

Structures, *Habitus*, Practices

Objectivism constitutes the social world as a spectacle offered to an observer who takes up a 'point of view' on the action and who, putting into the object the principles of his relation to the object, proceeds as if it were intended solely for knowledge and as if all the interactions within it were purely symbolic exchanges. This viewpoint is the one taken from high positions in the social structure, from which the social world is seen as a representation (as the word is used in idealist philosophy, but also as in painting) or a performance (in the theatrical or musical sense), and practices are seen as no more than the acting-out of roles, the playing of scores or the implementation of plans. The theory of practice as practice insists, contrary to positivist materialism, that the objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively recorded, and, contrary to intellectualist idealism, that the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus*, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions. It is possible to step down from the sovereign viewpoint from which objectivist idealism orders the world, as Marx demands in the *Theses on Feuerbach*, but without having to abandon to it the 'active aspect' of apprehension of the world by reducing knowledge to a mere recording. To do this, one has to situate oneself *within* 'real activity as such', that is, in the practical relation to the world, the pre-occupied, active presence in the world through which the world imposes its presence, with its urgencies, its things to be done and said, things made to be said, which directly govern words and deeds without ever unfolding as a spectacle. One has to escape from the realism of the structure, to which objectivism, a necessary stage in breaking with primary experience and constructing the objective relationships, necessarily leads when it hypostatizes these relations by treating them as realities already constituted outside of the history of the group – without falling back into subjectivism, which is quite incapable of giving an account of the necessity of the social world. To do this, one has to return to practice, the site of the dialectic of the *opus operatum* and the *modus operandi*; of the objectified products and the incorporated products of historical practice; of structures and *habitus*.

The bringing to light of the presuppositions inherent in objectivist construction has paradoxically been delayed by the efforts of all those who, in linguistics as in anthropology, have sought to 'correct' the structuralist model by appealing to 'context' or 'situation' to account for variations, exceptions and accidents (instead of making them simple variants, absorbed into the structure, as the structuralists do). They have thus avoided a radical questioning of the objectivist mode of thought, when, that is, they have not simply fallen back on to the free choice of a rootless, unattached, pure subject. Thus, the method known as 'situational analysis', which consists of 'observing people in a variety of social situations' in order to determine 'the way in which individuals are able to exercise choices within the limits of a specified social structure' (Gluckman 1961; cf. also Van Velsen 1964), remains locked within the framework of the rule and the exception, which Edmund Leach (often invoked by the exponents of this method) spells out explicitly: 'I postulate that structural systems in which all avenues of social action are narrowly institutionalized are impossible. In all viable systems, there must be an area where the individual is free to make choices so as to manipulate the system to his advantage' (Leach 1962: 133).

The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor.¹

It is, of course, never ruled out that the responses of the *habitus* may be accompanied by a strategic calculation tending to perform in a conscious mode the operation that the *habitus* performs quite differently, namely an estimation of chances presupposing transformation of the past effect into an expected objective. But these responses are first defined, without any calculation, in relation to objective potentialities, immediately inscribed in the present, things to do or not to do, things to say or not to say, in relation to a probable, 'upcoming' future (*un à venir*), which – in contrast to the future seen as 'absolute possibility' (*absolute Möglichkeit*) in Hegel's (or Sartre's) sense, projected by the pure project of a 'negative freedom' – puts itself forward with an urgency and a claim to existence that excludes all deliberation. Stimuli do not exist for practice in their objective truth, as conditional, conventional triggers, acting only on condition that they encounter agents conditioned to recognize them.² The practical world that is constituted in the relationship with the *habitus*, acting as a system of cognitive and motivating structures, is a world of already realized ends – procedures to follow, paths to take – and of objects endowed with a 'permanent teleological character', in Husserl's phrase, tools or institutions. This is because the regularities inherent in an arbitrary condition ('arbitrary' in Saussure's and Mauss's sense) tend to appear as necessary, even natural, since they are the basis of the schemes of perception and appreciation

through which they are apprehended.

If a very close correlation is regularly observed between the scientifically constructed objective probabilities (for example, the chances of access to a particular good) and agents' subjective aspirations ('motivations' and 'needs'), this is not because agents consciously adjust their aspirations to an exact evaluation of their chances of success, like a gambler organizing his stakes on the basis of perfect information about his chances of winning. In reality, the dispositions durably inculcated by the possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions inscribed in the objective conditions (which science apprehends through statistical regularities such as the probabilities objectively attached to a group or class) generate dispositions objectively compatible with these conditions and in a sense pre-adapted to their demands. The most improbable practices are therefore excluded, as unthinkable, by a kind of immediate submission to order that inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway denied and to will the inevitable. The very conditions of production of the *habitus*, a virtue made of necessity, mean that the anticipations it generates tend to ignore the restriction to which the validity of calculation of probabilities is subordinated, namely that the experimental conditions should not have been modified. Unlike scientific estimations, which are corrected after each experiment according to rigorous rules of calculation, the anticipations of the *habitus*, practical hypotheses based on past experience, give disproportionate weight to early experiences. Through the economic and social necessity that they bring to bear on the relatively autonomous world of the domestic economy and family relations, or more precisely, through the specifically familial manifestations of this external necessity (forms of the division of labour between the sexes, household objects, modes of consumption, parent-child relations, etc.), the structures characterizing a determinate class of conditions of existence produce the structures of the *habitus*, which in their turn are the basis of the perception and appreciation of all subsequent experiences.

The *habitus*, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms.³ This system of dispositions – a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation in similarly structured practices, an internal law through which the law of external necessities, irreducible to immediate constraints, is constantly exerted – is the principle of the continuity and regularity which objectivism sees in social practices without being able to account for it; and also of the regulated transformations that cannot be explained either by the extrinsic, instantaneous determinisms of mechanistic sociology or by the purely internal but equally instantaneous determination of spontaneist subjectivism. Overriding the spurious opposition between the forces inscribed in an earlier state of the system, outside the

body, and the internal forces arising instantaneously as motivations springing from free will, the internal dispositions – the internalization of externality – enable the external forces to exert themselves, but in accordance with the specific logic of the organisms in which they are incorporated, i.e. in a durable, systematic and non-mechanical way. As an acquired system of generative schemes, the *habitus* makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production – and only those. Through the *habitus*, the structure of which it is the product governs practice, not along the paths of a mechanical determinism, but within the constraints and limits initially set on its inventions. This infinite yet strictly limited generative capacity is difficult to understand only so long as one remains locked in the usual antinomies – which the concept of the *habitus* aims to transcend – of determinism and freedom, conditioning and creativity, consciousness and the unconscious, or the individual and society. Because the *habitus* is an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it provides is as remote from creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning.

Nothing is more misleading than the illusion created by hindsight in which all the traces of a life, such as the works of an artist or the events at a biography, appear as the realization of an essence that seems to pre-exist them. Just as a mature artistic style is not contained, like a seed, in an original inspiration but is continuously defined and redefined in the dialectic between the objectifying intention and the already objectified intention, so too the unity of meaning which, after the event, may seem to have preceded the acts and works announcing the final significance, retrospectively transforming the various stages of the temporal series into mere preparatory sketches, is constituted through the confrontation between questions that only exist in and for a mind armed with a particular type of schemes and the solutions obtained through application of these same schemes. The genesis of a system of works or practices generated by the same *habitus* (or homologous *habitus*, such as those that underlie the unity of the life-style of a group or a class) cannot be described either as the autonomous development of a unique and always self-identical essence, or as a continuous creation of novelty, because it arises from the necessary yet unpredictable confrontation between the *habitus* and an event that can exercise a pertinent incitement on the *habitus* only if the latter snatches it from the contingency of the accidental and constitutes it as a problem by applying to it the very principles of its solution; and also because the *habitus*, like every 'art of inventing', is what makes it possible to produce an infinite number of practices that are relatively unpredictable (like the corresponding situations) but also limited in their diversity. In short, being the product of a particular class of objective regularities, the *habitus* tends to generate all the 'reasonable', 'common-sense',⁴ behaviours (and only these) which are possible within the limits of these regularities, and which

are likely to be positively sanctioned because they are objectively adjusted to the logic characteristic of a particular field, whose objective future they anticipate. At the same time, 'without violence, art or argument', it tends to exclude all 'extravagances' ('not for the likes of us'), that is, all the behaviours that would be negatively sanctioned because they are incompatible with the objective conditions.

Because they tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the conditions in which their generative principle was produced while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures that constitute the *habitus*, practices cannot be deduced either from the present conditions which may seem to have provoked them or from the past conditions which have produced the *habitus*, the durable principle of their production. They can therefore only be accounted for by relating the social conditions in which the *habitus* that generated them was constituted, to the social conditions in which it is implemented, that is, through the scientific work of performing the interrelationship of these two states of the social world that the *habitus* performs, while concealing it, in and through practice. The 'unconscious', which enables one to dispense with this interrelating, is never anything other than the forgetting of history which history itself produces by realizing the objective structures that it generates in the quasi-natures of *habitus*. As Durkheim (1977: 11) puts it:

'In each one of us, in differing degrees, is contained the person we were yesterday, and indeed, in the nature of things it is even true that our past *personae* predominate in us, since the present is necessarily insignificant when compared with the long period of the past because of which we have emerged in the form we have today. It is just that we don't directly feel the influence of these past selves precisely because they are so deeply rooted within us. They constitute the unconscious part of ourselves. Consequently we have a strong tendency not to recognize their existence and to ignore their legitimate demands. By contrast, with the most recent acquisitions of civilization we are vividly aware of them just because they are recent and consequently have not had time to be assimilated into our collective unconscious.'

The *habitus* – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present. This autonomy is that of the past, enacted and acting, which, functioning as accumulated capital, produces history on the basis of history and so ensures the permanence in change that makes the individual agent a world within the world. The *habitus* is a spontaneity without consciousness or will, opposed as much to the mechanical necessity of things without history in mechanistic theories as it is to the reflexive freedom of subjects 'without inertia' in rationalist theories.

Thus the dualistic vision that recognizes only the self-transparent act of consciousness or the externally determined thing has to give way to the

real logic of action, which brings together two objectifications of history, objectification in bodies and objectification in institutions or, which amounts to the same thing, two states of capital, objectified and incorporated, through which a distance is set up from necessity and its urgencies. This logic is seen in paradigmatic form in the dialectic of expressive dispositions and instituted means of expression (morphological, syntactic and lexical instruments, literary genres, etc.) which is observed in the intentionless invention of regulated improvisation. Endlessly overtaken by his own words, with which he maintains a relation of 'carry and be carried', as Nicolai Hartmann put it, the virtuoso finds in his discourse the triggers for his discourse, which goes along like a train laying its own rails (Ruyer 1966: 136). In other words, being produced by a *modus operandi* which is not consciously mastered, the discourse contains an 'objective intention', as the Scholastics put it, which outruns the conscious intentions of its apparent author and constantly offers new pertinent stimuli to the *modus operandi* of which it is the product and which functions as a kind of 'spiritual automaton'. If witticisms strike as much by their unpredictability as by their retrospective necessity, the reason is that the *trouvaille* that brings to light long buried resources presupposes a *habitus* that so perfectly possesses the objectively available means of expression that it is possessed by them, so much so that it asserts its freedom from them by realizing the rarest of the possibilities that they necessarily imply. The dialectic of the meaning of the language and the 'sayings of the tribe' is a particular and particularly significant case of the dialectic between *habitus* and institutions, that is, between two modes of objectification of past history, in which there is constantly created a history that inevitably appears, like witticisms, as both original and inevitable.

This durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations is a practical sense which reactivates the sense objectified in institutions. Produced by the work of inculcation and appropriation that is needed in order for objective structures, the products of collective history, to be reproduced in the form of the durable, adjusted dispositions that are the condition of their functioning, the *habitus*, which is constituted in the course of an individual history, imposing its particular logic on incorporation, and through which agents partake of the history objectified in institutions, is what makes it possible to inhabit institutions, to appropriate them practically, and so to keep them in activity, continuously pulling them from the state of dead letters, reviving the sense deposited in them, but at the same time imposing the revisions and transformations that reactivation entails. Or rather, the *habitus* is what enables the institution to attain full realization: it is through the capacity for incorporation, which exploits the body's readiness to take seriously the performative magic of the social, that the king, the banker or the priest are hereditary monarchy, financial capitalism or the Church made flesh. Property appropriates its owner, embodying itself in the form of a structure generating practices perfectly conforming with its logic and its demands. If one is justified in saying, with Marx, that 'the lord of an entailed estate, the first-born son, belongs

to the land', that 'it inherits him', or that the 'persons' of capitalists are the 'personification' of capital, this is because the purely social and quasi-magical process of socialization, which is inaugurated by the act of marking that institutes an individual as an eldest son, an heir, a successor, a Christian, or simply as a man (as opposed to a woman), with all the corresponding privileges and obligations, and which is prolonged, strengthened and confirmed by social treatments that tend to transform instituted difference into natural distinction, produces quite real effects, durably inscribed in the body and in belief. An institution, even an economy, is complete and fully viable only if it is durably objectified not only in things, that is, in the logic, transcending individual agents, of a particular field, but also in bodies, in durable dispositions to recognize and comply with the demands immanent in the field.

In so far – and only in so far – as *habitus* are the incorporation of the same history, or more concretely, of the same history objectified in *habitus* and structures, the practices they generate are mutually intelligible and immediately adjusted to the structures, and also objectively concerted and endowed with an objective meaning that is at once unitary and systematic, transcending subjective intentions and conscious projects, whether individual or collective. One of the fundamental effects of the harmony between practical sense and objectified meaning (*sens*) is the production of a common-sense world, whose immediate self-evidence is accompanied by the objectivity provided by consensus on the meaning of practices and the world, in other words the harmonization of the agents' experiences and the constant reinforcement each of them receives from expression – individual or collective (in festivals, for example), improvised or programmed (commonplaces, sayings) – of similar or identical experiences.

The homogeneity of *habitus* that is observed within the limits of a class of conditions of existence and social conditionings is what causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted. The *habitus* makes questions of intention superfluous, not only in the production but also in the deciphering of practices and works.⁵ Automatic and impersonal, significant without a signifying intention, ordinary practices lend themselves to an understanding that is no less automatic and impersonal. The picking up of the objective intention they express requires neither 'reactivation' of the 'lived' intention of their originator, nor the 'intentional transfer into the Other' cherished by the phenomenologists and all advocates of a 'participationist' conception of history or sociology, nor tacit or explicit inquiry ('What do you *mean*?') as to other people's intentions. 'Communciation of consciousnesses' presupposes community of 'unconsciousnesses' (that is, of linguistic and cultural competences). Deciphering the objective intention of practices and works has nothing to do with 'reproduction' (*Nachbildung*, as the early Dilthey puts it) of lived experiences and the unnecessary and uncertain reconstitution of an 'intention' which is not their real origin.

The objective homogenizing of group or class *habitus* that results from homogeneity of conditions of existence is what enables practices to be objectively harmonized without any calculation or conscious reference to a norm and mutually adjusted in the absence of any direct interaction or,

a fortiori, explicit co-ordination. The interaction itself owes its form to the objective structures that have produced the dispositions of the interacting agents, which continue to assign them their relative positions in the interaction and elsewhere.⁶ ‘Imagine’, Leibniz suggests (1866c: 548), ‘two clocks or watches in perfect agreement as to the time. This may occur in one of three ways. The first consists in mutual influence; the second is to appoint a skilful workman to correct them and synchronize constantly; the third is to construct these two clocks with such art and precision that one can be assured of their subsequent agreement.’ So long as one ignores the true principle of the conductorless orchestration which gives regularity, unity and systematicity to practices even in the absence of any spontaneous or imposed organization of individual projects, one is condemned to the naive artificialism that recognizes no other unifying principle than conscious co-ordination.⁷ The practices of the members of the same group or, in a differentiated society, the same class, are always more and better harmonized than the agents know or wish, because, as Leibniz again says, ‘following only (his) own laws’, each ‘nonetheless agrees with the other’. The habitus is precisely this immanent law, *lex insita*, inscribed in bodies by identical histories, which is the precondition not only for the co-ordination of practices but also for practices of co-ordination.⁸ The corrections and adjustments the agents themselves consciously carry out presuppose mastery of a common code; and undertakings of collective mobilization cannot succeed without a minimum of concordance between the *habitus* of the mobilizing agents (prophet, leader, etc.) and the dispositions of those who recognize themselves in their practices or words, and, above all, without the inclination towards grouping that springs from the spontaneous orchestration of dispositions.

It is certain that every effort at mobilization aimed at organizing collective action has to reckon with the dialectic of dispositions and occasions that takes place in every agent, whether he mobilizes or is mobilized (the hysteresis of *habitus* is doubtless one explanation of the structural lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them which is the cause of missed opportunities and, in particular, of the frequently observed incapacity to think historical crises in categories of perception and thought other than those of the past, however revolutionary). It is also certain that it must take account of the objective orchestration established among dispositions that are objectively co-ordinated because they are ordered by more or less identical objective necessities. It is, however, extremely dangerous to conceive collective action by analogy with individual action, ignoring all that the former owes to the relatively autonomous logic of the institutions of mobilization (with their own history, their specific organization, etc.) and to the situations, institutionalized or not, in which it occurs.

Sociology treats as identical all biological individuals who, being the products of the same objective conditions, have the same *habitus*. A social class (in-itself) – a class of identical or similar conditions of existence and conditionings – is at the same time a class of biological individuals having the same *habitus*, understood as a system of dispositions common to all products of the same conditionings. Though it is impossible for all (or

even two) members of the same class to have had the same experiences, in the same order, it is certain that each member of the same class is more likely than any member of another class to have been confronted with the situations most frequent for members of that class. Through the always convergent experiences that give a social environment its physiognomy, with its 'closed doors', 'dead ends' and 'limited prospects', the objective structures that sociology apprehends in the form of probabilities of access to goods, services and powers, inculcate the 'art of assessing likelihoods', as Leibniz put it, of anticipating the objective future, in short, the 'sense of reality', or realities, which is perhaps the best-concealed principle of their efficacy.

To define the relationship between class *habitus* and individual *habitus* (which is inseparable from the organic individuality that is immediately given to immediate perception – *intuitus personae* – and socially designated and recognized – name, legal identity, etc.), class (or group) *habitus*, that is, the individual *habitus* in so far as it expresses or reflects the class (or group), could be regarded as a subjective but non-individual system of internalized structures, common schemes of perception, conception and action, which are the precondition of all objectification and apperception; and the objective co-ordination of practices and the sharing of a world-view could be founded on the perfect impersonality and interchangeability of singular practices and views. But this would amount to regarding all the practices or representations produced in accordance with identical schemes as impersonal and interchangeable, like individual intuitions of space which, according to Kant, reflect none of the particularities of the empirical ego. In fact, the singular *habitus* of members of the same class are united in a relationship of homology, that is, of diversity within homogeneity reflecting the diversity within homogeneity characteristic of their social conditions of production. Each individual system of dispositions is a structural variant of the others, expressing the singularity of its position within the class and its trajectory. 'Personal' style, the particular stamp marking all the products of the same *habitus*, whether practices or works, is never more than a deviation in relation to the style of a period or class, so that it relates back to the common style not only by its conformity – like Phidias, who, for Hegel, had no 'manner' – but also by the difference that makes the 'manner'.

The principle of the differences between individual *habitus* lies in the singularity of their social trajectories, to which there correspond series of chronologically ordered determinations that are mutually irreducible to one another. The *habitus* which, at every moment, structures new experiences in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences, which are modified by the new experiences within the limits defined by their power of selection, brings about a unique integration, dominated by the earliest experiences, of the experiences statistically common to members of the same class.⁹ Early experiences have particular weight because the *habitus* tends to ensure its own constancy and its defence against change through the selection it makes within new information by rejecting

information capable of calling into question its accumulated information, if exposed to it accidentally or by force, and especially by avoiding exposure to such information. One only has to think, for example, of homogamy, the paradigm of all the 'choices' through which the *habitus* tends to favour experiences likely to reinforce it (or the empirically confirmed fact that people tend to talk about politics with those who have the same opinions). Through the systematic 'choices' it makes among the places, events and people that might be frequented, the *habitus* tends to protect itself from crises and critical challenges by providing itself with a milieu to which it is as pre-adapted as possible, that is, a relatively constant universe of situations tending to reinforce its dispositions by offering the market most favourable to its products. And once again it is the most paradoxical property of the *habitus*, the unchosen principle of all 'choices', that yields the solution to the paradox of the information needed in order to avoid information. The schemes of perception and appreciation of the *habitus* which are the basis of all the avoidance strategies are largely the product of a non-conscious, unwilled avoidance, whether it results automatically from the conditions of existence (for example, spatial segregation) or has been produced by a strategic intention (such as avoidance of 'bad company' or 'unsuitable books') originating from adults themselves formed in the same conditions.

Even when they look like the realization of explicit ends, the strategies produced by the *habitus* and enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and constantly changing situations are only apparently determined by the future. If they seem to be oriented by anticipation of their own consequences, thereby encouraging the finalist illusion, this is because, always tending to reproduce the objective structures that produced them, they are determined by the past conditions of production of their principle of production, that is, by the already realized outcome of identical or interchangeable past practices, which coincides with their own outcome only to the extent that the structures within which they function are identical to or homologous with the objective structures of which they are the product. Thus, for example, in the interaction between two agents or groups of agents endowed with the same *habitus* (say A and B), everything takes place as if the actions of each of them (say a_1 for A) were organized by reference to the reactions which they call forth from any agent possessing the same *habitus* (say b_1 for B). They therefore objectively imply anticipation of the reaction which these reactions in turn call forth (a_2 , A's reaction to b_1). But the teleological description, the only one appropriate to a 'rational actor' possessing perfect information as to the preferences and competences of the other actors, in which each action has the purpose of making possible the reaction to the reaction it induces (individual A performs an action a_1 , a gift for example, in order to make individual B produce action b_1 , so that he can then perform action a_2 , a stepped-up gift), is quite as naive as the mechanistic description that presents the action and the riposte as so many steps in a sequence of programmed actions produced by a mechanical apparatus.

To have an idea of the difficulties that would be encountered by a mechanistic theory of practice as mechanical reaction, directly determined by the antecedent conditions and entirely reducible to the mechanical functioning of pre-established devices – which would have to be assumed to exist in infinite number, like the chance configurations of stimuli capable of triggering them from outside – one only has to mention the grandiose, desperate undertaking of the anthropologist, fired with positivist ardour, who recorded 480 elementary units of behaviour in 20 minutes' observation of his wife in the kitchen: 'Here we confront the distressing fact that the sample episode chain under analysis is a fragment of a larger segment of behavior which in the complete record contains some 480 separate episodes. Moreover, it took only twenty minutes for these 480 behavior stream events to occur. If my wife's rate of behavior is roughly representative of that of other actors, we must be prepared to deal with an inventory of episodes produced at the rate of some 20,000 per sixteen-hour day per actor . . . In a population consisting of several hundred actor-types, the number of different episodes in the total repertory must amount to many millions in the course of an annual cycle' (Harris 1964: 74–5).

The *habitus* contains the solution to the paradoxes of objective meaning without subjective intention. It is the source of these strings of 'moves' which are objectively organized as strategies without being the product of a genuine strategic intention – which would presuppose at least that they be apprehended as one among other possible strategies.¹⁰ If each stage in the sequence of ordered and oriented actions that constitute objective strategies can appear to be determined by anticipation of the future, and in particular, of its own consequences (which is what justifies the use of the concept of strategy), it is because the practices that are generated by the *habitus* and are governed by the past conditions of production of their generative principle are adapted in advance to the objective conditions whenever the conditions in which the *habitus* functions have remained identical, or similar, to the conditions in which it was constituted. Perfectly and immediately successful adjustment to the objective conditions provides the most complete illusion of finality, or – which amounts to the same thing – of self-regulating mechanism.

The presence of the past in this kind of false anticipation of the future performed by the *habitus* is, paradoxically, most clearly seen when the sense of the probable future is belied and when dispositions ill-adjusted to the objective chances because of a hysteresis effect (Marx's favourite example of this was Don Quixote) are negatively sanctioned because the environment they actually encounter is too different from the one to which they are objectively adjusted.¹¹ In fact the persistence of the effects of primary conditioning, in the form of the *habitus*, accounts equally well for cases in which dispositions function out of phase and practices are objectively ill-adapted to the present conditions because they are objectively adjusted to conditions that no longer obtain. The tendency of groups to persist in their ways, due *inter alia* to the fact that they are composed of individuals with durable dispositions that can outlive the economic and social conditions in which they were produced, can be the source of misadaptation as well as adaptation, revolt as well as resignation.

One only has to consider other possible forms of the relationship between dispositions and conditions to see that the pre-adjustment of the *habitus* to the objective conditions is a 'particular case of the possible' and so avoid unconsciously universalizing the model of the near-circular relationship of near-perfect reproduction, which is completely valid only when the conditions of production of the *habitus* and the conditions of its functioning are identical or homothetic. In this particular case, the dispositions durably inculcated by the objective conditions and by a pedagogic action that is tendentially adjusted to these conditions, tend to generate practices objectively compatible with these conditions and expectations pre-adapted to their objective demands (*amor fati*) (for some psychologists' attempts at direct verification of this relationship, see Brunswik 1949; Preston and Barrata 1948; Attneave 1953). As a consequence, they tend, without any rational calculation or conscious estimation of the chances of success, to ensure immediate correspondence between the *a priori* or *ex ante* probability conferred on an event (whether or not accompanied by subjective experiences such as hopes, expectation, fears, etc.) and the *a posteriori* or *ex post* probability that can be established on the basis of past experience. They thus make it possible to understand why economic models based on the (tacit) premise of a 'relationship of intelligible causality', as Max Weber (1922) calls it, between generic ('typical') chances 'objectively existing as an average' and 'subjective expectations', or, for example, between investment or the propensity to invest and the rate of return expected or really obtained in the past, fairly exactly account for practices which do not arise from knowledge of the objective chances.

By pointing out that rational action, 'judiciously' oriented according to what is 'objectively valid' (1922), is what 'would have happened if the actors had had knowledge of all the circumstances and all the participants' intentions' (1968: 6), that is, of what is 'valid in the eyes of the scientist', who alone is able to calculate the system of objective chances to which perfectly informed action would have to be adjusted, Weber shows clearly that the pure model of rational action cannot be regarded as an anthropological description of practice. This is not only because real agents only very exceptionally possess the complete information, and the skill to appreciate it, that rational action would presuppose. Apart from rare cases which bring together the economic and cultural conditions for rational action oriented by knowledge of the profits that can be obtained in the different markets, practices depend not on the average chances of profit, an abstract and unreal notion, but on the specific chances that a singular agent or class of agents possesses by virtue of its capital, this being understood, in this respect, as a means of appropriation of the chances theoretically available to all.

Economic theory which acknowledges only the rational 'responses' of an indeterminate, interchangeable agent to 'potential opportunities', or more precisely to average chances (like the 'average rates of profit' offered by the different markets), converts the immanent law of the economy into a universal norm of proper economic behaviour. In so doing, it conceals the fact that the 'rational'

habitus which is the precondition for appropriate economic behaviour is the product of particular economic condition, the one defined by possession of the economic and cultural capital required in order to seize the 'potential opportunities' theoretically available to all; and also that the same dispositions, by adapting the economically most deprived to the specific condition of which they are the product and thereby helping to make their adaptation to the generic demands of the economic cosmos (as regards calculation, forecasting, etc.) lead them to accept the negative sanctions resulting from this lack of adaptation, that is, their deprivation. In short, the art of estimating and seizing chances, the capacity to anticipate the future by a kind of practical induction or even to take a calculated gamble on the possible against the probable, are dispositions that can only be acquired in certain social conditions, that is, certain social conditions. Like the entrepreneurial spirit or the propensity to invest, economic information is a function of one's power over the economy. This is, on the one hand, because the propensity to acquire it depends on the chances of using it successfully, and the chances of acquiring it depend on the chances of successfully using it; and also because economic competence, like all competence (linguistic, political, etc.), far from being a simple technical capacity acquired in certain conditions, is a power tacitly conferred on those who have power over the economy or (as the very ambiguity of the word 'competence' indicates) an attribute of status.

Only in imaginary experience (in the folk tale, for example), which neutralizes the sense of social realities, does the social world take the form of a universe of possibles equally possible for any possible subject. Agents shape their aspirations according to concrete indices of the accessible and the inaccessible, of what is and is not 'for us', a division as fundamental and as fundamentally recognized as that between the sacred and the profane. The pre-emptive rights on the future that are defined by law and by the monopolistic right to certain possibles that it confers are merely the explicitly guaranteed form of the whole set of appropriated chances through which the power relations of the present project themselves into the future, from where they govern present dispositions, especially those towards the future. In fact, a given agent's practical relation to the future, which governs his present practice, is defined in the relationship between, on the one hand, his *habitus* with its temporal structures and dispositions towards the future, constituted in the course of a particular relationship to a particular universe of probabilities, and on the other hand a certain state of the chances objectively offered to him by the social world. The relation to what is possible is a relation to power; and the sense of the probable future is constituted in the prolonged relationship with a world structured according to the categories of the possible (for us) and the impossible (for us), of what is appropriated in advance by and for others and what one can reasonably expect for oneself. The *habitus* is the principle of a selective perception of the indices tending to confirm and reinforce it rather than transform it, a matrix generating responses adapted in advance to all objective conditions identical to or homologous with the (past) conditions of its production; it adjusts itself to a probable future which it anticipates and helps to bring about because it reads it directly in the present of the presumed world, the only one it can ever know.¹² It is thus

the basis of what Marx (1975: 378) calls 'effective demand' (as opposed to 'demand without effect', based on need and desire), a realistic relation to what is possible, founded on and therefore limited by power. This disposition, always marked by its (social) conditions of acquisition and realization, tends to adjust to the objective chances of satisfying need or desire, inclining agents to 'cut their coats according to their cloth', and so to become the accomplices of the processes that tend to make the probable a reality.

Belief and the Body

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.¹ 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.²

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).³ 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.⁴

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.⁵

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.⁶ 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, curtseying, 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.⁷

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.⁸ 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 redundance, 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.⁹

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;¹⁰ 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.'¹¹ 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.¹² 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'.¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

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.