



TECHNIQUES OF THE BODY

Body, Health and Society



CLASS OUTLINE

- Marcel Mauss
- Reading reflections
- Discussion



SYNOPSIS FEEDBACK

- precision (name of the author)
- length



TECHNIQUES OF THE BODY READING:

MARCEL MAUSS

- How was the text for reading?

Situating the reading

- time
- space
- methodology
- mainstream? (p. 82 - 83)

- What is the text about?

- What is the main argument?

- Questions/ Comments?

MARCEL MAUSS (1872-1950)

- French sociologist and anthropologist
- regarded for a founder of French Social Anthropology
 - since 1901 École pratique des hautes études „history of religion and primitive nations“
 - founder of a French Sociologist Institute (1924) and Institute of Ethnology (1926)
 - since 1931 professor of sociology - College de France
 - published and leaded L'Année Sociologique
- background, work
 - Student of Durkheim, teacher of Lévi-Strauss
 - No own fieldwork – build on secondary data
 - **Through the description and classification diverse societies and definition of theirs structural similarities the aim was**
 - **TO UNDERSTAND THE GENERAL DIMENSION OF SOCIAL LIFE**
 - **The Gift** (Essai sur le don, 1924)



GUIDING QUESTIONS

MAUSS, MARCEL (2007) [1935]. TECHNIQUES OF THE BODY. *IN FARQUHAR, J. AND LOCK, M. BEYOND THE BODY PROPER*, PP. 50-68.

- What are techniques of the body?
- How they are acquired?
- Are all the ways of handling body techniques? Which are not and how are they acquired?
- Are they conscious / unconscious?
- What is habitus?

TECHNIQUES OF THE BODY

- techniques vs. tools
- techniques as one type of action (str. 83, 1.)
- ways people use their bodies differently in different societies according to tradition
- How people know, how to use their bodies? – how to be a good man (str. 85, 3.odst.)
- usage of the body is coded culturally
- habitus (80)
 - social character of habitus
 - habit / acquired / ability
 - key in social action/ socially coded
- transmission
 - biggest influence – education = imitation (92, 5.)
 - Of who? (92, 3.)
- body techniques classification

BODY ACCORDING TO MAUSS?

- „total man“ - connection of psychological, biological and social dimension of being (77; 81; 83 – 2.)
- = first and most natural instrument of a man (83)
- conscious before unconscious (83, 3.; 93., 2.)
- social character of handling the body (93., 2.)

CLASSIFICATION

- gender
- age
- biographical list
 - Obstetrics
 - Infancy
 - Adolescence
 - Adult life
 - Sleep
 - Rest
 - Activities
 - Walking
 - Running
 - Dancing
 - Complex active techniques
 - Jumping
 - Climbing
 - Descent
 - Swimming
 - Forceful movements
 - Techniques of care for the body
 - Consumption techniques
 - Techniques of reproduction

APPLICATION

Marianne Wex

‘LET’S TAKE BACK OUR SPACE’

“Female” and “Male” Body Language as a Result of Patriarchal Structures



with 2037 photographs

In the second part of the book:

Man's struggle against womanpower and the effects upon body language throughout the course of history.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14

GENDERED WAYS OF SITTING?

Agnes



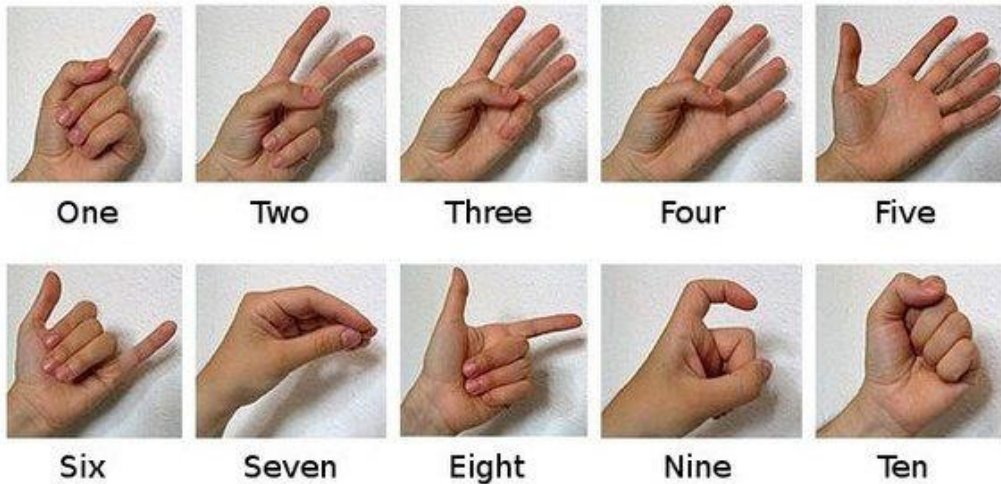
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Agnes

BEI UNZ FELDSTÄNDEN

CULTURALLY DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORaBxH_MKQI



CLOTHING



The answer goes back to a very fat king: King Edward VII.

The story of King Edward VII (who ruled from 1901 to 1910) is often dismissed as a myth — but it's completely true.

As fashion blogs and magazines will tell you, there's a story that King Edward VII, back when he was the Prince of Wales and suits were becoming in vogue, got too fat for his waistcoat so he stopped buttoning the bottom button to make it fit better.

Out of respect for him, the British court — and, eventually, everyone else in England and the British colonies — stopped buttoning their bottom buttons, too.

The "Edwardian theory," isn't always taken seriously. It sounds too silly to be true. But historians of British fashion consider it fact, if a little muddled over the years.

The truth is, Edward VII set the trend for unbuttoning the bottom button on waistcoats as well as the bottom button on suit jackets, but for two very different reasons.

(<http://www.businessinsider.com/suit-button-rules-bottom-top-2017-3>)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why are people handling their bodies the way they are?
- What is the relationship between individual bodies and the society?
- Can you think about a competing theory explaining this phenomenon?
- Can you find some other culturally specific techniques of the body among people present in class?

CRITIQUE

- Change?

- „There is any such thing as natural behaviour“?

- ➔ • formulation which still draws a line between nature vs culture

- Maybe we do not assume anymore, that bodies are for sociality impenetrable, but to think they are social only is similarly extreme position.

- Meaning?

NEXT CLASS

The two bodies

- Compulsory reading
 - Douglas, M. (2004) [1970]. The two bodies. In Douglas, M., *Natural symbols*, pp. 72-91. Taylor & Francis e-Library.
- Recommended reading
 - Douglas, M. (2007) [1970]. The two bodies, pp. 78-81. In Fraser, M., Greco, M., *The body: A reader*. Routledge, Oxon, New York.
- Guiding questions
 - Which two bodies are at stake?
 - What is the relationship between them?
 - What kind of role plays symbols in this relationship?
 - What kind of role plays control in it?
 - What is the role of understanding and experience in this process?
 - What is the purity rule?
- Discussion questions
 - Can you think about more examples of these two bodies relationship expression?
 - In relation to gender, beauty, eating, illness, health, sexual behaviour, death?
 - What is the difference between the approaches to body-society relationships of Mauss and Douglas?

LITERATURE

- Mauss, Marcel (2007) [1935]. Techniques of the body. *In Farquhar, J. and Lock, M. Beyond the Body Proper*, pp. 50-68.
- Kaščák, O., Obertová, Z. (2012). Školská etnografia tela, jej východiska, podoby a potenciály. *Český lid*, 99 (1), pp. 1-22.