technical action, physical action, magicoreligious action are confused for the actor. These are the elements I had at my disposal.

All this did not satisfy me. I saw how everything could be described but not how it could be organized; I did not know what name, what title, to give it all.

It was very simple, I had just to refer to the division of traditional actions into techniques and rites, which I believe to be well founded. All these modes of action were techniques, the techniques of the body.

I made, and went on making for several years, the fundamental mistake of thinking that there is technique only when there is an instrument. I had to go back to ancient notions, to the platonic position on technique, for Plato spoke of a technique of music and in particular of a technique of dance, and I had to extend these notions.

I call "technique" an action that is *effective* and *traditional* (and you will see that in this it is no different from a magical, religious or symbolic action). It has to be *effective* and *traditional*. There is no technique and no transmission in the absence of tradition. This, above all, is what distinguishes man from the animals: the transmission of his techniques, and very probably their oral transmission.

Allow me, therefore, to assume that you accept my definitions. But what is the difference between the effective traditional action of religion, the symbolic or juridical effective traditional action, the actions of life in common, moral actions on the one hand; and the traditional actions of technique, on the other? It is that the latter are felt by the author as *actions of a mechanical, physical or physicochemical order* and that they are pursued with that aim in view.

In this case, all that need be said is quite simply that we are dealing with *techniques of the body*. The body is man's first and most natural instrument. Or more accurately, not to speak of instruments, man's first and most natural technical object, and at the same time his first technical means, is his body. Immediately, this whole broad

category of what I classified in descriptive sociology as "miscellaneous" disappeared from that rubric and took shape and body: we now know where to file it.

Before instrumental techniques there is the ensemble of techniques of the body. I am not exaggerating the importance of this kind of work, the work of psychosociological taxonomy. But it is something: order imposed on ideas where there was none before. Even inside this grouping of facts, the principle made possible a precise classification. The constant adaptation to a physical, mechanical or chemical aim (for example, when we drink) is pursued in a series of assembled actions, and assembled for the individual not by himself alone but by all his education, by the whole society to which he belongs, in the place he occupies.

Moreover, all these techniques were easily arranged in a system that is common to us, the notion basic to psychologists, particularly Rivers and Head, of the symbolic life of the mind; the notion we have of the activity of the consciousness as being, above all, a system of symbolic assemblages.

I would never stop if I tried to demonstrate to you all the facts that might be listed to make visible this concourse of the body and moral or intellectual symbols. Here let us look for a moment at ourselves. Everything in us all is under command. I am a lecturer for you; you can tell it from my sitting posture and my voice, and you are listening to me seated and in silence. We have a set of permissible or impermissible, natural or unnatural attitudes. Thus, we should attribute different values to the act of staring fixedly: a symbol of politeness in the army, and of rudeness in everyday life.

Principles of the Classification of Body Techniques

Two things were immediately apparent given the notion of techniques of the body: they are divided and vary by sex *and* by age.

Sexual division of body techniques (and not just sexual division of labor). This is a fairly broad subject. The observations of Robert Mearns Yerkes and Wolfgang Köhler on the position of objects with respect to the body (and especially to the groin) in monkeys provide inspiration for a general disquisition on the differ-

ent attitudes of the moving body in the two sexes with respect to moving objects. Besides, there are classical observations of man himself on this point. They need to be supplemented. Allow me to suggest this series of investigations to my psychologist friends, as I am not very competent in this field and also my time is otherwise engaged. Take the way of *closing the fist*. A man normally closes his fist with the thumb outside, a woman with her thumb inside; perhaps because she has not been taught to do it, but I am sure that if she were taught, it would prove difficult. Her punching, her delivery of a punch, are weak. And everyone knows that a woman's throwing, of a stone for example, is not just weak but always different from that of a man: in a vertical instead of a horizontal plane.

Perhaps this is a case of two instructions. For there is a society of men and a society of women. However, I believe that there are biological and psychological things involved as well. But there again, the psychologist alone will be able to give only dubious explanations, and he will need the collaboration of two neighboring sciences: physiology and sociology.

Variation of body techniques with age.

The child normally squats. We no longer know how to. I believe that this is an absurdity and an inferiority of our races, civilizations, societies. An example: I lived at the front with Australians (whites). They had one considerable advantage over me. When we made a stop in mud or water, they could sit down on their heels to rest, and the "*flotte*," as it was called, stayed below their heels. I was forced to stay standing up in my boots with my whole foot in the water. The squatting position is, in my opinion, an interesting one that could be preserved in a child. It is a very stupid mistake to take it away from him. All mankind, excepting only our societies, has so preserved it.

It seems, besides, that in the series of ages of the human race this posture has also changed in importance. You will remember that curvature of the lower limbs was once regarded as a sign of degeneration. A physiological explanation has been given for this racial characteristic. What even Rudolf Virchow still regarded as an unfortunate degenerate, and is in fact simply what is now called "Neanderthal" man, had curved legs. This is because he normally lived in a squatting position. Hence, there are things that we believe to be hereditary, but which are in reality physiological,

psychological or sociological in kind. A certain form of the tendons and even of the bones is simply the result of certain forms of posture and repose. This is clear enough. By this procedure it is possible to classify not only techniques, but also to classify their variations by age and sex.

Having established this classification, which cuts across all classes of society, we can now glimpse a third one.

Classification of body techniques according to efficiency.

Body techniques can be classified according to their efficiency, that is, according to the results of training. Training, like the assembly of a machine, is the search for, the acquisition of, an efficiency. Here it is a human efficiency. These techniques are thus human norms of human training. These procedures that we apply to animals men voluntarily apply to themselves and to their children. The latter are probably the first beings to have been trained in this way, before all the animals, which first had to be tamed. As a result, I could to a certain extent compare these techniques, them and their transmission, to training systems and rank them in the order of their effectiveness.

This is the place for the notion of dexterity, so important in psychology as well as in sociology. But in French we have only the poor term "*habile*," a bad translation of the Latin word "*habilis*," which far better designates those people with a sense of the adaptation of all their well-coordinated movements to a goal, who are practiced, who "know what they are up to." The English notions of craft or cleverness (skill, presence of mind and habit combined) imply competence at something. Once again we are clearly in the technical domain.

Transmission of the form of the techniques.

One last viewpoint: The teaching of techniques being essential, we can classify them according to the nature of this education and training. Here is a new field of studies: masses of details that have not been observed, but should be, constitute the physical education of all ages and both sexes. The child's education is full of so-called details, which are really essential. Take the problem of ambidextrousness, for example: our observations of the movements of the right hand and of the left hand are poor,

and we do not know to what extent they are acquired. A pious Muslim can easily be recognized: even when he has a knife and fork (which is rare), he will go to any lengths to avoid using anything but his right hand. He must never touch his food with his left hand, or certain parts of his body with his right. To know why he does not make a certain gesture and does make a certain other gesture, neither the physiology nor the psychology of motor asymmetry in man is enough; it is also necessary to know the traditions that impose it. Robert Hertz has posed this problem correctly.⁵ But reflections of this and other kinds can be applied whenever there is a social choice of the principle of movements.

There are grounds for studying all the modes of training, imitation and especially those fundamental fashions that can be called the "modes of life," the *modes*, the *tonus*, the matter, the manners, the way.

Here is the first classification, or rather, four viewpoints.

Biographical Lists of Body Techniques

Another quite different classification is, I would not say, more logical, but easier for the observer. It is a simple list. I had thought of presenting to you a series of small tables, of the kind American professors construct. I shall simply follow more or less the ages of man, the normal biography of an individual, as an arrangement of the body techniques that concern him, or that he is taught.

Techniques of birth and obstetrics.

The facts are not very well known, and much of the classical information is disputable.⁶ Among the best is that of Walter Roth on the tribes of Queensland and on those of British Guiana.⁷

The forms of obstetrics are quite variable. The infant Buddha was born with his mother Māya upright and clinging to the branch of a tree. She gave birth standing up. Indian women in the main still give birth in this position. Something we think of as normal, like giving birth lying on one's back, is no more natural than doing so in other positions, such as on all fours. There are techniques of giving birth, both on the mother's part and on that of her helpers, of holding the baby, cutting and

tying the umbilical cord, caring for the mother, caring for the child. Here are quite a number of questions of some importance. And here are some more: the choice of the child, the exposure of weaklings, the killing of twins are decisive moments in the history of a race. In ancient history and in other civilizations, the recognition of the child is a crucial event.

Techniques of infancy

Rearing and feeding the child: Attitudes of the two interrelated beings, mother and child. Take the child — suckling, carrying and so on. The history of carrying is very important. A child carried next to its mother's skin for two or three years has a quite different attitude to its mother from that of a child not so carried;⁸ it has a contact with its mother utterly unlike our children's. It clings to her neck, her shoulder, it sits astride her hip. This remarkable gymnastics is essential throughout its life. And there is another gymnastics for the mother carrying it. It even seems that psychic states arise here that have disappeared from infancy with us. There are sexual contacts, skin contacts and so on.

Weaning takes a long time, usually two or three years. The obligation to suckle, sometimes even to suckle animals. It takes a long time for the mother's milk to run dry. Besides this, there are relations between weaning and reproduction, suspension of reproduction during weaning.⁹

Mankind can more or less be divided into people with cradles and people without. For there are techniques of the body that presuppose an instrument. Countries with cradles include almost all the peoples of the two northern hemispheres, those of the Andean region and also a certain number of Central African populations. In these last two groups, the use of the cradle coincides with a cranial deformation (which perhaps has serious physiological consequences).

The weaned child can eat and drink; it is taught to walk; it is trained in vision, hearing, in a sense of rhythm and form and movement, often for dancing and music.

It acquires the notions and practices of physical exercise and breathing. It takes certain postures that are often imposed on it.

Techniques of adolescence.

To be observed with men in particular. They are less important with girls in those societies to whose study a course in ethnology is devoted. The big moment in the education of the body is, in fact, the moment of initiation. Because of the way our boys and girls are brought up, we imagine that both acquire the same manners and postures and receive the same training everywhere. The idea is already erroneous about ourselves — and it is totally false in so-called primitive cultures. Moreover, we describe the facts as if something like our own school, beginning straightaway and intended to protect the child and train it for life, had always and everywhere existed. The opposite is the rule. For example, in all black societies, the education of the boy intensifies around the age of puberty, while that of women remains traditional, so to speak. There is no school for women. They are at school with their mothers and are trained there continuously, moving directly, with few exceptions, to the married state. The male child enters the society of men, where he learns his profession, especially the profession of arms. However, for men as well as women, the decisive moment is that of adolescence. It is at this moment that they learn definitively the techniques of the body that they will retain for the whole of their adult lives.

Techniques of adult life.

To list these we can run through the various moments of the day among which coordinated movements and suspensions of movement are distributed.

We can distinguish sleep and waking, and, in waking, rest and activity.

Techniques of sleep: The notion that going to bed is something natural is totally inaccurate. I can tell you that the war taught me to sleep anywhere, on heaps of stones, for example, but that I have never been able to change my bed without a moment of insomnia: only on the second night can I go to sleep quickly.

One thing is very simple: it is possible to distinguish between those societies that have nothing to sleep on except the "floor" and those that have instrumental assistance. The "civilization of latitude 15°" discussed by Fritz Graebner is characterized by, among other things, its use of a bench for the neck.¹⁰ This neckrest is often a totem, sometimes carved with squatting figures of men and totemic animals. There

are people with mats and people without (Asia, Oceania, part of America). There are people with pillows and people without. There are populations that lie very close together in a ring to sleep, around a fire or even without a fire. There are primitive ways of getting warm and keeping the feet warm. The people of Tierra del Fuego, who live in a very cold region, cannot warm their feet while they are asleep, because they have only one skin blanket (*guanaco*). Finally there is sleep standing up. The Masai can sleep on their feet. I have slept standing up in the mountains. I have often slept on a horse, sometimes even a moving horse: the horse was more intelligent than I was. The old chroniclers of the invasion picture the Huns and Mongols sleeping on horse-back. This is still true, and the riders' sleeping does not stop the horses' progress.

There is the use of coverings, people who sleep covered and uncovered. There is the hammock and the way of sleeping while suspended.

Here are a large number of practices that are both techniques of the body and that also have profound biological echoes and effects. All this can and must be discovered.

Waking: techniques of rest: Rest can be perfect rest or a mere suspension of activity: lying down, sitting, squatting and so on. Try squatting. You will realize the torture that a Moroccan meal, for example, eaten according to all the rituals, would cause you. The way of sitting down is fundamental. You can distinguish squatting mankind and sitting mankind. And, among the latter, people with benches and people without benches and daises; people with chairs and people without chairs. Wooden chairs supported by crouching figures are widespread, curiously enough, in all the regions at 15° of latitude north and along the equator in both continents.¹¹ There are people who have tables and people who do not. The table, the Greek trapeza, is far from universal. Normally, it is still a carpet, a mat, throughout the East. This is all complicated, for these forms of rest include meals, conversation and so on. Certain societies take their rest in very peculiar positions. Thus, the whole of Nilotic Africa and part of the Chad region, all the way to Tanganyika, is populated by men who rest in the fields like storks. Some manage to rest on one foot without a pole, others lean on a stick. These resting techniques form real characteristics of civilization, common to a large number of them, to whole families of peoples. Nothing seems more natural to psychologists: I do not know if they would quite agree with me, but

I believe that these postures in the savannah are due to the height of the grasses there and the functions of shepherd or sentry; they are laboriously acquired by education and are preserved.

You have active, generally aesthetic, rest; thus, even dancing at rest, for instance, is frequent. I shall return to this.

Techniques of activity, of movement: By definition, rest is the absence of movement, movement the absence of rest. Here is a straightforward list:

Movements of the whole body: climbing, trampling, walking

Walking: The *habitus* of the body being upright while walking, breathing, rhythm of the walk, swinging the fists, the elbows, progression with the trunk in advance of the body or by advancing either side of the body alternately (we have grown accustomed to moving all the body forward at once). Feet turned in or out. Extension of the leg. We laugh at the goose-step. It is the way the German army can obtain the maximum extension of the leg, given in particular that all northerners, high on their legs, like to take as long a step as possible. In the absence of these exercises, we Frenchmen remain more or less knock-kneed. Here is one of those idiosyncrasies that is simultaneously a matter of race, of individual mentality and of collective mentality. Techniques such as those of the about-turn are among the most curious. The about-turn "on principle," English-style, is so different from our own that it takes considerable study to master it.

Running: Position of the feet, position of the arms, breathing, running magic, endurance. In Washington, I saw the chief of the Fire Fraternity of the Hopi Indians who had arrived with four of his men to protest against the prohibition of the use of certain alcoholic liquors in their ceremonies. He was certainly the best runner in the world. He had run 250 miles without stopping. All the Pueblos are accustomed to prodigious physical feats of all kinds. Henri Hubert, who had seen them, compared them physically with Japanese athletes. This same Indian was an incomparable dancer.

Finally, we reach techniques of active rest that are not simply a matter of aesthetics, but also of bodily games.

Dancing: You have perhaps attended the lectures of Erich von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs. I recommend to you the latter's very fine history of dancing.¹² I accept their division into dances at rest and dances in action.¹³ I am less prepared to accept their hypothesis about the distribution of these dances. They are victims of the fundamental error that is the mainstay of a whole section of sociology. There are supposed to be societies with exclusively masculine descent and others with exclusively uterine descent. The uterine ones, being feminized, tend to dance on the spot; the others, with descent through the male, take their pleasure in moving around.

Sachs has better classified these dances into extrovert and introvert dances.¹⁴ We are plunged straight into psychoanalysis, which is probably quite well founded here. In fact, the sociologist has to see things in a more complex way. Thus, the Polynesians and in particular the Maori, shake vigorously, even on the spot, or move around very energetically when they have the space to do so.

Men's dancing and women's dancing should be distinguished, for they are often opposed.

Finally, we should realize that dancing in a partner's arms is a product of modern European civilization, which demonstrates that things we find natural have a historical origin. Moreover, they horrify everyone in the world but ourselves.

I move on to the techniques of the body that are also a function of vocations and part of vocations or more complex techniques.

Jumping: We have witnessed a transformation of jumping techniques. We all jumped from a springboard and, once again, full-face. I am glad to say that this has stopped. Now people jump, fortunately, from one side. Jumping lengthways, sideways, up and down. Standing jump, pole-vault. Here I return to the objects of the reflection of my friends Köhler, Paul Guillaume and Ignace Meyerson: the comparative psychology of man and animals. I won't say anything more about it. These techniques are infinitely variable.

Climbing: I can tell you that I'm very bad at climbing trees, though reasonable on mountains and rocks. A difference of education and hence of method.

A method of getting up trees using a belt encircling the tree and the body is of prime importance among all so-called primitives. But we do not even have the use of this belt. We see telephone workers climbing with crampons, but no belt. They should be taught this procedure.¹⁵

The history of mountaineering methods is very noteworthy. It has made fabulous progress in my lifetime.

Descent: Nothing makes me so dizzy as watching a Kabyle going downstairs in Turkish slippers (*babouches*). How can he keep his footing without the slippers coming off? I have tried to see, to do it, but I can't understand.

Nor can I understand how women can walk in high heels. Thus, there is a lot even to be observed, let alone compared.

Swimming: I have told you what I think. Diving, swimming; use of supplementary means; air-floats, planks and so on. We are on the way to the invention of navigation. I was one of those who criticized Louis de Rougemont's book on Australia, demonstrated plagiarisms, believed he was grossly inaccurate.¹⁶ Along with so many others, I held his story for a fable: he had seen the Niol-Niol (northwest Australia) riding cavalcades of great sea turtles. But now we have excellent photographs in which these people can be seen riding turtles. In the same way, Robert Rattray noted the story, among the Ashanti, of pieces of wood on which people swim.¹⁷ Moreover, it has been confirmed for the natives of almost all the lagoons of Guinea and of Porto-Novo, Dahomey, in our own colonies.

Forceful movements: Pushing, pulling, lifting. Everyone knows what a back-heave is. It is an acquired technique, not just a series of movements.

Throwing, upward or along the ground and so on; the way of holding the object to be thrown between the fingers is noteworthy and undergoes great variation.

Holding. Holding between the teeth. Use of the toes, the armpit and so on.

This study of mechanical movements has gotten off to a good start. It is the formation of mechanical "pairs of elements" with the body. You will recall Franz Reuleaux's great theory about the formation of these pairs of elements.¹⁸ And here

the great name of Louis-Hubert Farabeuf will not be forgotten. As soon as I use my fist and, a fortiori, when a man had a "Chellean hand-axe" in his hand, these "pairs of elements" are formed.

This is the place for conjuring tricks, sleight of hand, athletics, acrobatics and so on. I must tell you that I had and still have a great admiration for jugglers and gymnasts.

Techniques of care for the body:

Rubbing, washing, soaping: This dossier is hardly a day old. The inventors of soap were not the ancients, they did not use it. It was the Gauls. On the other hand, independently, in the whole of Central America and the northeast of South America they soaped themselves with *quillaia* bark or "brazil," hence the name of the empire.

Care of the mouth: Coughing and spitting technique. Here is personal observation: a little girl did not know how to spit and this made every cold she had much worse. I made inquiries. In her father's village, and in her father's family in particular, in Berry, people do not know how to spit. I taught her to spit. I gave her four sous per spit. As she was saving up for a bicycle, she learned to spit. She is the first person in her family who knows how to spit.

Hygiene in the needs of nature: Here I could list innumerable facts for you.

Consumption techniques:

Eating: You will remember the story Harald Høffding repeats about the shah of Persia. The shah was the guest of Napoleon III and insisted on eating with his fingers. The emperor urged him to use a golden fork. "You don't know what a pleasure you are missing," the shah replied.

Absence and use of knives. An enormous factual error is made by W. J. McGee, who believed he had observed that the Seri (Indians of the Madeleine Peninsula, California), having no notion of knives, were the most primitive human beings. They did not have knives for eating, that is all.¹⁹

Drinking: It would be very useful to teach children to drink straight from the source, the fountain and so on, or from puddles of water and so on, to pour their drinks straight down their throats and so on.

Techniques of reproduction: Nothing is more technical than sexual positions. Very few writers have had the courage to discuss this question. We should be grateful to Friedrich Krauss for having published his great collection of *Anthropophyteia*.²⁰ Consider, for example, the technique of the sexual position consisting of this: the woman's legs hang by the knees from the man's elbows. It is a technique specific to the whole Pacific, from Australia to lower Peru, via the Behring Straits but very rare, so to speak, elsewhere.

There are all the techniques of normal and abnormal sexual acts. Contact of the sexual organs, mingling of breath, kisses and so on. Here sexual techniques and sexual morals are closely related.

Techniques of the care of the abnormal: Massages and so on. But let us move on.

General Considerations

General questions may perhaps be of more interest to you than these lists of techniques that I have paraded before you at rather too great a length.

What emerges very clearly from them is the fact that we are everywhere faced with physio-psycho-sociological assemblages of series of actions. These actions are more or less habitual and more or less ancient in the life of the individual and the history of the society.

Let us go further: One of the reasons why these series may more easily be assembled where the individual is concerned is precisely because they are assembled by and for social authority. This is how I taught, as a corporal, the reason for exercise in close order, marching four abreast and in step. Once I ordered the soldiers not to march in step drawn up in ranks and in two files, four abreast, and I obliged the squad to pass between two of the trees in the courtyard. They marched on top of one another. They realized that what they were being made to do was not so stupid. In group life as a whole, there is a kind of education of movements in close order.

In every society, everyone knows and has to know and learn what he has to do in all conditions. Naturally, social life is not exempt from stupidity and abnormalities. Error may be a principle. The French navy only recently began to teach its sailors to swim. Example and order, though, that is the principle. Hence, there is a strong

sociological causality in all these facts. I hope you will accept that I am right.

On the other hand, since these are movements of the body, this all presupposes an enormous biological and physiological apparatus. What is the breadth of the linking psychological cogwheel? I deliberately say cogwheel. A Comtian would say that there is no gap between the social and the biological. What I can tell you is that here I see psychological facts as connecting cogs and not as causes, except in moments of creation or reform. Cases of invention, of laying down principle, are rare. Cases of adaptation are an individual psychological matter. In general, though, they are governed by education, and at least by the circumstances of life in common, of contact.

On the other hand, there are two big questions on the agenda for psychology: the question of individual capacities, of technical orientation, and the question of salient features, of biotypology, which may concur with the brief investigations I have just made. The great advances of psychology in the last few years have not, in my opinion, been made vis-à-vis each of the so-called faculties of psychology, but in psychotechnics, and in the analysis of psychological "wholes."

Here the ethnologist comes up against the big questions of the psychic possibilities of such a race and such a biology of such a people. These are fundamental questions. I believe that here, too, whatever the appearances, we are dealing with biologico-sociological phenomena. I think that the basic education in all these techniques consists of an adaptation of the body to their use. For example, the great tests of stoicism, which constitute initiation for the majority of mankind, have as their aim to teach composure, resistance, seriousness, presence of mind, dignity and so on. The main utility I see in my erstwhile mountaineering was this education of my composure, which enabled me to sleep upright on the narrowest ledge overlooking an abyss.

I believe that this whole notion of the education of races selected on the basis of a determinate efficiency is one of the fundamental moments of history itself: education of the vision, education in walking, ascending, descending, running. It consists especially of education in composure. And the latter is, above all, a retarding mechanism, a mechanism inhibiting disorderly movements; this retardation subsequently allows a coordinated response of coordinated movements setting off in the direction of a chosen goal. This resistance to emotional seizure is something fundamental in social and mental life. It separates, it even classifies, the so-called

primitive societies according to whether they display more brutal, unreflected, unconscious reaction or, on the contrary, more isolated, precise actions governed by a clear consciousness.

It is thanks to society that there is an intervention of consciousness. It is not thanks to unconsciousness that there is an intervention of society. It is thanks to society that there is the certainty of pre-prepared movements, domination of the conscious over emotion and unconsciousness. It is right that the French navy is now to make it obligatory for its sailors to learn to swim.

From here we easily move on to much more philosophical problems.

I don't know whether you have paid attention to what my friend Marcel Granet has already pointed out in his great investigations into the techniques of Taoism, its body techniques, and breathing techniques in particular.²¹ I have studied Sanskrit texts of Yoga enough to know that the same things occur in India. I believe precisely that at the bottom of all our mystical states there are body techniques that we have not studied, which were studied fully in China and India, even in very remote periods. This socio-psycho-biological study should be made. I think that there are necessarily biological means of entering into "communication with God." Although, in the end, breath technique and so on is only the basic aspect in India and China, I believe this technique is much more widespread. At any rate, on this point we have the methods to understand a great many facts that we have not understood hitherto. I even believe that all the recent discoveries in reflex therapy deserve our attention, ours, the sociologists', as well as that of biologists and psychologists... much more competent than ourselves.

NOTES

1. Marcel Mauss, *Manuel d'ethnographie*, ed. Denise Paulme (Paris: Payot, 1947).

2. See Sydney Holland, "Swimming," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (10th ed. [supp. to the 9th], Edinburgh: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1902-1903), vol. 33, pp. 140-41 — TRANS.

3. Elsdon Best, *The Maori: Memoirs of the Polynesian Society*, 2 vols. (Wellington: Board of Maori Ethnological Research, 1924), vol. 1, p. 408 (cf. p. 135). [The latter reference seems to be a mistake of Mauss's; could he have been referring to vol. 1, p. 436, or vol. 2, p. 556, which refer to the gait of men and women respectively? — TRANS.]

a mistake of Mauss's; could he have been referring to vol. 1, p. 436, or vol. 2, p. 556, which refer to the gait of men and women respectively? — TRANS.]

4. Christian Gottlieb Teichmann and Clamor Wilhelm Schurmann, *Outlines of a Grammar, Vocabulary, and Phraseology, of the Aboriginal Language of South Australia. Spoken by the Natives in and for Some Distance around Adelaide* (Adelaide: published by the authors at the native location), xerographic facsimile, South Australian Facsimile Editions no. 39, 1962, p. 73, quoted in Edward John Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia and Overland from Adelaide to King George's Sound in the Years 1840-41*, 2 vols. (London: T. and W. Boone, 1845), vol. 2, p. 241.

5. Robert Hertz, "La Prééminence de la main droite: Etude sur la polarité religieuse," *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger* 68 (1909), pp. 553-80 [Hertz, "The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand: A Study in Religious Polarity," in *Death and the Right Hand*, trans. Rodney and Claudia Needham (London: Cohen and West, 1960), pp. 87-113, 155-60].

6. Even the latest editions of Hermann Heinrich Ploss, *Das Weib* (Bertel's editions, etc.) leave something to be desired on this question. [See Hermann Heinrich Ploss, *Das Weib in der Natur- und Völkerkunde, Anthropologische Studien*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Grieben, 1884); Ploss and Max Bartels, *Das Weib in der Natur- und Völkerkunde*, 2 vols. (8th ed, Leipzig: Grieben, 1905); and Ploss, Max Bartels and Paul Bartels, *Woman: An Historical, Gynecological and Anthropological Compendium*, 3 vols., ed. and trans. Eric John Dingwall (London: Heinemann, 1935) — TRANS.]

7. Walter Edmund Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines* (Brisbane: Government Printer, 1897), pp. 182-83; idem, "An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs of the Guiana Indians," *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Smithsonian Institution, 1916-17* (Washington, D.C., 1924), pp. 693-96.

8. Observations are beginning to be published on this point.

9. Ploss's large collection of facts, supplemented by Bartels, is satisfactory on this point. [See Ploss, Bartels and Bartels, *Woman*, vol. 3, p. 183 — TRANS.]

10. Fritz Graebner, *Ethnologie in die Kultur der Gegenwart*, ed. Paul Hinneberg (Leipzig: Teubner, 1923), pt. 3, sec. 5.

11. This is one of the useful observations in Graebner, *Ethnologie in die Kultur*.

12. Curt Sachs, *World History of the Dance*, trans. Bessie Schonberg (London: Allen and Unwin, 1935).

13. Curt Sachs uses the term "close dance" and "expanded dance" — TRANS.

14. Sachs, *World History of the Dance*, pp. 54-61.
15. I have just seen it in use at last (spring 1935).
16. Louis de Rougemont (pseudonym for Henri-Louis Grin), *The Adventures of Louis de Rougemont as Told by Himself* (London: Newnes, 1899), p. 86.
17. Robert Sutherland Rattray, *Ashanti* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), pp. 62-63, figs. 8-12, 15-16.
18. Franz Reuleaux, *The Kinematics of Machinery: Outlines of a Theory of Machines* (London: Macmillan, 1876), p. 43: "The kinetic elements of a machine are employed singly, but always in pairs, or in other words... the machine cannot so well be said to consist of elements as of pairs of elements (*Elementenpaare*). This particular manner of construction forms a distinguishing characteristic of the machine."
19. W. J. McGee, "The Seri Indians," *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Smithsonian Institute for the Year 1895-96* (Washington, D.C., 1898), p. 152. [In fact, the Seri live on the island of Tiburón and the adjacent mainland of Sonora Province, Mexico, on the Gulf of California — TRANS.]
20. Friedrich Saloman Krauss, ed. *Anthropophytica: Jahrbücher für folkloristische Erhebungen und Forschungen zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Geschlechtlichen Morale* (Leipzig: Deutsche Verlagaktiengesellschaft, 1904-1909; Ethnologischer Verlag, 1910-1913).
21. Marcel Granet, *Chinese Civilization* (New York: Knopf, 1930).

Johann Cruyff, 1975.

