

Body Culture and Conflict of Identities: Variations for Dialogue

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Abstract

The confrontations between contemporary societies have found their modern expression in the euphemized and regulated cultural object that is sport. In the ideological apparatus of the state, sport is given stakes and tournaments that the media overexposes, globalizes, and disseminates. Meanwhile, if sport practices represent a global social fact in which all institutions are expressed at one time and totally, we could wonder what would be the contribution of people, individuals and persons at the different scales of variation within society. In other words, under which conditions and by what means could body culture appropriation turn conflict between cultural, individual and inner identities into dialogue so as to facilitate mutual comprehension and shared contemporary humanistic values? We will illustrate this discourse with examples of traditional practices taken from karate and swimming as reference.

Keywords: global social fact, sport, body culture, identities, scale variations

要旨

現代社会間に派生している諸対立が婉曲的で統制の取れた形で展開されている場が、スポーツである。しかし、人間的な価値の共有に向け、スポーツは何をもたらすのか。また、その実現にはどのような条件が必要になるのか。空手と水泳を例に、この点について紹介したい。

キーワード：グローバルな社会的事実；スポーツ；体の文化；素性；
変動の体系

Introduction

War and conflict are omnipresent in the news and affect human and state security on all continents. This violence takes multiple forms in an ever more globalized world that is governed by the law of the strongest. In this world, more or less political powers intervene so as to establish, sometimes against the citizen's will or interests, the domination of the most powerful. Thus conflict designates the game play of opposite interests that leads to armed conflict.

Sport is born from a kind of 'war by procuration', the Agon games as practiced in the Greek cities of antiquity. Elias (1964) theorized its modern modalities while showing that the institutionalization of a traditional physical practice regulated and normalized by explicit rules (e.g. the French *soule* which prefigured rugby) has the purpose of preserving the integrity of the human species (i.e. avoiding injury to single young men during rustic fights) by means of ritualization and euphemization of violence. What noticeably occurred over time was the progressive euphemization of the violence of combat by the ediction of universal rules. These rules fix, for any physical practice, the exercise limits forbidding any dangerous action: they guarantee as well the equiprobability of the score while proscribing foul play and protecting equity in the confrontation. Modern sport's specificity does not depend on champion performance progress or on the media's globalization of practices but on its complex codification derived from the evolution of techniques, mentalities and cultural identities.

If contemporary sport, especially its extreme media version (i.e. the Olympics), provides an ideology that alienates peoples, individuals and persons, under which conditions can body practices contribute to the emergence of a pacified and safe humanity? We will first examine how body cultures vary according to a people and by which ways they can be made into dialogue. Then we will see how the inter-individual variation of body techniques may allow an appropriation process oriented towards comparison and mutual open mindedness. Third, intra-individual variability will be questioned with regards to alternative practices and to objectives for developing the person. Finally, we will propose ideas for education towards dialogue between cultural identities through physical practice; we will propose an intercultural educative approach centered on the person. The target will be to question three scales of variation: the people, the individual, and

the person. We will consider the crowd as a conjunctural and undetermined meeting (i.e. hooligans), with ephemeral and unstable limits, and so will not take it as an object of study because of its composite and multiple identities.

1. Cultural variability and social use of the body: the scale of people and nations

Sport practices represent a “global social fact” (Mauss 1934) where “institutions express at one time and instantly”; in sport practices, all social life dimensions combine and crystallize (i.e. values, religions, politics, economies, history, esthetics, techniques, education...). In fact Marxist sociologists (Brohm 1964; Defance 2004; Liotard 2005) consider sport as an “ideological apparatus of the state” (Althusser 1970; Bourdieu & Passeron 1975), in which logics of distinction/exclusion issue into the domination of the individual by a superior interest (i.e. national, political, religious, ideological and/or financial). A means of body retorsion by constraint and effort (Foucault 1975; Vigarello 1981: 19-22), sport becomes a central state cog whenever the political system supports it (Erraïs & Ben Larbi 1986; Erraïs 1992). Sport has been exploited by the IOC (Hache 1992) to become a display of nations in search of image (i.e. international legibility, capability for maintaining mass security and order, sustainability...) and of legitimacy (i.e. in terms of human rights and gender equity, and of social stability that reassures investments, and of technicity for the regulation of information by the mass media, and of sponsor returns...).

As a result, the different social significations carried by physical activities and sports with regards the notion of ‘habitus’ being cultural (Mauss 1934) or social (Bourdieu 1967), are fertile in material when analyzing the way people, individuals and persons appropriate the field of physical practices taken as a cultural object belonging to the human heritage. Then the question is to know to what extent these physical practices can reflect and involve a symbolic universe favourable to the empowering of inter-culturality and dialogue beyond the euphemized combats they organize and regulate.

The question is how to identify the meanings of physical practices as a revelator of values and identities beneath the popular cultures? If sport is neither educative by essence nor bears naturally humanistic values, then how can we study the field

of body practices, these dynamic and contrastive cultural constructions, so as to provide them as vectors for creating dialogue between cultures and identities?

1.1 Body techniques and cultural habitus

Body techniques represent an embodied way to act that is oriented towards the target of efficiency and strongly inscribed within a tradition (Mauss 1934), generally transmitted by an ancestral oral tradition. They present different expressions according to the natural and/or social environments; walking, swimming, sitting posture or sleeping position, childbirth, body care, etc. are examples of the many ways to embody traditional systems of values and cultural codes. Techniques each refer to specific cultures and consolidate belonging to a particular identity: the embodiment of a cultural habitus acculturates the people and the nation in an implicit process and constitutes belonging markers. Mauss (1934) considers that “any technique has its form. But it is the same with each body attitude. Each society has its own habits”.

Commentary 1: The walk

The walk denotes the way one stages the body and conceives a particular body identity to be shown. An ample ‘compass movement’ of rather straight legs whose amplitude is limited by the stiletto heels and by the pelvis anteversion characterizes the walk of an occidental top model. A woman’s barefoot walk bearing a burden on the head will try to compensate for the vertical unsteadiness of the gravity center while conserving a head/pelvis/foot support alignment. The walk of a woman wearing a straight cloth like a kimono with geta [下駄] will be with small steps, nearly sliding. The walk of the late nineteenth century woman wearing a corset or the Japanese woman wearing an *obi* around the abdomen will present equally particular characteristics, in particular when changing posture or balance, as for example in movements of greeting.

The frequency, the length, the vivacity, the definition itself of grace and elegance while walking are therefore coded by context but also by fashion and rules of propriety; in the suburbs, a woman wearing a skirt will not sit in the same way as when wearing trousers. These habits format the body technique as well as the

mental posture of the person that uses or appropriates it. Each culture will likewise reinterpret and redefine the practice of the walk, its uses and customs, according to the cultural context and the specific anthropomorphic parameters. The cultural habitus (Mauss 1939) characterizes the manner in which people exercise the body inside the different everyday compartments. Habitus better conveys the idea of 'exis', of 'experience' and of 'faculty' provided by Aristotle. According to Mauss (1934), habits "vary not simply according to individuals and their limitations; they vary mostly with societies, education values, properties and modes, and prestige." As a result, these body techniques evolve during time according to usage and context. Let us now see within the field of sport practice how the body habitus is expressed. For this topic, we will explore two examples of traditional body practices: swimming and karate.

1.2 Body technique, identity markers: case study in Taiwan

Being a cultural marker, body technique denotes a certain symbolic and ethical rapport with the environnement and society. Within the traditional Taiwanese practices for example, the body culture forms have many contrastive aspects that are inscribed at the same time in rupture and in continuity with endogeneous currents of influence (i.e. aboriginal cultures) and exogeneous currents (i.e. cultures that historically settled in Formosa: Dutch, Chinese, Japanese, French, etc.). In Taiwan, body cultures vary strongly according to the forms of practice they take.

Commentary 2: The dragon boat race

This is, for example, the case of the dragon boat races [龍舟] that are inscribed within a Chinese southern tradition. Two thousand years-old rustic confrontations have issued into transformed and secularized practices such as inter-university competitive sports. The coincidence of these events with the moon calendar, the summer solstice and the end of the first rice crop strengthen the idea of a collusion between rural traditions and protection and veneration rituals. The drum beats that give rhythm to the rowing cadence synchronize the collective effort of the rowers.

Within the same practice, the technical forms take on signification with surprising differentiated modalities. If one takes the case of dance in Taiwan, it is evident that many forms of expression of technique coexist.

Commentary 3: Dance

In the dragon dance [舞龍], in *Kun Qu* [崑曲] (traditional opera theatre inspired by Beijing opera), in taoist sacred dance *Ba jia xiang* (the so-called Eight Generals), in aboriginal dances or in reinterpreted contemporary dance *Vu Shon* [舞想], the body techniques strengthen belonging to strong networks of influence that reverberate in present Taiwanese culture. Being a historically inscribed technical act, dance surpasses the simple physical performance so as to merge the dancer into a strong symbolic act, eventually a magico-religious act, and within a specific cultural environment that is propitious for cultural and identity claims or assertion.

Furthermore, these forms sometimes assume particular mystical elements that orient the religious aspect of the techniques; Taoist Buddhism, animism or primitive religions. In order to take the example further, we will examine the case of the sacred dance *Ba jia xiang*.

Commentary 4: University graduation performance

At the end of the academic year, students graduating from the Taiwanese state university hold a performance. Students graduating from the sports science department of the university dance in front of 6,000 spectators; dressed in authentic religious costumes of the war gods who serve as bodyguard to the Taoist pantheon, their made-up faces and their symbolic weapons embody the sacred dance while prefiguring the confrontation against dark forces. Where common sense upsets Western rationality is when these rituals are initiated by a Taoist monk who had been physically present during the rehearsals as well as during the actual performance so as to protect spectators and dancers from an unexpected incursion of bad spirits. The dance ends with the famous South Korean music of Gangnam Style. This contradictory dimension, academic and sacred, performative and iconoclast, media and divinatory is superimposed without apparent

contradiction within a symbolic world mixing at the same time the cultural, the sacred, the profane and the offbeat.

1.3 Swimming techniques, post-modern societies and efficiency

If we consider swimming, then swimming techniques take on different meanings according to the different cultures.

Commentary 5: Samurai swimming style

In Japan, samurai swimming, practiced with armor, dates back to the fifteenth century. Presented as a martial art and not as a competition, the samurai project is characterized by survival in the natural environment, in particular in navigating coastal waves or during the ascent of a stream [*hayanuki*]. The technical realization is expected to keep the chest as high as possible out of the water by continuously orienting the arm strokes at the water surface towards the bottom, the stroke is equally to realize an esthetic gesture independently from efficiency or from speed of movement while being ready for fighting.

In this example, the swimming technique is determined by a martial art spirit and by a desire to mark, by a specific aesthetic, the dominant culture's image of the hero. In Europe, swimming has different aspects related to heliotherapy and hygiene (Rauch 1983; Arnaud 1986: 43-55), leisure and competitive sport. A depository of cultural phantasms that orient behavior, the practice acculturates the practitioner while empowering taste and pleasure, fear and impulse, relationship to the world and emotion.

Commentary 6: Asian vs. Western swimming practices

In Asia, practicing swimming at the seaside or in a stream does not consist of movement or training exercises. It is more a kind of bathing close to the shore, wearing a bathing cloth that protects both from looks and from sunburn. The Western bikini is linked with a sport practice and an excessive tolerance to the sun's rays, denoting the shift from a hygienic practice to an active lifestyle oriented towards health care and prevention: the social practice taken as reference is the

competitive sport. In Australia, the ‘surf life-saving’ practice aims at sea rescue and issues into coded carnivals between confronting club teams. The body technique combines with a specific knowledge of the marine environment (i.e. currents, reef barriers, marine fauna, etc.) so as to determine strategies of movement. This swimming technique, equally determined by the use of specific materials (i.e. wetsuit that modifies flotation, floating materials, flippers, and recognizable bathing cap), supposes an irrefragable fitness whether out/inside water or paddling like a surfer.

Swimming is a depository of techniques with varied stakes that, according to the period, location and societal culture determines the appropriate manner of practice and the form of practice.

1.4 Karate, schools and masters: a complex migratory trajectory

The case of karate is of specific interest because it was first created in China by a Shaolin monk and disseminated through the Okinawa Islands towards Japan, then it differentiated and branched in influence and practice. In order to define karate as a cultural object with values and from different cultures oriented by essential principles, it is necessary to give an account of its genesis as well as its transformation dynamics.

Around the years 520-525, the Buddhist Indian monk Bodhidharma established a Zen school [禪] at Shaolin (China) and formed a fighting technique from existing ones. Two books, *Ekkinkyo* & *Senzuikyo*, summarize the theory of this technique. *Ekkinkyo* was later introduced to the people of the Ryukyus as *Shorinji Kenpo* or Chinese Kenpo. *Ekkinkyo* was synthesized with native self-defense forms to produce Okinawan Ti (Hokama 1996: 16).

Renamed art-law boxing of the Shaolin temple or Chinese Boxing [少林寺拳法, *Shorinji kenpo*] by the inhabitants of the Ryukyu archipelago (Okinawa), karate is a cross between native self-defense forms such as *Muto* [武当, war techniques] and *Tegumi* [手組, hand techniques]. It should be noted that these practices present reverse kanjis [組手, *kumite* or training fighting]. This form of practice

developed in Okinawa under the name *Ti* [手, the hand], from *Okinawa-te* [沖繩手, Okinawan hand], and *To-de* [唐手, Chinese Tang hand] with reference to the Tang Chinese Dynasty (618-907).

Commentary 7: Karate in Okinawa

Karate developed significantly during the seventeenth century in Okinawa, at one time because of the atmosphere of insecurity due to the invasion of the islands by Japanese samurai who forbade the carrying of weapons (1602), and because of the arrival of Chinese people on the archipelago who perpetuated the influence of prior techniques. In the early twentieth century, members from the Japanese Ministry of Education, among them the judo founder Kano Jigoro, called on the Okinawan *To-de* masters to disseminate their art on the main Japanese islands. The name *To-de* [唐手] became karate-do [空手道, the way of the empty hand] and spread: 1) in the Tokyo area with the assistance of Funakoshi Gichin (Shotokan-ryu school); 2) in Osaka prefecture with Miyagi Chojun (Goju-ryu school) and Mabuni Kenwa (Shito-ryu school).

Every school founder established his own style in the manner of practicing the art of the empty hand. The Goju-ryu technique, mainly located in the harbour zone of Naha, presents a direct style with power and force. The Shito-ryu style, located in the hills of Shuri and Tomari, presents a more fluent and soft style with fast movements, curved trajectories and a certain aesthetic. The Shotokan-ryu style is rough and is practiced with force, very low body postures and movements with direct trajectories.

In the absence of historical continuity with noble martial arts established by Japanese samurai, karate does not have a central dominant place like the other Japanese *budo* (i.e. kendo, kyudo or aikido). The Ryukyu original spirit is becoming progressively marginalized while *budo* are experiencing the first stages of ‘sportivization’, noticeably competitive, as well as becoming internationalized and globalized. From the successive migrations of the original practice new technical forms have emerged that are adapted to practitioners and context related to varied concepts of gesture and the martial arts. Aesthetic,

utilitarian, performative, competitive, these contemporary forms are unlimited. Practice is no longer restricted to a dominant and distinctive elite but is now open to all, even woman and minorities.

1.5 Body techniques, cultural objects and education

The forms of body technique depend on the societal culture, the time and the location as well as upon the dynamics of traditional identity. The people are the custodians of body techniques as well as the motors for transformation. If these body cultures serve as a reference and means for school education, then they may be qualified as social cultures taken as reference and integrated into the school system in physical education. Meanwhile, the price to pay for their custom fees is, as theorized by Arnaud (1986), a quadruple process of didactic transposition (Verret 1975; Chevallard 1985) with regards: 1) compulsory nature of educative objectives; 2) transposition of content knowledge to be taught; 3) elaboration of referential progressions modeling the stages of construction from beginner to expert practice; and 4) elaboration of assessment tools allowing to make visible progress and to legitimise final school examinations. From a traditional object, the practice mutates into a technical object and then into a didactic object ready for teaching in school.

For a change of scale, let us move to an examination of how an individual can interrogate a ‘technique’ so as to appropriate the logic of producing form in a new and original manner and finally to producing ‘techniques’.

2. Inter-individual variability and body techniques: the individual scale

Although present in the concrete physical materiality that is physical practice, the body technique relates to value and thinking systems that are embodied and transcended within social groups by individuals. Thus, the body technique becomes an identity marker that makes visible and materializes the belonging to a group and singularization. The notion of habitus as a social identity marker is displaced by Bourdieu (1979) and models the “distinction” process. In French, this term bears a double signification of separation and exception. The distinction relates to a process of relative positioning of social actors in between a social space of practices. In order to be recognized within a social field (i.e. being

stylish), the agents have, at the same time, to fit and to conform (i.e. be in fashion) and yet to be distinct so as to stand out by a personal trait that will give a new orientation to the tendency.

It is the same process with the field of sport body practices. The individual rapports to techniques can be studied according to the type of relationship to norms and values but also according to the way these individuals construct their proper knowledge by the use of techniques within physical practices.

We will successively study the ways individuals appropriate techniques in swimming and in karate.

2.1 Swimming and individual interpretation of the techniques

There are many possible and practicable swimming techniques. These techniques are born from traditional and professional utilitarianism. For example competition swimming has undergone many technical evolutions in order to define and to stabilize practices, at least provisionally, into the code of the FINA rules (Fédération Internationale de Natation). Thus, competition swimming distinguishes and normalizes four styles of swimming: breaststroke, free-style (or crawl), backstroke and butterfly. Recursively, these techniques are themselves the result of influences, as for example the alternative arm propulsion that from an 'overarm stroke' style was transformed under the famous Olympic champion Johnny Weissmuller in the 1920s into the 'crawl'. Likewise, breaststroke has been progressively codified under the impact of restrictions from FINA and of innovations by swimmers. Finally, techniques of somersault and diving (from classical diving to 'grab start' or 'track start') can be differentiated according to three principles: efficiency, spectacularization, and security of practicants and spectators.

If we consider the crawl technique, we can observe that between an individual and an institution there is a restrictive complementarity that targets at the same time normalization of the practices and the renewal of form so as to ensure its continuity. The impact on body form is the immersion of airways, the stabilization role of the head and the horizontal body that represent the cultural revolution of 'good swimming'.

It appears that body culture as practiced and embodied by swimmers transforms and evolves successively. Individuals are a depository of tradition that recursively evolve according to social use, meeting opportunity, and legitimate rules.

2.2 Case study of the *Tensho kata* [転掌型]

The term *kata* [型] signifies ‘mold’, ‘model’. In Asian martial arts and especially Japanese ones, the *kata* is a means of bringing the different practices together. In western arts, however, it is the form of attack which is given prime importance. The *kata* represents codified gestures and forms a wide technical repertoire, somewhat in the way of a body encyclopedia of all martial art techniques, in this case, of karate. In a period when nothing was written and when traditions were orally transmitted, about the tenth century, these techniques were preserved and transmitted by the practice of *kata*. There are very few written traces concerning the techniques of Japanese martial arts (i.e. bushido [武士道] and bujutsu [武術]) practiced by Bushi [武士] and samurai [侍] on the main Japanese islands, and no written reports have yet been found concerning karate in Okinawa, even though the islands have been part of Japan for over a century.

The *Tensho kata* was invented in 1921 in Okinawa by Miyagi Chojun, founder of the Goju-ryu *kata*. This *kata* is the product of the evolution and fusion of techniques taught to Miyagi by his master Higaona Kanryo (1853-1915). It is composed of Chinese techniques of *Wu-shu* from the ‘white crane’ style [白鶴拳]. This *kata* is typically Okinawan in the sense that it mixes local techniques with Chinese techniques. We should mention that Higaona Kanryo is also one of the two masters of Mabuni Kenwa, founder of the Shito-ryu karate. The *Tensho kata* also exists in Shito-ryu karate.

The differences in the way the *Tensho kata* is performed between the Shito-ryu and Goju-ryu styles are small. For certain techniques, the *Tensho kata* in Shito-ryu style uses the hand edge (better than the thenar and hypothenar eminences of the hand used in Goju-ryu). The blows are applied to the center of the chest (Shito-ryu) so as to reach the solar plexus and the groin instead of the clavicle and the abdomen (Goju-ryu). These technical nuances can also be seen in other *katas* from the two schools.

A description of the *Tensho kata* follows:

- 転てん *ten* (くるり *kururi*) = turn, rotation; reference is made to a ‘turning point’ in a Chinese poem
- 掌しよ *sho* (てのひら *tenohira* ; たなごころ *tanagokoro*) = hand volar region
- 転掌てんしよ *tensho* = turning volar region hand, rotation

This kata is a *tanden kata* [丹田型, abdomen kata]. Each movement is executed in an extremely close relationship between breathing and a diaphragm thrust at the moment of expiration and inspiration. As a result, the abdomen is always contracted, presenting strong protection and pushing the gravity center downwards so as to get power. The movements are executed slowly and harmoniously, concentrating a great amount of energy [気 *ki*] under the navel into the abdomen [丹田 *tanden*] and the belly [腹 *hara*].

The leg position is quite natural, and the play of foot movements combined with hand techniques enables an effortless deflection of a frontal attack, for example to the face, while instantly putting the attacker off balance, causing him to lose his footing and either be thrown to the ground or immobilized by a control of his arm. In either event the attacker ends up in the opposite direction to that from which he attacked, and the practicant is generally favourably positioned at his back.

This kata is visually very aesthetic but has little interest for sporting competitions because it is not impressive in terms of speed of movement of execution. Its technique, essentially turned towards the inside of the body, is not spectacular. Furthermore, this is a short *kata* that does not call for a wide movement in a single direction and has no body rotation. Nevertheless, this *kata* technique is very efficient and its execution allows a deep development of energy. The application during *jissen* [実践] or *bunkai* practice [分解, analysis, decomposition and application of techniques] may by contrast reveal how very impressive its efficiency is, when faced with a rapid attack.

Behind the individual kata technique and its field of influence, a whole world concept opens up to the practicant. It is indeed a matter of finding an internal force through diaphragm respiration while respecting a perfect aesthetic form. Far from seeking the spectacular, as deployed during competition, this kata opens up

perspectives of a technical ground centered on diaphragm breathing useful for warding off sudden attacks.

2.3 Technique variations, archeology of knowledge and education

We saw how body techniques can be appropriated by individuals who transform them and in turn give them a traditional/competitive signification. On a different scale, it appears that individual grab techniques in a very specific and original manner can provide an element of improvisation and creativity.

The forms of body technique can likewise be considered in education both as a norm and as an object to be taught that needs to be transformed in order to be learned. Whether swimming technique or ancestral *kata*, initiation in the evolution of the logics of gesture allows not only enrichment of the motor repertoire of an individual but also discovery of the living heritage that a technique may represent, even if not very efficient or not used anymore.

It may also turn out to be interesting to discover non-codified swimming techniques as well as certain ancient *katas* by proceeding in a similar manner to Foucault (1969) and his theory of the notion of knowledge archeology. The aim would be to get back to the evolution of body technique while rendering evident the ideas, values, knowledge and gestural forms that generated them. As a result, a historical continuity/discontinuity could question contemporary practices while repositioning them in tradition, societal continuity and specific mentality. By means of a didactic treatment that transforms body techniques configuring the cultural objects they embody, as swimming and karate taken for example here, the educator would be able to make the inner essence of the culture as well as the considered symbolic universe approachable, which would allow for sharing and mediation. Let us move to the scale of the person so as to see how the notion of humanities can be operationnalized around dialogue between identity conflicts.

3. Intra-individual variability, evolving world and education: the scale of the person

The scale of the person is considered to be an autonomous entity for decision-making and a morally responsible entity. In an evolving world that never stops

transforming in an unpredictable but determinant manner (Tako & Yoshiba 2000), even if it survives or is irreversible, it becomes urgent to reconfigure the conception of the person and his/her education.

3.1 Body cultures, production of forms and educative models in swimming

The modes of technique transmission in swimming evolved under the pressure of scientific, technological and didactic contributions. Thus it was decided in France in the mid-nineteenth century to learn swimming out of water (i.e. with the help of the Beulque apparatus) before actually going into shallow water, hanging by a belt on a spring (i.e. Trotzler and Beulque apparatus) (Schoebel 1947; Catteau & Garoff 1968). The shift of exercise to the aquatic environment relates to transmission of an educative model. It denotes as well a rapport poorly centered on the swimmer-learner and reflects a fear of drowning.

In France, recent reforms to the secondary school system require nowadays the swimmer to adopt a reflective posture providing problem-solving strategies in a given context. This paradigm change, common whichever the sport taken into account, considers techniques as a means to be mobilized according to opportunity and personal resource. As a result, it is the competency to read and to interpret the environment and the tendency of things that orients decision-making.

Thus the corresponding body culture provides the idea of decisional variations relevant to the actor and situated in the context: it redefines the person as an autonomous, responsible actor who inspires transformation of the world. This voluntarist and constructivist conception of the person presupposes at the same time: 1) taking into account the rapport with the world through proper interpretation; 2) finding available operating modes; and 3) analyzing the provided effects. This can be observed in physical education in different areas of the globe. For example in English speaking countries, the Teaching Games for Understanding movement (TGfU) promotes the idea of education for decision-making in a given context and within a community of practices (Light & Wallian 2008: 387-404). In Europe, the influence of the neo-constructivist approach orients the definition of action itself with regards to the display of a meta-reflective posture of the practitant.

3.2 Cultural globalized forms, essence of karate and interculture

Access to the essence of a cultural practice is gained by a review of one's self. Between the differing karate practices, within traditional Japanese dojos, in the modern 'body karate' and even in competition, the technical forms relate to radically opposable configurations as much for the values provided as for the definition itself of the acceptable, legitimised and/or authorized, body culture. If karate is a depository of value ideals (ideologies) and even of phantasms, then the way it is practiced determines the mental posture of the *karateka* (karate practicante); its function is thus highly contrastive.

Commentary 8: The body karate

In France, the 'body karate' consists of a type of fitness practice: tonic music synchronizes the rhythm, and the practicante's clothing, coloured and creative, is inspired from bodybuilding and fitness activities. The form of practice is repetitive and collective, guided by *karateka* educators who demonstrate and correct the movements while animating the sequence; the practice is comparable to a form of production with an imaginary opponent. This practice is not exclusively practiced by women and can be used as a physical preparation for karate as well as for body shaping.

If one considers now the way that the masters teach karate, important contrasts can be observed within the conception itself of transmission of the body culture (Bride, Loizon, Aoki & Wallian 2014).

Commentary 9: The intensity

In France, karate for beginners is an agreeable way of practicing through play and in a relaxed, trendy manner, sometimes in happy confusion, with the object of giving pleasure to participants guided by a tolerant master. Like other sport practices, this leisure practice may proceed to competition level. In Japan, the practice respects tradition and hierarchy, is highly coded and institutionalized, and is inscribed into an ordered and quite silent atmosphere. The practicante learns how to strive, suffer and make progress through the intensive repetition of *kihon* [基本, basic technique patterns] and *kata* [型, mold].

Thus the forms of practice are strongly determined by context and cultural mentality. If it is possible to conceive of an intercultural approach that aims at cultural mediation through this traditional martial art, then the question of the practice taken as reference becomes crucial: how to teach karate with regards to the cultural dimension while exploiting it as a vehicle of cultural knowledge to be shared? Is education for interculture possible through the traditional practice of karate? How and in which conditions can this avenue operate from the Japanese culture to a foreign culture through the practice of karate? Taking into account representational systems and practicant expectations, considering the problem in terms of alterity relationships and reflexivity may present an interesting avenue to be explored.

3.3 Educating for reflective practices in varied contexts: capability and development of a person

The impact of reflective practice on PE teacher training in Japan (Sato, Akita & Iwakawa 1993: 100-110) echoes deeply in the Asian educative community: it gives the person, teacher as well as student, a major role in elaborating strategies of decision-making. It also questions education based on technique [*kenkyu jugyo*]. As a result, the relationship between theory and practice is modified, reconfiguring the practice as a starting and arrival point for elaborating knowledge in action.

In India, the concept of “capability approach” or of personal development as provided by the economist Sen (2000; 2005: 151-166; 2006: 215-238) has relevant perspectives for the field of education. Grounding the exercise of critical judgement on the idea of social justice, Sen proposes a model of development based on individual freedom as a mode of social engagement. This perspective is fully compatible in the domain of body culture with the idea of physical development of the person.

Thus, the notion of thinking-in-action characterizes innovative forms of creativity and of self-development, conditions for solving complex problems in unpredictable environments, and for evolving expertise all through one’s life. This educative orientation may also influence in a broader way the contemporary concept of ‘citizen of the world’. In fact, if one considers that globalized cultures

modify the rapport with the world of the practicing citizens, then it becomes possible to conceive of these cultures as vectors of transformation for cultural mediation. Thus, which forms of cultural mediation may be generated?

3.4 Alternative citizen education and patrimonial body culture

As to the terms used in this study, it may be appropriate here to redefine what is meant by body culture with regards to the perspective of alternative citizen education for dialogue in the conflict of identities. The emergence of so-called 'extreme practices' questions the notion itself of body culture heritage and of the humanities because these forms break away from the concept of sport.

Commentary 10: Extreme practices

Extreme body practices are characterized by three major goals: to incur more or less subjective risks; to put to the test very strong sensations; and to create a privileged rapport with nature or the environment by means of technological apparatus that is sometimes very sophisticated. If one refers, for example, to the online practice videos of the GoPro® site (see internet sources), it becomes possible to imagine a very new rapport with the world from an internalist, dynamic and sensational point of view. In fact, the camera attached to the subject in movement provides images within action with remarkable precision, whatever the element of practice. The wide-angle lens allows a view of nature, here the submarine or aquatic world, from original and unusual angles; the acting practitant is included within a natural environment of extraordinary beauty. The earth-based landmarks are reduced to provide an impression of three dimensional movement symbolically included within the five elements.

Often practiced outside of institutions, norms and conformism, body culture integrates alternative forms with regards to beauty and risk. It positions the actor in a reflective posture rather than in a reproductive manner, engaging him/her with the exploit more than with contemplation. It is this action provided by the person that determines the rapport with the world mediated by strong sensations, relationship to others and the mastering of techniques rather than the reproduction of technique. How can we educate a person so as to act in a citizen-like manner in

a globalized world? Four perspectives that could be summarized as ‘alternative education for patrimonial body cultures’ are discussed below.

First of all, we would like to postulate that a problem-solving setting could represent a major educative tool because it can induce a transformation dynamic of deconstruction/reconstruction of the world representational system. Such disequilibria produced by being confronted with a problem are propitious for creativity and adaptation in moving and uncertain societies.

Second, the reading of the context, a highly interpretative activity linked to experience and subjectivity, requires being educated. In fact, it is the interpretation rather than the processing of information that is privileged and the semiotic activity of the practicant will be deployed while reducing the production of simple form.

Then, we would like to postulate that alterity represents an opportunity for change, that it presupposes educating the citizen to tolerating a certain zone of uncertainty and indetermination. Thus, in order to solve problems encountered during body exercise practice, the subject will be able to draw on the community of practice he/she belongs to and on shared values, experiences and knowledge.

Finally, conscious of being an heir to a cultural historical heritage – we could say of a life patrimony embodied within practices – the practicant will consider it a gift to be bestowed. Just as the property of a grand traditional house or of an outstanding ecological environment signifies a moral responsibility for conserving and transmitting it to further generations, the embodied practice of significant body cultures commits the practicant to preserve this memory by learning and transmitting it in a living way down the generations and with diverse influences. The case of the *Tensho kata* is a living example of the conditions in which transmission must not be restricted to an exclusive confidential circle but entrusted to reliable and initiated depositories.

To summarize, the person scale is pertinent to an analysis of body culture with regards to questions of education and transmission of a living heritage because it is embodied in forms of practice. Such forms can take on an intercultural dimension despite being rooted in their different social traditions. The project of

developing capability represents a real opportunity to initiate a new understanding of what it is to be a citizen of the world and also to reposition the humanities within the educational process far from ideology, merchandizing, and the fear of alterity. We believe a highly pertinent question to ask of ourselves is which form of body culture is relevant for future adults and citizens of the world?

Conclusion: educating towards alterity, a new relation to the world

The field of social practices evolves constantly according to the rhythm of the societies that use them. Body culture responds to this logic of dynamics and redefines the rapport with the world, the technique of body forms and the knowledge embodied by the actors.

The call for re-establishing human sciences with critical humanism takes into account the fact that even if a person, as a human being, is not open with him/herself, that person cannot refuse being considered as a responsible and autonomous person, i.e. as a ‘person who can think’. It is an arduous but, in a world that never stops complexifying, worthwhile project for the educator. The main source of resistance, however, is the resistance to change, as any society, any individual, or any person seeks to preserve a stable condition. Here education for alterity can intervene as a means to promote understanding and to share distinct body cultures, i.e. as a means to turn the conflict of identities into dialogue. We can use the metaphor of the *obi* [結ぶ], the beautiful belt that is wrapped around the Japanese kimono, to illustrate this.

Commentary 11: The *Obi*

The *obi* surrounds the intertwining of the superimposed cloth while tightening the outside (the people) and the inside (the person). It interweaves golden threads of silk so as to form a pattern with strong symbolic designs; the white crane for eternity, the peony and flowers for beauty and youth... It is the relationship between the threads that gives signification to the pattern while defining the relationship of alterity with the world. The *obi* constrains the walk while restricting the gestures with an elegant and light form that finds its grace within

the body posture, a posture that affirms the identity and the cultural belonging inscribed within tradition. Finally, putting on the *obi* requires the practical knowledge of an expert third-party who assists while giving form to the aesthetic aspect of the tie.

If the *obi* can be a representation of the process of dialogue between conflicts of identities, it is because it symbolizes the process of embracing alterity. Likewise, the forms of physical practice can embody different cultural identities. If a practitioner seeks to explore an intercultural dimension, then forms of physical practice, as discussed here, are appropriate for discovering and deepening an understanding of alterity. From this perspective, there are different scales of variation: the people, the individual, the person. The school and the university can no longer be simple depositories of culture or producers of academic knowledge, even interdisciplinary academic knowledge; they must now become vectors of different cultural identities open to alterity.

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