ARABIC GESTURES

Robert A. Barakat

INTRODUCTION

As a discipline, folklore has been expanding of late to include not just the study of oral tradition and folk-life but also research into the nature and meaning of gestures. Indeed, it is noteworthy that some years ago Archer Taylor set forth the importance of gesture studies as part of folklore research. Until only recently his suggestion and example remain unheeded and perhaps neglected unnecessarily.[1] Interest in this rather subtle form of communication has taken root and has resulted in some published commentaries on semiotic gestures, specifically a chapter in Jan Brunvand's book, *The Study of American Folklore.*[2] This is a significant addition to the field because students of oral tradition have come to realize that *how* a person tells a story might oftentimes be as important as a text itself. *How*, of course, means the gestures and body movements that accompany an oral text and which are used primarily to mark certain parts of speech and to register reactions to events in the narrative. Through an analysis of the observed gestures, it should be possible to note their importance to the tale, its language, the storyteller, and his culture. One's understanding of the oral texts should be increased because segments of the cultural context have been identified, a phase of field observation sorely neglected by collectors.

Moreover, just as there are reflections of culture imbedded within oral narratives in the form of motifs and descriptions, one might also note more overt expressions of cultural behavior in the form of gestures, postures, and the like.[3] That some gestures and postures are culture-specific, for example, is a well-known fact attested to by many anthropologists and psychologists.[4] Scrutinizing these can prove beneficial to our scanty knowledge of non-verbal communication, particularly those gestures that accompany speech and which serve to emphasize what the nar-

rator relates to his audience, and the audience's reaction to both the narration and the storyteller. Too often collectors have forgotten the source of their materials in their zest to record oral texts; to separate the narrator from his repertory of tales is impossible. If one is to study a series of tales from one narrator it must be done with that narrator's technique in mind and the accompanying gestures constitute a vital part of that technique. Think for a moment of the hundreds of thousands of texts neatly catalogued in archives throughout the world and how little has actually been observed on the behavior of the storytellers. Surely these archives and their contents would be more meaningful if one wanted to re-create segments of a culture; the observation and noting of gestures of all classes should assist in attaining this goal.

Although the above-noted comments may seem to be aimed particularly at folklorists, they are also pointed at field workers from other disciplines to some degree, including anthropologists, linguists, and sociologists. They, like their relations in folklore, have overlooked the vast possibilities for the collection and cataloguing of gestures and body movements as they occur in the cultures being studied. Fortunately, the two former groups are beginning to realize the importance of kinesics and semiotics as useful tools for the analysis of culture; thus, some detailed research is being carried out in such areas as *proxemics, kinesics*, and other forms of silent communication that are as much a part of culture as an oral text or costume.[5]

Serious students of gestures are constantly faced with a dearth of research materials. This is not to say that no work has been done because a great deal has, as Francis Hayes's bibliography reveals.[6] A cursory glance will show that much of what has been printed to date is of little use generally because of the journalistic nature of some materials and also because many of the sources refer to gestures only in passing.[7] Few of them deal, for example, with in-depth gesture studies of specific cultures. Indeed, it is amazing that so little research has been done on even the sign language of the deaf-mutes, which only recently has been scrutinized as a language.[8] The same is true of other sign languages, including those of the Cistercian monks, North American Indians, and others. Some studies have been published on technical gesture systems of such groups as auctioneers, crane operators, merchants, referees, and so on.[9]

Unfortunately, there is no basic, up-to-date bibliography of source materials on gestures to which one may turn for information nor is there a lexicon of gestures for specified cultural groups, although Hayes proposed one some years ago but to my knowledge one has never been executed.[10] The Arabs, for example, have been sorely neglected by field workers, or at least their gestures have. What is available deals with literary references to gestic actions as they occur in literature, such as those to be found in *The Thousand and One Nights* or to culturally induced motor habits, postures, and some religious gestures of Islamic origin. Of course, this dearth of data is not confined to the Arabs alone; most cultures have been overlooked.

For this particular study, I managed to come up with only a few references to Arab gestures plus a few from other cultures. Andrea de Jorio, for instance, has done some remarkable work among the Southern Italians as has David Efron

among the ghetto Jews and Italians of New York City.[11] Leonhard Bauer has also described a number of gestures of diverse types from the Holy Land, but he included little commentary and, alas, no illustrations.[12] W. D. Brewer, in his article on gestures among the Levantine Arabs, offered some interesting commentaries on the nature of gestural patterns and noted also the lack of data on Arabic gesture patterns.[13] This was in 1951, and there has been no appreciable increase since in printed sources. The data presented here will, hopefully, fill part of the void, or at least stimulate field workers to collect material on gestures.

This collection of Arabic gestures is extensive but by no means is it complete since it includes only a few items from Arab women. To expand the list would require a great deal of work with women, if indeed, they would be available for interviews. In some of the more conservative Moslem countries, like Yemen, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, among others, access to women is difficult, if not impossible. This problem exists to some degree in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and to some extent in the rural areas of Kuwait, but generally people in these countries are less conservative and submit to interviews easily. Foreign influence, higher levels of education, and more liberal religious views make this possible. However, in the long run, one is placed in the same position as any folklorist who must glean material from informants. Certainly the Middle East presents a challenge to the collector.

SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF GESTURES

Arabs, perhaps no more than most peoples, make extensive use of a vast variety of gestures and body movements to register reactions to events and peoples, or to communicate messages silently. Like the proverbial Italian, southern variety, who is berated for his abuse of gesticulation, the Arab is often accused of speaking with his hands and body as well as his mouth.[14] So intimately related are speech, gesture and culture, that to tie an Arab's hands while he is speaking is tantamount to tying his tongue.[15] Whatever an Arab has to say in words must, in a sense, be accompanied by a series of graphic illustrations with his hands and body. These illustrations usually take the form of objects outlined with the hands, or peculiar body movements to represent an action being described by words. In some instances, they may be simply gestures that mark parts of speech for emphasis, or to increase intonation and pitch through gestural activity. In other instances, gestures may be true substitutes for speech, in which case no words are necessary because the meaning of the signs have been agreed on prior to use by members of the culture.

Thus, gestic action on the part of the Arabs takes many forms and, as a result, may be analyzed on many levels, including the cultural, linguistic, psychological, and social. Although I will deal with Arabic gestures on only two levels, the cultural and linguistic, it seems appropriate at this point to say something about social attitudes towards gestures and the peoples who use them. By these comments, I hope to illustrate some of the major misconceptions held by many people and how they oftentimes misjudge other cultures.

Gesticulation, whether in the form of hand gestures or body movements,

is widespread among all peoples. Those groups who use gestures overtly and perhaps unconsciously are thought by many to be deficient in language because they do use gestures. Otherwise, it is believed they would be unable to communicate their messages. This is why, as the popular misconception goes, Arabs and Italians gesticulate so much; they use hands and bodies to fill gaps openedy up by lack of vocabulary with which to express themselves. However, the idea that people who gesticulate freely are deficient in vocabulary extends to the group's language as well. Thus, many believe that not only is an individual lacking in vocabulary but so is the language deficient.

Although this is not the place to recount the history of this misconception, it is necessary to note that it is apparently widespread in the Western world. Some Western cultures have come to view gestures as social markers; only people from the lower classes use them. Moreover, people from the upper segments of a given society, since they are educated and sophisticated, should not use gestures while speaking because they would identify themselves with the lower strata of society. Leonard Bloomfield states it succinctly: "Italians use more gestures than English-speaking people; in our civilization people of the privileged class gesticulate least."[16] He also implies in this statement that Italians are not of the privileged class and, thus, are less civilized than English-speaking peoples. Reference is being made to the notion that Mediterranean cultures are perhaps inferior because of their great tendency to gesticulate. Indeed, the upper classes of English society *do* gesticulate less but they still use some forms of subtle gestures as adjuncts to speech to emphasize pitch and intonation, or simply to react to what someone has said or done. In the latter instance, facial expressions and body positions may be observed. Some comments are necessary here about the English because they do represent a different approach to the study of attitudes towards gestures. Furthermore, these people can serve to illustrate several points on gestures that are significant.

The English, as compared with the Arabs and Italians, have often been charged with being "impoverished in kinesic communication (at least intentionally)."[17] As E. B. Tylor noted in the 1870's,

> We English are perhaps poorer in the gesture-language than any other people in the world. We use a form of words to denote what gesture or a tone would express. Perhaps it is because we read and write so much, and have come to think and talk as we should write, and so let fall those aids to speech which cannot be carried into the written language.[18]

Yet to the careful observer they, too, employ a far greater number of gestures than they would care to admit. One should note, for example, less obvious gestures when an upperclass Englishman speaks, such as eye, head, and shoulder movements, interlacing of fingers, changes in stance and posture and certainly facial expressions. One must state "upperclass" because there is every indication that members of this particular segment of English society consciously suppress the use of gestures, for the obvious use of them within the context of sophisticated English society seems to suggest a lower class origin. In addition, being less

demonstrative is acceptable in the eyes of that reserved class. Apparently this is not the case with members of the lower classes, who gesticulate freely.

The middle segment of English society appears to be caught in the middle. On the one hand, they have social aspirations and therefore imitate their superiors in the conscious disuse of gestures. However, on the other hand, they are still members of the middle class and must use gestures appropriate to it. To become part of the upper class these people must replace their native gestures with a set more consistent with that group, just as they must change their speech habits, dress, and so on, to better fit into the new group. Since gesticulation marks social position or origin, anyone who wishes to climb the social ladder has to alter his gesture patterns.[19] What has been said about the English appears also applicable to the various segments of American society.

However, the conscious avoidance of native gestures by the American and English upper and middle classes has not always occured. Weston LaBarre notes: "Englishmen of the first half of the eighteenth century gesticulated freely, and their American counterparts were, if anything, less inarticualte kinesically in frontier times."[20] He is referring to all class strata in both societies and the observation doubtless applies to the upper classes as well. Moreover, what LaBarre notes about the English and Americans apparently holds true for Englishmen of the Elizabethan period, and perhaps earlier years, too. One quickly realizes this after reading plays by Shakespeare in which references to gestures, ranging from ceremonial gestures to those involving simple amenities, abound. Some examples serve to illustrate this point:

Elb. Aye, sir, by Mistress Overdone's means. But as she spit in his face, so she defied him.
(*Measure for Measure*, II, i, 85-86)

Gads. Give me thy hand. Thou shalt have a share in our purchase, as I am a true man.
(Henry IV, Part I, II, i. 100-101)

Laf. By my old beard
And every hair that's on't, Helen, that's dead,
Was a sweet creature.
(*All's Well That Ends Well*, V, iii, 76-78)

Sampson. Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them, which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it.
(*Romeo and Juliet*, I, i. 49-50)[21]

In addition to these gestures, there are a surprisingly large number of gestures involving body contact, such as handshaking and embracing among men, the latter act being particularly rare among upper and middle class Englishmen today, as in the United States.

Of further interest, as regards the intentional disuse of gestures, as the fact that in many cultures, individuals, especially those who have had some contact with the West, tend to scorn their native mannerisms. That this avoidance of

gesticulation is for social reasons may be established, but one other may be added that is indirectly related: it is fashionable among many people to imitate Western mannerisms and dress. Leo Hamalian, for instance, has noted that among some Damascene Arabs who have had some contact with Western cultures, particularly through education, there is a decided decrease in the use of native gestures.[22] Among some of the immigrant groups now in the United States this writer has observed a definite attempt on the part of some educated persons to mimic members of the established classes by divesting themselves of their native gestures and replacing them with a set acceptable to the group with which they want to identify.[23] This attempt at integration seems confined to the first generation in most instances studied and only to some degree with later generations since there is less social pressure on them to become "Americans." Those persons who want to maintain their ethnic or national identity pay little attention and continue to utilize their native gestures freely. Arabs, for example, who may have little contact with Western culture continue to use Arabic gestures even though they may be immigrants to a Western country. Their sons and daughters, on the other hand, will alter their gesture patterns according to their social ambitions. Although I have not looked into the possible business ambitions, it is possible that these too play a significant role.

During the course of collecting data for this study, I had occasion to interview a number of Arabs studying in the United States. After discussing gestures with them, it became increasingly clear that many of them had modified their gesture patterns to better fit into American society. Indeed, some were shocked to learn that they actually used certain gestures that could be established as peculiarly Arabic and quite different from American ones. What is of greater significance is that some of them were not aware of these changes in their gesture patterns. They had apparently occured unconsciously, perhaps because of experience with Americans. Such simple amenities as shaking hands, embracing and kissing on the cheeks between men, were dropped in deference to the American verbal greeting or the goodbye without accompanying gestures. Some agreed that on visits to their homelands during vacations they would not use many of their native gestures until they had been in the cultural milieu for a while and only then hesitatingly.

It is rather intriguing to speculate that these men had actually gone through a degree of assimilation into American culture, albeit unconsciously. What reasons that might be conjured up for this are vague at best but we may note that experience has taught them that to function adequately in an alien culture they must conform to some extent; that is, habits of dress, speech, and mannerisms, or those culturally induced traits that mark them as Arabs must be altered or modified in some way to help better fit them in the new culture. Some go so far as to adopt Western mannerisms altogether as though they were going to become permanent members of American society. This conscious acceptance of American behavioral patterns may be related to other traits that have been noted in recent years among foreign students, such as interlingual word taboos that they acquire and perpetuate.[24]

Some of the taboos involving gestures are quite interesting because many of

them are the same ones that Americans observe. Gestures requiring some body contact between males, for example, are avoided wherever and whenever possible by Arabs here in the States, particularly kissing on the cheeks, holding hands as an act of friendship, and embracing. These specific actions have become taboos among Arabs studying in the States because of the obvious sexual implications; Americans believe that these actions, when performed by two men, indicate that they are homosexuals. Arab students soon learn that these are perfectly acceptable in their own culture but not in America, and accordingly drop them from their gestural repertoire. Whether or not these taboos are perpetuated in their countries of origin has yet to be determined but preliminary evidence seems to support the possibility that they are, at least, among those men who live in cities where Western influence is greatest and where it is fashionable to imitate Westerners.[25]

Prolonged eye contact between speakers offers some fascinating material for comment since it is an integral part of Arabs' behavioral patterns. Furthermore, it is directly related to spatial relationships among speakers. In the Middle East, when two people are speaking, there is a general tendency to maintain eye contact for long periods. If and when an individual does move his eyes away they usually focus on the other person's mouth or some other part of the face then back to the eyes again. In the United States, on the other hand, Americans avoid any lengthy eye contact between speakers because of the intimacy implied in such a gesture. One may observe that Americans generally make only brief contact, then focus their eyes on an object behind or to the side of the other speaker for a moment then back to the eyes once again. This typical pattern was dismaying to some of the Arabs interviewed in the States. Such was not the case in the Middle East where eye contact is acceptable to nearly all.

Arabs, when confronted with this situation, do maintain prolonged eye contact even though the Americans with whom they are speaking do not. This is one gestural pattern that is too culturally rooted to change at all. However, this is not true of spatial relationships between speakers. Arabs tend in some circumstances, to come closer together when speaking and they also make some physical contact, such as placing one hand on another's forearm or shoulder. The distance, moreover, between them diminishes quickly as a discussion becomes more intimate or heated. Under other conditions, however, they may keep quite a distance between themselves. Americans, on the other hand, tend to build invisible barriers between themselves when they speak, and in some instances, actual physical objects, say a desk or a table. By keeping a distance, they thus avoid body contact. Most of the Arab students interviewed noted quite strongly that at first they stood close to Americans when conversing but soon learned that it was not customary and thus stopped it.

These comments reveal a great deal about how Arabs see Americans and themselves in terms of gesture patterns. They also reveal to some extent just what problems Arab students have in the United States when faced with behavior alien to their way of life. Through their experiences with Americans these students soon pick out gestural patterns that are to be used or avoided. Indeed, it must be disconcerting to young Arabs who are used to gesticulating freely to be

suddenly confronted with Americans who, in the opinion of many Arabs, are so reserved and undemonstrative. Even facial expressions which border on the animated in the Arab world appear to be totally absent in Americans. One student said that he had difficulty "reading" many Americans' faces because of their bland expressions and the fact that many Americans do not open their mouths too widely to enunciate words only added to his confusion. Indeed, to a foreigner, this could be a problem since many do look at a person's lips as he speaks in hopes that he will better understand the other's words as he forms and utters them.

Although these comments give us some idea about interacting gesture patterns from two cultures, namely American and Arabic, perhaps some comments specifically about the roles of gestures in the religious and social lives of Arabs in the Middle East will give a better view of the importance of gestures in Arabic culture.

In all cultures, gestures play important social and religious roles. As social factors gestures have numerous functions that vary from simple acts to attain social control to the more complex actions to ask for and to offer hospitality. In the former case, for instance, a mother can threaten her child with a simple touch of the ear with her fingers without a word being said. In the latter case a traveller must ask for hospitality from a Bedouin in a specific manner that requires both to participate. The way in which he approaches the tent is spelled out in detail and his prospective host's actions in no less detail. Both bear the responsibility of acting out this ritual because each is aware of it and its importance to them and their mutual culture.

Once within the tent there are a host of postures and gestures that must also be observed without failure. For example, the serving of food and drink requires the server to offer each from his right hand to his guest's right hand. No less important are the simple amenities of eating with the right hand and once finished the symbolic act of wiping one's hand on a specified part of the tent's supports. Some of these gestures apply to entering other types of dwellings when, for instance, one enters someone's house shoes should be removed. This is a common gesture among Moslems since one must also remove shoes before entering a mosque. Even the postures one assumes within the house have names that are a direct reflection of Bedouin culture.[26]

Islamic requirements for prayer are quite interesting because of the various postures one must assume before and during prayer. Of course, these are in many ways different from Christian practices but they perform much the same function within both religions. What is most striking about Moslem prayer is its highly ritualized pattern that is repeated over and over again with accompanying phrases without variation from generation to generation. Its counterpart is to be found in the Roman Catholic liturgy and its numerous gestures and postures prescribed by the Church. An even more exact counterpart might also be noted in some monastic orders and their ritualized prayers with accompanying gestures, postures and phrases. These, like the Moslem prayer patterns, must not be varied in any way from what is stated in some of the manuals of prayer and practices such as those found in the Cistercian Order. In both instances, great emphasis is placed

on the non-verbal aspects of prayer which appear to be just as important as the verbal phrases.

An excellent source for data on gestures is the proverbial market place (*sūg*) where one can observe a tremendous variety of gestures ranging from the highly personal, autistic gestures to the technical gestural jargon of fishmongers and other merchants. The market place can be a most fascinating arena that may be used to great advantage, particularly when it is marketing day for the natives, which is usually every day. Among the more interesting sources of data within the market is the traditional bargaining that must take place between a merchant and his customers. Observing such a discussion clearly shows the importance of gestures, body contact, and spatial relationships between the men.

Among the many gestures used are the animated autistic gestures that are used to complement speech. Most of these seem not to follow a given pattern since each individual develops his own that does not necessarily pass into the whole culture. These include peculiar movements such as a turn of the head, chopping motion with one hand to give force to a part of speech or message, a smile that is intended to convey sincerity, and so on with thousands of others. Linked with these one also finds a good deal of body contact; that is, placing hands on forearms, shoulders, and the like. Of course, this also implies a decrease in distance between speakers; thus, there is a marked tendency for speakers to come closer together as they discuss a price, or whatever. Each, as with the visitor approaching a tent for hospitality and his prospective host, are required to carry out the ritual to its completion even though a sale may be lost, or made at the price argued over so vehemently.

Many of these gestures are not used among the more sophisticated, educated segments of Arab society because furniture has been added to the houses negating the need for traditional postures taken on rugs or some other type of ground cover. In fact, it has become quite fashionable among many Arabs to imitate western mannerisms, dress, and so on, a point that has already been discussed above.

Aside from the market place, homes, and the mosque, one can easily observe gestures and all types of body motion in the streets, social events, such as weddings and banquets. In addition, the traditional coffee-house in countries like Lebanon and Syria is an exceptional place to gather data. It would seem that drinking Turkish coffee and playing backgammon (*tawūla*) are national pastimes in these countries. Furthermore, if one has the chance to watch a game of backgammon it can be a most revealing experience, particularly to a Westerner. Some random comments on the game are appropriate here.

Watching two men play backgammon proved to be quite fruitful because those who do play the game take on a set of gestures, postures, and verbal phrases that they would not otherwise use. Indeed, there seems to be an overt transformation that takes place when an individual sits down to play this most popular of Middle Eastern board games. One might observe a rather quiet and reserved man, who, once he has begun to play, becomes animated and verbally abusive while his opponent goes through the same metamorphosis. What is even odder is the fact that that person's behavior returns to its everyday identification once the

game is over. To explain all of this "mysterious" behavior would be impossible but it is a very definite pattern that may be observed in many Arab and other Middle Eastern countries, including Turkey and Iran, plus Greece though technically in Europe.

Of particular interest is the manner in which the dice are thrown. Almost invariably they are tossed with the hand first brought down below the box (or board), then it is raised very quickly and the dice are released with a sudden flick of the wrist which is simultaneously rolled over. The thumb and forefinger usually are thrust out as the cubes are released since they are used to grip them. A slight variation of this action is just after the player throws the dice he snaps his thumb and forefinger, an action that is frequently accompanied by an entreaty to Allah (or one of His other 98 names) or a curse, depending upon the temperament of the individual players. Moreover, it is not unusual for one of the players to get up from the game and refuse to continue after a few words have passed between them about cheating. Invariably, the game continues with tempers at peak pitch at all times and frequent accusations.

As the stones (checkers) are moved from one section of the board to another the players do not simply pick them up and gently set them down again. There is always a great deal of noise during the game which is partially the result of slapping the stones on the board with a quick snap of the wrist just in front of the position at which they are to be placed, then they are forcefully jammed into that position again with a good amount of verbalization. In fact, there is a steady stream of cursing and arguments that continue with the physical movements.

Postures while playing backgammon are also quite interesting because they too are patterned to some extent. Since the box is usually placed on a fairly low table, the players are forced to sit with their legs apart. The left hand is frequently rested on the inside of the left knee with the elbow high in the air. Backs are oftentimes bent so that the face is nearly directly over the board. Of course, eyes are intently focused on the board and upon the opponent's hand as he moves the checkers from position to position to safeguard against cheating. Facial expressions are common but they defy description because of their very personal nature. Furthermore, they indicate little about the culture but a great deal about the individual.

Postures used while sitting and eating relate, to some degree, to the type of clothing worn by men. In Saudi Arabia, for example, men wear a long caftan-like robe called a *thoub* which, to all appearances, is similar to a priest's robe. However, it differs in that it is loosely fitted with a slight flair at the bottom with wide sleeves. The design is functional because it allows for freedom of movement and also because it is quite cool to wear in hot, dry climates.[27] While talking, or waiting for someone, Saudi men will place both feet firmly on the ground, then they will simply lower their haunches so that they barely touch the heels. The knees are pointing up at a slight angle and are directly in front of the chest. Arms are then placed on the knees or around them so that the hands may touch between them. The flowing robe covers the lower members completely so that nothing shows. With a pair of trousers on, this particular posture is difficult to make since

any tension on them at the posterior would rip the seams of the pants. When urinating Saudi men who wear the *thoub* will assume somewhat the same position as described above, except they will bend forward on their toes and spread out the robe so that the urine passes between the thighs and onto the ground, a posture that is fairly common and one which allows for some privacy.

A variation of this posture may be observed when men gather around a large tray of rice and lamb (*kabsa*) which is placed on the ground. They squat down so that the left leg is flat on the ground with the left heel beneath the haunches. The right foot is planted flat in front of the body so that the right knee is pointed directly up. As they eat, the right arm is rested on that knee and the trunk is moved back and forth as they reach into the tray for the food; they then return to the original position between portions or to rest. To gather the rice and meat into their right hands (they eat only with the right hand), they dig into the pile and pick up a bit of food, then it is moved around in a circular motion with the hand until a small ball of food is formed which is then popped into the mouth. While all this is going on the left arm is held behind the body or to the side.

The use of the right hand for eating, drinking, and serving is related to the taboos involving the left hand. In some cultures in the West, as in the Middle East, the left hand is used exclusively for aiding bodily functions such as cleaning out the rectum. Moreover, the left hand is considered evil or at least an instrument of evil and therefore inauspicious. Thus the left hand for a purely practical reason may not touch food and for a deeply ingrained religious taboo may not be used to serve either. In fact, the right hand is the hand most often used to swear oaths in many cultures including that of the Arabs. It is interesting to also note that one punishment for theft is the severance of the right hand. Once that hand has been cut off, it is difficult for that person to adequately function in Moslem society. He has to use the left hand to perform all acts, from aiding bodily functions to eating. Furthermore, he has been marked as an outcast.

Moslem Arabs eat with their right hands, as already noted above, but they also serve food and drink from right hand to right hand but never from left to right or whatever. Coffee, for example, is usually served by a younger male and he fills the cups in his right hand then proffers them to guests who take the cups in their right hands. To indicate to the server that another cup of coffee or tea is not wanted the guest simply holds his right palm over the top of the cup while holding it in the same hand, or he may shake the cup after covering it. In either case, the server will know what these manual signs mean.

ARABIC GESTURES

It is possible to make some generalizations about Arabic gestures, as I have already hinted at in the preceding discussion. However, so little data are available on autistic, culture-induced and technical gestures that any generalizations would be purely speculative right now. Such is not wholly the case with semiotic gestures, since this collection offers a good deal of material on which to base some tentative conclusions. Nonetheless, the following generalizations are offered cautiously un-

til more studies can be made:[28]

(1) Arabic semiotic gestures involve the use of the right hand more than the left. If both hands are required to make the gesture, then it is the right that conveys the basic segment of the meaning. Except in some cases, the right hand is usually used to touch another part of the body.

(2) A significant number of Arabic semiotic gestures are related to Islamic and Arabic traditions; thus, they extend beyond a simple series of messages and take on religious and cultural significance.

(3) Semiotic gestures are linked to male, female, and age groups, although not exclusively by each group since the same configuration for one gesture may be used by more than one group but with different meanings.

(4) Many semiotic gestures collected from adults are obscenities, insults or threats while the remainder are a potpourri of meanings, specifically gestures of thanks, greetings, respect, and so on.

That the right hand is more often used than the left is borne out by statistics. In this particular collection there is a total of sixty-six gestures which utilize the right hand exclusively either in motion, stationary, or in close proximity to a part of the body but not in contact with it. Moreover, there are seventy-five gestures involving the right hand and some part of the body, say the nose, face, chest, and so on. Figures for the left hand are scant indeed when one considers that it is used only rarely when and if the right cannot be used. Thus my count includes no gestures that utilize the left hand exclusively either singly or in contact with some part of the body. Those gestures requiring the use of both hands number thirty, while only nine involve the two hands in contact with some part of the body.

Hamalian's observation, therefore, seems correct when he states that Arabic gestures are generally confined to the hands.[29] He unfortunately does not note that this is valid mainly for semiotic gestures, although he does mention that some body motion is used. One might object to this rather sweeping statement on the ground that there are innumerable culture-induced and autistic gestures that do not require the hands. This is true of not just the Arabs but other peoples as well. Indeed, it is quite probable that any generalizations may be made about autistic gestures at all since they are so personal, whereas a study of culture-induced gestures might reveal many patterns of posture, walking, and so on, as Hewes has shown.[30]

For Arabic semiotic gestures that require the use of both hands, it is the right hand that conveys the greater part of the meaning. Moreover, one may note that in such configurations the left hand is oftentimes stationary whereas the right is the one that is moved. For example, the left hand is held with palm open, the right fist is quickly hit into the palmar surface simultaneously extending the right middle finger. The gesture is a phallic obscenity but the basic meaning is conveyed not by the left hand but by the right (Gesture 68). Other examples are numbers 8, 42, 63, 64, 65, 94, and 118. This observation is significant in that most semiotic gestures requiring the hands usually have one hand in motion, perhaps for emphasis just as one makes autistic gestures to emphasize parts of speech, tone, intonation, and pitch.

Certain Arabic gestures, such as those made to express gratitude, respect, greetings or good-bye, use the right hand almost without exception. For example, one kisses the right fingertips or back of the right hand to gesturally communicate one's gratitude or respect (Gestures 24 and 84). The left hand is never brought to the lips nor is it used to communicate feelings because of what is associated with that hand. This is the result of culturally determined associations that in no small way are related to Islamic tradition. Furthermore, oaths are always made with the right hand either alone or in contact with some body part, usually the nose. There are one or two instances in which both hands are raised to swear an oath but the recurrence of these seems to indicate that the signer is pleading, or imploring Allah for some aid rather than swearing an oath. As with any gesture one must examine the context carefully, particularly the verbal phrases that accompany the gesture.

When a gesture must be made with only one hand in contact with a part of the body the right hand appears to be the one most frequently involved. After shaking hands with another man, for instance, one or both men will place the palms of their right hands on their chests as though to show respect (Gesture 25). Like the Roman gesture of placing the forefinger on the testicles for swearing to tell the truth, the Bedouin do much the same. The judge places his right hand near or on the phallus of a witness who is then required to tell the truth without bias (Gesture 202). The right hand is also associated with amenities, such as thanking someone for lighting a cigarette (Gesture 6) and a show of affection (Gesture 202), each of which involves both the right hand and a part of the body.

There are numerous semiotic gestures that are connected with Arabic cultural traditions, several of which are included here. Some of them are acts of fealty, respect and/or pleas for mercy, while others are simple acts of friendship and courtesy. Fealty, respect or humility are expressed gesturally in a number of ways. For example, when a man of lower status greets a person of higher status, and thus worthy of respect, he kisses the dignitary's right hand, right shoulder, feet or nose (Gestures 115, 121, 122, 135, 138). A plea for mercy is expressed by kissing a dignitary's right hand or foot (Gesture 122).

Expressions of gratitude and thanks are similar to acts of thanks in that there is some hand kissing involved. For instance, if one wants to thank Allah for something then one kisses one's own right hand and then raises that hand to heaven with palm up (Gestures 84 and 111). Greetings are particularly interesting because of their variety. They range from a simple handshake to the kissing of noses. However, handshakes are somewhat different from Western ones in that often when the gesture is completed the men place the palms of their right hands on their own chests as though to emphasize the sanctity of the act (Gestures 25 and 138). Other gestures of greeting include the touching the noses three times (Gestures 116 and 136), the kissing of cheeks and an embrace (Gesture 139), and lip kissing between men (Gesture 140).

The swearing of oaths also offer some insight into the relationship between gestures and culture. As indicated earlier, the right hand is significant for swearing oaths singly or in combination with some body part. Some examples of com-

binations of right hand and body part are made by placing the right hand (or its forefinger) on the tip of the nose (Gesture 96), the right eyelid (Gesture 157), on top of the head (Gesture 178), on the moustache or beard (Gesture 183). These particular gestures are usually accompanied by a verbal phrase such as "on my nose," "on my eyes," and so on. The importance of oath swearing on one's moustache, or beard, is about equal to swearing an oath on one's phallus: the beard and moustache are symbolic of maturity and virility. So, too, with the eyes and nose: to be without them would be disastrous to anyone. Indeed, the significance of the beard among the Bedouin, for example, is illustrated by Gesture 174: warriors victorious in battle cut off the beards of the vanquished to insult not only the loser's fighting ability but also his virility. Gesture 161 also illustrates this point but differs because those defeated have their plaits of hair cut off.[31] It would seem that losing one's beard or plait of hair is equal to losing one's right hand in Arabic culture.

In addition to the gestures discussed above, which are accepted and understood in most Arab cultures, there are quite a number that are confined to Bedouins. Like the beard and moustache, the rope-like circle that holds on the cloth head piece (*agal*) takes on some cultural significance. One Bedouin interviewed stated that you could tell a man's character by the way he wore his *agal.* This comment is akin to the one popular among American cowboys who state that you can read a man's character by the way he sits in the saddle. The variety of ways a man might wear his *agal* is like the many ways a Westerner might wear his hat: to one side, on the back of the head, down over the eyes, and so on. In both the Middle East and in the West the *agal* and the hat respectively become a sort of appendage or symbol of maturity that young men receive when they achieve manhood. It becomes a part of them and something to show off. Thus, in Syria when a man purposely knocks off another's *agal* it is an insult or challenge to fight (Gesture 207), just as children consider the knocking off of a piece of wood from the shoulder as a challenge to fight. When one warrior pardons another an *agal* is unraveled and placed over the head of the pardoned to indicate that that man is now part of the property of the victorious warrior (Gesture 175).

Semiotic gestures that reveal the system of justice among the Bedouin are perhaps numerous. However, I have included only some representative examples to illustrate them. When a man is convicted of theft his right hand is cut off (*Quran*, Sura V. 41), or, as in Saudi Arabia, the judge ties the man's hands with his own headcloth (Gesture 243). Other examples relating to justice are Gestures 204, 302, and 192.

Good or inauspicious omens may be presaged through gestures which one makes before he embarks on a trip. The examples offered here are from the Bedouin and indicate that gestures are related to superstition. For example, a man may throw date stones over his shoulder in hopes that each of them will represent one camel to be captured in a raid (Gesture 134). Before a man leaves on a journey he may count beads (*misbaha*) to determine whether or not he should take the trip (Gesture 132), or he may close his eyes and try to touch the fingertips of both his hands; if he succeeds, then he will take the trip; if he fails,

he will cancel it.[32]

Arabic semiotic gestures that are related to Islamic tradition include prayer gestures and postures. However, examples of religiously oriented gestures in this collection reveal something of the relationship between Moslems during the pilgrimage (*Hadj*). For example, a child may kiss his mother's head during the Holy Days (Gesture 119) as a gesture of respect, or people may kiss only their shoulders when greeting during the Pilgrimage (Gesture 179). This latter gesture is related to Gesture 180, which may be used to greet parents of a recently deceased child. To indicate that a person is not a Moslem, one raises the right forefinger from a fist, then bends that finger so that the tip of it touches its lower joint (Gesture 93).

There is little question that Arabic semiotic gestures are sex-linked; that is, men, women, and children use sets of gestures that are unique to each group, although not exclusively because there is some overlapping. It is possible to discuss in detail gestures used by men because there are a good deal of data available from them. Such is not the situation with women because of the difficulties of setting up interviews with them in the more conservative Arab countries. The same may be true of children as well since so little is available. Moreover, any research on the types of gestures that these groups share should be helpful because we know that mothers communicate gesturally with their children (Gestures 76 and 169), or they with both of their parents (Gesture 27), and men and with women. Certainly, the gestures used and shared by these groups must be commonly understood. When a man propositions a woman (Gestures 4, 15, 82, and 247), for instance, one of them assumes that the meaning will be understood, otherwise the gesture would go unheeded. If she reacted, then the meaning was clear to her.

Whether or not men and women share a great many semiotic gestures is not clearly indicated in this collection because of the scarcity of data from women. There are a few obviously female gestures that have no significance to men. Even though the actual physical configurations may be shared by both groups, the meanings of these gestures differ from each other. For example, when a woman rubs her palms together she is expressing jealousy (Gesture 218), an act which a man would not perform. To silently place a curse on someone a woman in Jordan, for instance, places the back of her right hand on her forehead (Gesture 69) and to indicate that she will not marry again, a woman will stand next to her dead husband's grave (Gesture 211). These are the only examples I have to offer here but, as noted earlier, one must gain access to Arab women before any meaningful statements may be made regarding female gestural patterns.

Many of the semiotic gestures in this collection are insults, obscenities, and threats, although this is not to say that all semiotic gestures are of these types because they are not. Note, for example the wide variety of gestures used for greeting and showing respect. What is particularly intriguing, at least as regards this collection, is the number of ways that men may insult each other, ranging from the low intensity "social finger" to the high intensity "cuckhold" gestures. The impact upon the viewer can be greater for one gesture than for another depending upon the context in which the gesture is made and also the sensitivity of

the viewer. In addition, as with many verbal insults, the gesture, though directed at one person, oftentimes insults his family, say a wife, sister, or mother indirectly. In a country like Saudi Arabia where it is considered impolite to ask about a man's wife, sister, or mother, one might imagine the reaction to a gesture impugning their reputations. Some examples follow.

Gesture 234 is an example of a high intensity gesture because the insult is directed not just at the viewer but also at his mother. The left fingers are joined in a pear-configuration and held horizontally in front of the body, then the right forefinger is placed in the middle of the left fingers. It may mean a number of things but usually implies that the mother was a whore (the five fingers of the left hand representing five men or fathers), thereby casting a shadow over the viewer's parentage and his entire family as well.

Any of the gestures implying that a man's wife has been cheating on him also fall into this category. Like gestures inferring cuckoldry in the West, Arabic gestures are much the same. For example, the familiar "sign of the horns" (Gesture 110) is widely used in the Middle East to mean cuckold. Other examples are Gestures 1, 19, 52 and 53 which involve placing both hands on the temples in varying configurations with the backs of the hands forward or facing backwards with the forefingers extended or all fingers extended. No matter what the configuration, the meaning is still cuckold, not a very pleasant insult for a man in a culture that jealously guards its women from other men.

There are also a number of semiotic gestures that are directed at men specifically as insults in the form of obscenities. Most of them have counterparts in the West like the "social finger," "sign of the fig," and so on. The former gesture has some variations worth noting. Most common among the configurations is the middle finger stiffly extended from the right fist with the back of the hand facing forward (Gesture 43). Oftentimes this is preceded by kissing the tip of the finger which is then thrust out (Gestures 165 and 165a). Variations of this gesture are the stiffly extended thumb (Gesture 44), the "social finger" pointing down with the fingers and thumb spread (Gesture 59) and this latter configuration with the finger pointing up (Gesture 143). The meaning of all these is essentially the same as the slapping of the left biceps with the right hand as the left forearm and fist are quickly moved upwards: a phallic obscenity that would mean "Go screw yourself!" Gesture 68 adds a second hand to the gesture.

The "sign of the fig" also has some variations of the standard configuration with the thumb thrust between the forefinger and middle finger of the same hand (Gesture 45a). One variation simply places the thumb on the middle joint of the middle finger with the other fingers spread out (Gesture 45) and with hand held to one side so that the inside of the hand is clearly visible. Similar to these are the two gestures that involve the quick thrusting of the right fist through a partially opened left hand (Gestures 42, 17, 164). Once the left hand is hit with the right wrist, the signer may grasp it, then move the right hand up and down several times to further emphasize the obscenity.

There are a few other gestures that are as equally graphic in the sense that they reproduce the actual physical movements and the sex organs. Gesture 48 is a good example because it manually outlines the vagina to mean "screw you."

Gesture 102 is even more graphic; it uses the same configuration as number 48 but adds a second element: the male sex organ in the form of a stiff right forefinger which is then moved back and forth in and out of the opening. Note also Gesture 74 which, in a very complex series of movements, reproduces essentially the same thing as Gesture 102: the penis and the vagina as well as the sex act. Other phallic obscenities are illustrated by Gestures 130 and 142, the former of which may be moved up and down beneath the nose (represents the penis).

Perhaps I have dwelt too long on insults but more often than not they are the most revealing and graphic of semiotic gestures. At any rate, they are frequently the most widely diffused of gestures, at least in the Middle East.

Threats are made in much the same manner throughout the Middle East; that is, the extended forefinger is used to threaten an individual. Gestures of this sort may simply involve the stiffly extended forefinger without any significant movement (as in Gesture 22), or with some movement (Gesture 21). However, some configurations use all of the fingers clustered together (Gesture 28), or spread apart with the forefinger or middle finger pressed down by the thumb, and with vigorous movement of the hand (Gestures 46 and 71). In Gesture 91, the tip of the forefinger is moved across the throat to imply that something serious will happen, while in Gesture 95 it is used to push in the tip of the nose to infer a threat.

Perhaps the most widely diffused gesture in the Middle East is Gesture 144, which involves a quick snap of the head upwards with an accompanying click with the tongue. Although it has a variety of meanings, it generally means "No," "Perhaps," "What you say is false," and so on. It is one of those rare gestures that foreign residents readily acquire and use when living in the Arab world. In fact, there is a short joke which utilizes the gesture as a punch line and which is worth noting here.

> A young Englishman has come to the Middle East to teach but he has to leave his young wife at home. After some time a student of his comes to inform him that he is about to leave for England for a period of advanced study. Of course, the instructor is quite pleased and proud that this young Arab should be going to England. He therefore gives the fellow his wife's address so that he might visit her. A few months pass until the teacher has a chance to go home for a short visit. Upon arrival in England, he quickly rushes to his house to see his wife. After becoming re-acquainted with each other, he asks her if this young Arab had come to visit her. She then snaps her head upwards and clicks her tongue as an answer.

TYPES OF GESTURES

Although the subject of this paper is Arabic semiotic (folk) gestures, it is not inappropriate at this point to briefly discuss types of gestures. For purposes of discussion and classification, therefore, we may discern four general groups: (1) autistic, or personal; (2) culture-induced, or determined; (3) technical; and

(4) semiotic, or folk gestures. None of these groups is all inclusive or exclusive since there is extensive overlapping from one group to another. Just where one group begins or leaves off and another starts may only be determined arbitrarily since some members of one group may serve the function and purpose of another group in given contexts. The following discussion should at least set up some major distinctions that may be used as general parameters.[33]

Briefly, then, autistic gestures are those bodily movements that are highly personal in nature, or unique to a particular person. These may take the form of specific hand movements while that person is speaking. For example, a person may use a given hand movement to regularly mark certain parts of speech or to emphasize pitch or intonation.[34] Or that person may utilize a peculiar facial expression, stance or posture in some situations. What is significant here is that these gestures are patterned in the same or similar contexts. In a sense, they are predictable. Such movements border on the instinctual and appear to be a definite factor in the verbal act of communication, although they may be used in situations other than as adjuncts to speech. However, once separated from speech they have no meaning since some of them complement speech patterns. Those that are used apart from speech have meaning only to persons who are thoroughly familiar with another person's autistic gestures, say, a family member.

Whether or not autistic gestures are instinctual is a question yet to be answered by psychologists. But when and if these gestures are transmitted from individual to individual they become a problem for anthropologists and folklorists because they would become culture-induced gestures and might further be considered a part of the store of traditions of a given culture. Autistic gestures may, therefore, evolve into culture-induced gestures or they are passed on as learned traits among the members of a culture, although data are lacking to support this idea. Some examples of autistic gestures that might become culture-induced gestures are numbers two and three presented in this collection. Indeed, these examples may also be designated as "universal" or "natural" signs, if one cares to use these terms.[35] Others that may fit are numbers 29, 30, and 51.

Closely related to autistic gestures are culture-induced gestures. Like the first group these are also linked to the act of communication and also border on the instinctual. Unlike autistic gestures, however, culture-induced gestures are learned like any symbolic code such as speech, except that in the case of this type of gesture as opposed to speech, the act of learning them is perhaps less conscious; that is, individuals of a specific culture learn these gestures through imitation and practice. Thus, a son will mimic his father's manner of walking or sitting or even eating just as his father imitated his father, and so on into the past.

Of interest is the fact that some observers have noted the development of "dialects" in culture-induced gestures. Since sitting, walking, eating, and postures (stance) are included in this main group, one may note that through careful observations of these gestures individuals from different sections of a country walk differently. These "dialect" differences are simply variations on a standard pattern but with perceptively odd characteristics that may become localized over periods of time. La Barre, Hewes, and Barakat discuss these in some detail.[36]

Moreover, it is these types of gestures that make an individual seem peculiarly odd when he is placed in an alien culture. His mannerisms, though they are perfectly acceptable in his own culture, become markers that identify him as a foreigner. It is precisely these gestures, "native" gestures, that one attempts to drop when he wishes to become a member of another society or culture group and adopts their set of gestures. Autistic gestures are a bit more difficult to cast aside and they must be suppressed if possible. Some examples of culture-induced gestures are numbers 61, 72, and 181, shown on pages

The third major group of gestures, the technical, represent a radically different type than either of the two former groups. They are radically different because they, like semiotic gestures, are true substitutes for speech; that is, they are characterized by their arbitrariness, their required prior verbal agreement for meanings and their rather limited use among a select group of professional classes. Like speech, technical gestures are arbitrary in meaning which indicates that the same physical configuration, if it were used in more than one system of technical gestures, will have dissimilar meanings in both systems. Thus, when a particular technical gesture is transmitted to a second professional group's system the meaning will be completely lost; only the configuration will remain intact.

As true substitutes for speech such gestures not only are arbitrary in nature but they require the prior verbal agreement of the group that used them before they may have meaning and therefore effectiveness. That this agreement is necessary needs little discussion here since the members of the group could not silently communicate if meanings were not predetermined. A member who has need of these gestures, learns them through study and practice just as he would learn any other symbolic code.

Technical gestures have limited use among professional groups who need some form of silent communication in situations that might prove awkward or situation in which distance and background noise prevent verbal exchanges. Thus one finds crane operators, auctioneers, referees, umpires, merchants, truck drivers, and members of monastic orders utilizing such codes. Then there are the more systematic sign languages that are composed of technical gestures, including that of the deaf-mute community, the North American Indian sign language, that of the Cistercian Order, and finally the sign languages of the dance such as one finds in India. These may be considered attempts to systematize technical gestures into ordered languages that bear many similarities to speech. Unfortunately, as with the Cistercian sign language, some of these are simply lexical languages and not highly systematized as is the case with speech.[37]

Semiotic, or folk, gestures, as noted above are substitutes for speech, arbitrary in meaning and require prior verbal agreement from the members of a community to standardize meaning with that group. The basic characteristics of semiotic gestures are essentially the same as those that define technical gestures. The primary differences between the two types are simply that technical gestures are part of a greater system of silent communication that may be used to signal messages with some order to them, whereas semiotic gestures are part of a group of gestures that are diverse and fragmented in meaning; that is, they may not be placed in any order to convey complex messages such as one might do with tech-

nical gestures. In addition, semiotic gestures are more subject to change in meanings than technical gestures, although the physical configurations rarely change. Semiotic gestures are also handed down from generation to generation as part of a culture's store of traditions; thus, semiotic gestures are known and used by a larger segment of members of a culture than technical gestures whose use is limited to small professional groups.

Like technical gestures, semiotic ones have meaning only within a given group or culture. Once the gestures are transmitted to another culture, the meanings are altered, modified or completely lost. The use of a semiotic gesture from one culture cannot be assumed to have the same, or even a similar, meaning in two or more cultures. Thus, when using semiotic gestures, indeed all gestures, an individual must exercise some discretion because these gestures might be misinterpreted and could create some problems of communication.[38]

Unlike technical gestures whose meanings remain quite constant with a particular context that changes little itself from year to year, semiotic gestures can be as vital and ever-changing as speech words. There is a discernable tendency in some societies in which the mass media are influential for people to pick up a gesture and give it new meanings. Diverse segments of these societies snatch it from the folk tradition and literally "beat it to death" until its original meaning is lost altogether in the maze of more up-to-date ones. An example will serve to illustrate this point.

When Winston Churchill resurrected from oblivion the "V for Victory" sign he did it for a specific reason: to rally the British behind him and the cause of the Allies. This sign became his trademark and, to the traditionally minded, was usually associated with this statesman.[39] However, over the course of nearly three decades the "V for Victory" sign has come to mean several things. Among the hippies it means "I have pot," while to people involved in the Civil Rights Movement it means "We are all brothers," and a sign that rallies the alienated to a cause. To the general public, who have taken it up, it may mean several things: (a) greeting or a goodbye; (b) a sign that all will go well because that person making the gesture is right in his cause; (c) simply "peace." Of course, the context in which the sign is made must be carefully observed since nuances of meaning might affect its ultimate meaning. Thus the sign as Churchill used it has been pushed aside in favor of other, more up-to-date meanings, although it still is used to mean "Victory by many who are anti-war.

Many semiotic gestures have their counterparts among technical gestures. Although these generally have different meanings there are some that share not only the same physical configurations but also the same meanings. That many technical gestures were originally from the folk tradition seems a good explanation because when people devise a technical gesture they are likely to draw on their knowledge of semiotic gestures. For example, there are numerous signs from the Cistercian sign language that can be traced to folk tradition. The sign for *president* is the same as the "social finger" and the sign for *invitator* is the same as the "sign of the fig." In both cases the physical configurations are the same but the meanings are different. However, the sign for *dead* is like that of one from Italian folk tradition and means exactly the same thing (push underside

of chin with tip of right thumb). Other examples can be found among other sign languages, such as the deaf-mute sign language and that of the North American Indians, which would prove of interest.

A NOTE ON THE PHOTOGRAPHS

One unfortunate drawback of working in the Middle East, particularly in the more conservative Moslem countries, is that photography is frowned upon by many Arabs. When doing my fieldwork here in the United States and in the Arab world I found it necessary to make brief notes on the gestures and the contexts in which they occured rather than risk antagonizing my informants by photographing them. I later had a professional photographer take pictures of me making the individual gestures, a poor substitute for the real thing. Generally, these pictures depict quite well the simpler gestures, but nonetheless the still photograph is poor medium for capturing the essence and subtlety of physical action. The difficulty of recreating a semiotic gesture, indeed any gesture, is very real but to recreate it with all of the accompanying body movements is nearly an impossibility. Gesture 210 in this collection serves to illustrate this point.

Note that the tongue is thrust out from the mouth and it is also puffed up so that it fills the whole oral cavity. Second, note that the hands are extended before the body and that the back is bent back slightly. In a real situation this particular gesture is quite complicated in that all of these movements must be carried out simultaneously. The hands are first down near the waist with palms in, and they are then brought up and turned over so that they end up as depicted in the photograph. As this is done, one makes a strange slurping sound. There are even more complex body motions which could only be recorded on motion picture film or videotape. This all simply means that still photography is at best a fair approximation of most gestures. For careful descriptions of gestures, we must depend on the written word or the motion picture and videotape.

NOTES

[1] Archer Taylor, "Folklore and the Student of Literature," *The Pacific Spectator*, 2 (1948), 216-223, reprinted in Alan Dundes (ed.), *The Study of Folklore* (New Jersey, 1965), pp. 35-37; see also Taylor's "The Shanghai Gesture," FF Communications No. 166 (Helsinki, 1956) for a marvelous application of some of his ideas on gesture studies.

[2] Jan Brunvand, *The Study of American Foklore* (New York, 1968), pp. 242-251; Robert A. Barakat, "Gesture Systems," *Keystone Folklore Quarterly*, XIV (Fall 1969), 105-121.

[3] Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (New York, 1959) and his book, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York, 1966) relate a great deal of material about postures, proxemics, and cultural behavior that might prove of interest to the folklorist; see also Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York, 1959).

[4] Weston La Barre, "Paralinguistics, Kinesics, and Cultural Anthropology,"

in *Approaches to Semiotics*, eds. Thomas Sebeok, *et al.* (The Hague, 1964), pp. 191-220; G. T. Hewes, "World Distribution of Certain Postural Habits," *American Anthropologist*, 57:2, Part 1 (April 1955), 231-244; and Hall, *Dimension*, pp. 131-164.

[5]Robert Sommer, *Personal Space: The Behavioral Basis of Design* (New Jersey, 1969); Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Introduction to Kinesics* (Louisville, 1952). Both authors have excellent commentaries of these subjects and Sommer has an outstanding series of notes for source materials.

[6]Francis Hayes, "Gestures: A Working Bibliography," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, XXI (December 1957), 218-317.

[7]Although Dr. Hayes cites several publications of a popular nature there are a great many excellent sources of vast importance to the study of gestures noted in the bibliography. In addition, as more and more research is published each year it may be necessary to re-do his work to bring it up to date. I should like to note in passing that the Human Relations Area Files should prove to be a good source of information on gestures, too.

[8]William Stokoe, "Sign Language Structure: An Outline of the Visual Communication Systems of the American Deaf," *Studies in Linguistics*, Occasional Papers No. 8 (Buffalo, 1960) and Stokoe's *The Study of Sign Language* (Washington, D. C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1970).

[9]Robert A. Barakat, *The Cistercian Sign Language: A Study in Non-Verbal Communication*, Cistercian Studies Series, Vol. 11 (Dublin, forthcoming); Garrick Mallery, *Sign Language Among North American Indians*, U. S. Bureau of Ethnology, I (Washington, 1879-1880), pp. 263-552.

[10]Francis Hayes, "Should We Have a Dictionary of Gestures?" *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, IV (1940), 239-245.

[11]Andrea de Jorio, *La Mimica degli Antichi Investigata nel Gestiri* (Napoli, 1832); David Efron, *Gesture and Environment* (New York, 1941); see Hall, *Dimension*, pp. 131.164.

[12]Leonhard Bauer, *Volksleben im Lande der Bibel* (Leipzig, 1903).

[13]W. D. Brewer, "Patterns of Gesture among the Leventine Arabs," *American Anthropologist*, 53 (1951), 235-237.

[14]Leo Hamalian, "Communication by Gesture in the Middle East," *Etc: A Review of General Semantics*, 22 (March 1965), 43; see Ray L. Birdwhistell, "Some Relations Between American Kinesics and Spoken American English," in *Communication and Culture*, ed. Alfred Smith (New York, 1966), 182-189; Dwight Bolinger, *Aspects of Language* (New York, 1968), pp. 13-15; Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I (London, 1903), pp. 164-165; Luigi Barzini, *The Italians* (New York, 1967), pp. 62-66.

[15]Hamalian, 43.

[16]Leonard Bloomfield, *Language* (New York, 1961), p. 39.

[17]La Barre, "Paralinguistics," 203.

[18]Edward Burnett Tylor, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind* (New York, 1878), p. 44.

[19]Barakat, "Gesture Systems," 109-110.

[20]La Barre, "Paralinguistics," 203.

[21] Quotes from Shakespeare's plays are from G. B. Harrison (ed.) *Shakespeare: The Complete Plays* (New York, 1952).

[22] Hamalian, 44; Barakat, "Gesture Systems," 109-110; Tylor, *Primitive*, I, p. 164.

[23] Barakat, "Gesture Systems," 109-110.

[24] Mary R. Haas, "Interlingual Word Taboos," in *Language in Culture and Society*, ed. Dell Hymes (New York, 1964), 489-494; Robert A. Barakat, "Interlingual Word Taboos among Arab Students," *Folklore Forum*, 2 (September 1969), 124.

[25] Hamalian, 44.

[26] Alois Musil, *The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouin* (New York, 1928), p. 64; pp. 97-98; p. 102.

[27] Barakat, "Gesture Systems," 108-109.

[28] See section in this paper entitled "Gesture Types" for a discussion of terms used to type gestures.

[29] Hamalian, 44.

[30] Hewes, "World Distribution," 231-244.

[31] Musil, p. [32] Musil, p.

[33] Barakat, "Gesture Systems," 105-116.

[34] Bolinger, pp. 13-15; Birdwhistell, *Introduction, pp. 5-24.*

[35] There is some question as to the validity of these designations since the contexts in which gestures occur vary considerably from culture to culture as do the gestures themselves. Stokoe discusses this in his monography, "Sign Language Structure," 10-11.

[36] See footnotes 2, 4, for references.

[37] Barakat, "Gesture Systems," 115-120, and his *Cistercian Sign Language* (forthcoming).

[38] Weston La Barre, "The Cultural Basis of Emotions and Gestures," *Journal of Personality*, i6 (1947), 53; Hall, *Silent*, pp. 10-12.

[39] Edgar A. Schuler, "V for Victory: A Study in Symbolic Social Control," *Journal of Social Psychology*, 14 (May 1944), 283-299; also see footnote 17 in Barakat's "Gesture Systems" for newer meanings of this gesture.

ARABIC GESTURE COLLECTION

(Items with an asterisk are not included in the photos.)

(1) Place fourth fingers of both hands in ears with the backs of the hands facing forward and the other fingers spread out: Cuckold. Syria, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

(2) Hit the side of one's face with the palm of one hand, head is tilted slightly to one side and the eyes are opened wide: Expression of surprise. Syria, Libya, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon. Autistic gesture.

(3) With the tip of the right or left forefinger scratch the back of one's head: trying to think out a problem or possibly a gesture that indicates veracity of what someone else has said as that person is talking. Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria. Autistic gesture.

*(4) Gently blow smoke into a woman's face: indicates that one who makes gesture desires that woman. Northern Syria. Semiotic gesture.

*(5) While someone is speaking slowly turn one's head or back to that person: implies that one doubts that person's statement, or that one does not want to listen further. Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia. Autistic, semiotic or culturally determined gesture.

*(6) When someone is lighting one's cigarette, touch the back of that person's hand with the tips of one's right fingers, then place these finger tips on one's forehead in a sort of salute and bow the head slightly forward: expression of thanks. Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(7) Rub the tips of the right forefinger and right thumb with other fingers pressed into the palm: reference to money. Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(8) Hit tightly closed right fist into left palm: may mean that you want to sleep with some woman to whom the gesture is made, or may be an expression of anger. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic, autistic gesture.

(9) Move right arm up from about waist level to over right shoulder with palm facing up throughout the making of the gesture; head is also tilted backwards and eyes are raised upwards as the hand is moved up: swearing an oath. Libya, Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(10) Hold right hand before right shoulder with palm facing forward: swearing an oath. Libya, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

*(11) Pinch the right cheek of another person with tips of right forefinger and thumb: gesture of affection. Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Libya. Semiotic, culturally determined gesture.

(12) Pick one's nostrils with tips of right forefinger and thumb, then quickly thrust hand out with middle finger extended stiffly: show of disgust or a phallic obscenity. Libya, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(13) Grasp chin with tips of right fingers: need assistance. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(14) Hold one hand or both hands before body with palms down, then move them up and down slightly several times: quiet down. Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Libya. Semiotic gesture.

*(15) When shaking hands with a woman a man places his right thumb on the back of her right hand and rubs the back slightly with the thumb: proposition. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(16) Clench both fists at waist level with thumbs extended in opposite directions: expression of anger or defiance. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic, autistic gesture.

(17) Grasp left wrist or forearm with right hand then move left fist rapidly up and down with right hand still grasping wrist or forearm: obscenity. Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(18) Flick the tip of one's nose with the tip of the right forefinger: implies that the person to whom the gesture is made is a homosexual. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(19) Place tips of thumbs on both temples with palms facing forward and fingers spread widely, then move fingers back and forth: Cuckold. Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(20) Hold hands at sides with palms up and head tilted back: swearing an oath. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

(21) Extend right forefinger from fist then shake the finger at someone: threatening gesture. Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Autistic, or culture-induced gesture.

(22) Extend right forefinger from fist and point directly at someone without moving the finger: expression of anger; threat. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Autistic, or culture-induced gesture.

(23) Hold right hand with palm down at left side of body, then move it quickly from left side to the right and turn body slightly as the hand is moved: "don't bother me," or "go away." Culture-induced gesture.

(24) Touch the tips of the right forefinger, second finger and thumb to mouth and bow slightly as one performs the first gesture: show of respect to person to whom gesture is made.
Variation (a): Touch mouth then forehead as body is bowed. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture, or culture-induced gesture.

(25) Press palm of right hand on chest: greeting, or thank you. Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Culture-induced or semiotic gesture.

(26) Press right palm on stomach then move the hand in a circular motion while still in contact: expression of hunger. Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Culture-induced gesture, or semiotic gesture.

*(27) Touch the lower lip of a child with tip of right forefinger: quiet down, or keep quiet. Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait. Culture-induced or semiotic gesture.

(28) Join tips of right thumb, forefinger and middle finger, then move the configuration rapidly in front of the body: threat. Saudi Arabia, Jordan. Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

(29) Hit front of forehead with palm of right hand and move head back as hand makes contact: expression of one's own stupidity, or surprise. Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon. Autistic gesture.

(30) Hit right thigh with palm of right hand: expression of surprise, joy, or that one has remembered something. Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Autistic gesture.

*(31) Pat another person's shoulder with right hand: conciliatory gesture. Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia. Autistic, or culture-induced gesture.

*(32) Flick the underside of a woman's chin with the tip of right forefinger: conciliatory gesture, or "cheer up." Jordan, Syria, Lebanon. Culture-induced gesture.

(33) Pick one's nostrils with right forefinger and thumb: insult ("Go to hell"). Syria.

(34) Place the tip of the right forefinger on lower eyelid of right eye: implies that person to whom gesture is made is stupid. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(35) Turn right hand over quickly at about waist level: insult. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(36) Move open hands over each other several times on chest: teasing gesture. Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

*(37) Children join little fingers of right hands: indicates they are enemies. Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.
Variation (a): may also mean they are friends: Saudi Arabia.

*(38) Children join forefingers of right hands: indicates they are friends. Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.
Variation (a): may also mean they are enemies: Saudi Arabia.

(39) Wet the tip of right little finger then rub it along right eyebrow: person to whom gesture is made is a homosexual, or that person might be mentioned in a conversation. Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

*(40) Hold up open hands in front of respective shoulders, then move them forward a few times with palms facing forward: curse on person to whom gesture is made. Jordan, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(41) Hold out right hand in front of body then turn it slowly with thumb and fingers extended loosely: obscenity. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(42) Hold left hand out with palm up and fingers curled slightly, then, with a thrusting motion, move right fist through left hand and grasp the forearm of the right hand: obscenity. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(43) Extend stiff middle finger from right fist with other fingers pressed into palm and back of hand forward: phallic obscenity. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(44) Extend stiff thumb from right fist: phallic obscenity. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.
Variation (a): may also mean everything is allright. Technical gesture.

(45) Place tip of right thumb on second joint of middle finger of right hand with other fingers extended: phallic obscenity. Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.
Variation (a): place thumb between forefinger and middle finger of

right fist: phallic obscenity (sign of the fig). Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(46) Right forefinger is held firmly down by the right thumb with other fingers extended like a fan, and hand is then moved several times: threat. Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(47) Touch tips of the right middle finger and thumb to form a circle with other fingers extended: obscenity. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(48) Touch tips of right forefinger and thumb to form the equivalent of an anal passage or vagina and hold the configuration in front of the stomach with other fingers held into palm: obscenity. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(49) Move open right hand at right side of buttocks and thrust out right buttocks while hand is moved: insult. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(50) Press tips of right forefinger and thumb together with other fingers pressed into palm then move the hand up and down with a wrist motion (pecking motion): obscenity. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(51) Rub the back of one's neck with palm of the right hand: indicates that one would like to meet the woman to whom gesture is made. Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

(52) Place tips of thumbs on temples with other fingers extended and palms forward, the fingers are wiggled: cuckold. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(53) Place thumbs flat against temples with forefingers extended and other fingers pressed into palms: cuckold. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(54) Touch tips of right fingertips to forehead while bowing head slightly: gesture of respect but may also mean goodbye or hello. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait. Semiotic gesture, and culture-induced.

*(55) Touch tips of right fingers to forehead then chest and back to forehead while bowing slightly forward: gesture used for greeting. Jordan, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture, and culture-induced gesture.

*(56) With the right hand tap the back of one's neck: reference to homosexual. Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

*(57) When shaking hands with another person of the same sex (usually two men) do so loosely rather than firmly: sexual (homosexual) inference. Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

(58) Pick the top of the right ear with the right thumb and forefinger: teasing gesture. Lebanon. Semiotic, and possibly a culture-induced gesture.

(59) Hold out right hand with palm facing down and forefinger pointed downward with other fingers held out stiffly: phallic obscenity. Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan. Semiotic gesture.

(60) Place palm of right hand on back of left hand with fingers slightly interlocked then rotate thumbs several times: obscenity or teasing gesture. Lebanon, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(61) Move the right forefinger in a circular motion near the right temple with head tilted slightly: person to whom gesture is made, or about whom it

is made, is crazy. Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Culture-induced or semiotic gesture.

(62) Tap right temple with tip of right forefinger then throw the finger out to side of head, wrinkle brows, and tilt head slightly to one side: person to whom gesture is made is crazy. Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Culture-induced or semiotic gesture.

(63) Raise left arm slowly and pass the right hand beneath it simultaneously as body turns slightly: gesture of defiance. Jordan, Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

(64) Form an inverted V-configuration with left forefinger and middle finger then place extended right forefinger between the V and move it back and forth rapidly: gesture of defiance. Jordan, Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

(65) Place heel of right fist into open palm of left hand and grind right heel into the palm: obscenity. Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

*(66) Rub tip of thumb and index finger together: obscenity. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(67) Place forefinger sidewards in mouth and bite it, then remove the finger and shake it vigorously: reference to luck of another person. Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(68) Hit tightly closed right fist into left palm and just as the right hand hits the palm extend the middle finger: phallic obscenity. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(69) Rub the back of right hand on forehead: curse on the person to whom gesture is made. Jordan. A semiotic gesture usually used by women.

(70) Extend tongue from open mouth: teasing gesture. Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq. Semiotic gesture.

(71) Hold middle finger down with thumb with other fingers extended then shake hand at someone: expression of anger or a threat. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(72) Extend right forefinger from fist and point upwards with eyes looking up: expression of anger or swearing an oath. Saudi Arabia, Syria. Semiotic or culture-induced gesture.

(73) Place tip of right forefinger on right eyelid and rub lightly: bad luck to person to whom gesture is made or gesture to prevent the evil eye. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(74) Place hands back to back and interlock fingers, then twist hands in opposite directions until thumb is protruding from opening made by hands: phallic obscenity. Saudi Arabia, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(75) Place extended right forefinger before mouth then blow on it: admonition to be quiet. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(76) Child holds up both hands with palms forward and fingers spread wide when asked : "How much do you love your mother?": gesture is used to answer the question and means "this much." Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(77) Hold forefinger and middle finger together with other fingers pressed

tightly into palm beneath the thumb: gesture to indicate friendship. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(77a) *Variation*: rub both forefingers together several times while fingers are extended forward: indication of friendship or a teasing gesture. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(78) Grasp chin with thumb side of right fist: sign of wisdom or maturity. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(79) Hold right forefinger down with thumb and extend other fingers: swearing an oath or a threatening gesture if it is moved rapidly. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(80) Gently graze the chin of another person with right fist: admonition not to argue. Saudi Arabia, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

*(81) Gently graze another person's chin with the tip of right forefinger: threat or challenge. Lebanon, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(82) Tickle the palm of a woman when shaking hands, usually with the forefinger: proposition. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.
Variation: two men may do the same thing.

*(83) Place palm of right hand on chest and bow head a little and close eyes: thank you (in the name of Allah). Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(84) Kiss the back of right hand, then move hand so that its palm is facing up and raise eyes simultaneously: thank you (in the name of Allah). Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(85) Extend right thumb from right fist and move it in a circular motion: obscenity, or a proposition between a man and a woman, although the man makes the gesture. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(86) Extend thumb from right fist but do not move it: item refered to is the best. Libya. Semiotic gesture.

*(87) Extend thumb from right fist but do not move it: obscenity. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.
Variation: may also be a technical gesture when used by pilots to indicate that everything is all right. Technical gesture.

*(88) Hold right thumb out from fist and move back and forth over right shoulder: used to indicate where someone has gone. Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria. Semiotic gesture, or possibly culture-induced gesture.

(89) Hold tips of right forefinger, middle finger and thumb in pear shaped configuration and kiss while bowing slightly forward, then flick the hand up: item refered to is of excellent quality. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(90) Hold right hand with palm down and fingers stiff, then move the hand from left to right across the body: never. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon. Autistic gesture.

(91) Rub stiff right forefinger across throat with head tilted back slightly, usually finger is moved from left to right with a squeaking noise accompanying the gesture: threat or warning. Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Semiotic gesture.

*(92) Hold extended right forefinger at about waist level, then move it up in a

circular motion to its original position: "see you the day after tomorrow." Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria. Autistic gesture or possibly semiotic gesture.

*(93) Hold up right forefinger from fist then bend the finger so that the tip is touching the lowest joint of that finger with other fingers held into palm: reference to person who is not a Moslem. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(94) Hold out right fist then grasp the right wrist with left hand and move the right hand up and down rapidly; wrist may be grasped from beneath or on top: obscenity. Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(95) Push tip of nose in with right forefinger: threat. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(96) Touch the tip of nose with tip of right forefinger: promise to do something accompanied by phrase: "on my nose." Libya, Saudi Arabia, Syria. Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

(97) Flick right thumbnail on front teeth: "I have no money," or "I have only a little." Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(98) Clasp hands over right shoulder and shake vigorously: gesture of support or joy, or expression of winning. Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Autistic gesture, or possibly semiotic gesture.

(99) Shrug shoulders and hold out hands with palms up with head tilted to one side slightly: expression of "I don't know," or "perhaps." Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Autistic gesture.

*(100) Move hands up from about waist level with palms up: disagreement. Lebanon, Saudi Arabia. Autistic or semiotic gesture, and possibly culture-induced.

*(101) Move eyebrows up and down rapidly: flirting with a woman. Lebanon, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture, or possibly autistic gesture.

(102) Place right forefinger into hole formed by tips of left thumb and forefinger touching, then move the forefinger in and out of the opening: obscenity. Lebanon, Libya. Semiotic gesture.

*(103) Push tip of nose in with right forefinger: insult indicating that person to whom gesture is made is a Negro (see gesture 95). Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(104) Hold hands at shoulder level with palms forward then turn head slightly to one side: surrender. Libya, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Jordan. Semiotic gesture.

*(105) Hold tip of forefinger and thumb together with other fingers pressed into palm then move the hand up and down rapidly in a pecking motion: obscenity. Lebanon, Libya. Semiotic gesture.

*(106) Hit right fist into open palm of left hand: obscenity. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(107) Wag tongue from one side of mouth to the other but do not extend the tongue fully from mouth: proposition made by man to woman. Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

*(108) Stroke chin with fingers of right hand with downward motion: sign of

respect to whom gesture is made but may also mean "shame" on that person. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(109) Hit side of face with palm of right hand then while still in contact rub the hand downward on cheek: swearing an oath. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(110) Extend forefinger and thumb of right hand with other fingers pressed into palm and back of hand up: cuckold. Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Semiotic gesture.

*(111) Kiss the back of right hand then raise it with the palm up: expression of gratitude. Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

*(112) Snap forefinger, or middle finger on thumb: forgot something. Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Autistic gesture.

*(113) Hold up right hand with palm facing backward and move fingers and hand back: goodbye. Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(114) Rub slightly closed palms together in front of body: regret. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture, or culture-induced gesture.

*(115) Kiss the forehead, nose or feet or right hand of person whom greeting: gesture of extreme respect. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(116) Bedouin touch their noses three times when greeting each other: expression of friendship, or greeting. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(117) Touch tip of nose with back of right hand and simultaneously move head back and forth as the nose is touched: indication of friendship. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(118) Grind tip of right forefinger into left palm: obscenity. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

*(119) Children kiss the tops of their mothers' head during Moslem Holy days: gesture of respect. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(120) Kiss the top of another man's head after quarreling: apology. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(121) Kiss the feet of a dignitary: respect or humility. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(122) Kiss the back of a dignitary's hand: ask for mercy. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(123) Raise number of fingers one will pay for an item: indication of how much one will pay. Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Autistic gesture.

(124) Rub right palm down over face of another person: curse on that person. Libya, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(125) Bite right forefinger which is placed sidewards in mouth: threat or expression of regret (see gesture 67). Egypt, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(126) Twist tip of forefinger into cheek: one uses this when speaking to a beautiful woman: Libya, Semiotic gesture.

*(127) Run the tip of right forefinger down the cheek of a woman: compliment. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(128) Brush palm and back of right hand back and forth over inside of left forearm several times like stropping a razor: teasing. Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

(129) Hold up forefinger and middle finger with palm forward and other fingers pressed into palm: victory. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(130) Hold up forefinger and middle finger with palm facing body and then pump the hand up and down several times: obscenity: Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.
Variation: V-configuration may be placed beneath the nose and pumped up and down.

(131) Place thumbs of both hands in mouth with other fingers pointed directly at someone: sign of surrender. Bedouin (Rwala) of Kuwait, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(132) Count beads (odd or even) before taking a trip: done to decide whether or not to take the trip, or embark on another enterprise. Bedouin (Rwala) of Kuwait, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(133) Man shuts his eyes and holds out both hands with fingers pointed towards each other slowly so that the fingertips touch exactly; if they do then a trip may be taken, if not, the trip must be cancelled: omen. Bedouin (Rwala) of Kuwait, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(134) Men will eat dates; then will throw stones over his shoulder: each stone indicates a camel acquired in a raid. Bedouin (Rwala) of Kuwait, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(135) Kiss the nose and then the right hand of a dignitary: respect and humility. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(136) Two men touch noses three times then smack lips: greeting. Saudi Arabia (Bedouin), Semiotic gesture.

*(137) Hold right hand with back forward then lightly brush the tips of fingers beneath chin several times with forward motion: insult. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(138) When greeting a dignitary or person of respect, men will shake right hands then the person of lower rank kisses his own hand and then places it on his chest and bows slightly: gesture of respect. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(139) When two men meet they kiss each other's cheeks (one side then the other) and place hands on each other's shoulders as this is done: greeting. Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(140) Two men kiss quickly on the lips: greeting. Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Semiotic gesture.

*(141) Men kisses woman on forehead; son kisses mother on lips or forehead; girls kiss older woman on forehead: greeting. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture, or culture-induced gesture.

(142) Place palms together then bend two middle fingers while other fingers are still extended in contact, and move hands in opposite directions while in contact so that fingers (middle) are extended, one up, the other

down: obscenity. Egypt. Semiotic gesture.

(143) Hold out hand with fingers extended then bend the forefinger: obscenity. Egypt. Semiotic gesture.

*(144) Snick teeth with tongue and simultaneously lift head quickly: "No, never," "perhaps," or "I don't believe you." Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

*(145) Shake head from side to side several times: "No." Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Autistic gesture, or culture-induced gesture.

*(146) Shake head from side to side and snick teeth at the same time: moral comment. Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

*(147) Rub hands lightly in front of body: finished. Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Autistic gesture, possibly culture-induced gesture.

(148) Extend right forefinger from fist then place tip of thumb on lower joint: to indicate a small amount or size. Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture, culture-induced gesture.

*(149) Hold hand out before body with palm down then turn the hand a little several times: "What can I do?" or answer to question "How are you?" to indicate "So and so." Lebanon, Syria. Semiotic gesture, or culture-induced gesture.

(150) Place tip of right forefinger into left palm and twist it a bit: obscenity, teasing, or expression of jealousy. Egypt. Semiotic gesture.

(151) Hold fingers in pear shaped configuration so that they are pointing forward, then quickly open them: "Go away," or "Don't bother me": Egypt. Semiotic gesture.

(152) Hold fingers in pear shaped configuration with tips pointing up at about waist level and move hand slightly up and down: "Wait until later," "Enough," or "Be careful": Lebanon, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(153) Hook right forefinger over tip of nose: "I'll do it in spite of you": Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(154) Bite lower lip with upper teeth and shake head from side to side: expression of anger. Saudi Arabia. Autistic gesture.

(155) Bite middle joint of right forefinger with heel of hand pointing forward and hand closed: apology. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(156) Move tongue in and out of mouth rapidly: person to whom gesture is made is a liar. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(157) Place tip of right forefinger on right upper eyelid: swearing an oath. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(158) Shake coffee cup with radial motion: used to decline another cup of coffee. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture, or culture-induced gesture. *Variation*: place palm of right hand over cup and shake a little.

*(159) Coffee, tea or food is always proferred from right hand to right hand of guest: culture-induced gesture. Saudi Arabia, and other Moslem countries.

*(160) Before serving coffee a bit of it is poured onto the ground: sacrifice.

Rwala Bedouin of Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Semiotic gesture, or culture-induced gesture.

*(161) Cut off a man's plait of hair: great shame on that person. Rwala Bedouin of Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Semiotic gesture, or culture-induced gesture.
Variations: (a) cut off a man's right hand; and (b) cut off a man's beard.

*(162) Wink at another person: secret between them, or that one person is putting another on (joking). Culture-induced gesture.

(163) Hold hand in front of body with palm forward, then shake the hand vigorously from side to side: negative. Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria. Autistic, or culture-induced gesture.

(164) Hold out left hand with palm up and fingers slightly spread, then quickly and forcefully hit right wrist into it with fingers tightly held into right palm: obscenity. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(165) Place tip of right middle finger in mouth and purse lips about it, then remove it and hold out with back of hand forward and other fingers pressed into palm: obscenity directed at female members of family of person to whom gesture is made. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(166) Man wrinkles his nose and one cheek simultaneously to a woman or girl: he wants her to come to him. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

(167) Clasp hands in front of body with fingers tightly interlocked, then move the hands from the wrists several times: expression of anguish; request for mercy. Saudi Arabia, Lebanon. Culture-induced, or autistic gesture.

(168) Place tip of right thumb on middle joint of forefinger (extended) and with other fingers pressed into palm, then move the forefinger in a pecking motion several times: teasing gesture. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(169) Mother grasps ear lobe with forefinger and thumb: indication that she will speak with a child later and probably punish the child (used when people are present). Saudi Arabia. Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

*(170) Rub open palm of right hand down one's own face to chin, then grasp the chin with tips of fingers and thumb: promise to do something. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(171) Hold right fist horizontally at left side with heel of hand facing forward, then pump it vigorously and stiffly on that plane: obscenity. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(172) Rub tips of thumb and forefinger together: teasing gesture. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(173) Lightly hit thumb nails of both hands together: teasing, or to indicate that what another person is saying is worthless. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(174) Those victorious in battle cut off the beards of the vanquished: expression of victory, or that men vanquished are not virile. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(175) Victorious warrior who pardons his enemy places his *agal* (rope-like

circle of head-piece) over the head of that person pardoned: indicates that vanquished person belongs to victorious warrior and all that he owns. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq. Semiotic gesture.

(176) Hold out left hand with palm forward in front of face, then lightly hit the back of it with palm of right hand: indicates contempt for person to whom gesture is made. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(177) Hold out hand with fingers in shape of claws then move the hand back and forth several times: expression of contempt; mocking. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(178) Place palm of right hand on top of head: swearing an oath. Saudi Arabia, Jordan. Semiotic gesture.

*(179) During the *Hadj* (pilgrimage) people may kiss only on the shoulders: greeting. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(180) Parents of a recently deceased son or daughter may kiss only on shoulders: greeting. Bahrein, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(181) Guests rise when an esteemed person enters house or tent: expression of respect. Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Iraq, Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

*(182) Snap forefinger and thumb of same hand: call for someone to come. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(183) Grasp another man's moustache with right fingers: swearing an oath. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(184) Hit the side of one's neck with right hand: finished. Hadhramaut. Semiotic gesture.

*(185) Spit at some other person's feet or in face: insult, or an expression of shame. Lebanon, Bahren, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(186) When two men meet they embrace and kiss: greeting, or to make up after fighting. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic or culture-induced gesture.

(187) Lightly pat one's heart with right palm: indication that one needs assistance. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

*(188) Hold thumbs under armpits with other fingers spread wide and thrust out chest: braggard, or expression of pride. Saudi Arabia, Bahrein. Autistic gesture, or culture-induced gesture.

(189) Hold up right hand with palm down then move it several times in slightly clawing motion: call for someone to come. Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrein, Saudi Arabia, Syria. Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

*(190) Place right hand on beard or chin: request for something (polite). Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture, or culture-induced gesture.

(191) Grasp little fingers of both hands then move the arms in sawing motion: indicates that two people are enemies. Jordan, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(192) Touch lower eyelid with right forefinger: indicates that one will act as proxy. Saudi Arabia.
Variation: move the finger from right to left while on lid.

*(193) Twist one side of face: expression of anger. Syria. Autistic gesture.

*(194) Move eyebrows up and down rapidly: teasing. Saudi Arabia, Syria.

Culture-induced, or semiotic gesture.

(195) Move right hand in half circle from lower chest to stomach: indication that some woman is pregnant. Lebanon, Jordan, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(196) Flip hand near mouth and simultaneously make a clicking sound with tongue and teeth: used to indicate that person is not to worry. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(197) Touch tips of right forefinger and thumb and bring to slightly open mouth with head tilted back a bit: food, or expression of hunger. Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Semiotic gesture.

(198) Extend forefinger and little finger from closed hand, and bring to mouth while head is tilted back a little: water, or expression of thirst. Collected in all Arab countries noted in this list. Semiotic gesture.

(199) Hold thumb side of right fist on mouth: expression of thirst. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(200) Hold right hand in front of face with back facing forward, then flip the hand so that its palm is up: person asked for is not present. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(201) Extend forefinger and middle finger from fist with back of hand up then move the hand forward once or twice towards another person's eyes: threat, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(202) Chief of tribe places right hand under man's belt so that it barely touches sexual organ: man on whom hand is laid must tell the truth. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(203) Move hands up sides of chest so that thumbs hit undersides of lapels. shake head a little: sign of unrequited love. Hadhramaut, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(204) Bedouin spreads out garment before judge and holds one end with his left hand then smoothes it out with the right hand: indicates that he can obtain enough worthy witnesses to substantiate his claim in a dispute: Rwala Bedouin of Kuwait, Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(205) Exhale very slowly: dissatisfaction with turn of events. Saudi Arabia, Syria. Autistic gesture.

(206) Place thumb in mouth sidewards and bite it, then remove it and shake it: flirting with girls. Syria. Semiotic gesture.

*(207) Knock off another man's *agal*: insult, or challenge. Syria. Semiotic gesture.

*(208) When a man sacrifices an animal for a woman he must place the animal on ground with its head facing south, then after he has killed it he must dip his right forefinger in its blood and then dab it on his own cheeks, tip of nose and between his eyebrows: meaning not clear but it has religious connotations. Rwala Bedouin. Semiotic gesture.

(209) Hold extended right thumb near chin with heel of hand out: shame. Jordan, Syria. Semiotic gesture.

(210) Flip hands up and out before body and extend the tongue: disbelief. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic, autistic gesture, or culture-induced gesture.

*(211) Woman stands next to her husband's grave: indication that she will not remarry. Rwala Bedouin. Semiotic gesture. Islamic custom.

*(212) Rub earlobe with tips of right forefinger and thumb: "Do you want me to answer the question for you?" Saudi Arabia. Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

(213) Snap forefinger and thumb, then thrust out hand with forefinger extended: reference to past. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(214) Place hands together (palms) then separate them so that the palms are facing forward and hands are next to each other: teasing. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(215) Place half closed hand in front of stomach then turn it slightly: person to whom gesture is made is a liar. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(216) Place extended forefinger sidewards over nose then move it across nose several times with tongue extended: teasing. Egypt. Semiotic gesture.

*(217) Touch tips of forefinger and thumb then point them at someone: teasing. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(218) Woman rubs palms together several times: expression of jealousy and that her man cannot get another woman. Syria. Semiotic gesture.

*(219) Clap hands once or twice: signal for servant or waiter to come. Saudi Arabia, Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

*(220) Knock sand from another boy's hand: challenge to fight, or acceptance of an offer to fight. Syria, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(221) After a man dances he kneels before the musician who wipes the dancers cheeks with his head-cloth: expression of gratitude on part of the participants. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(222) Religious leader places hands of bride and groom together so that their thumbs touch and holds the hands in this position while he says a prayer: practiced in Moslem marriage ceremony. Semiotic gesture.

(223) Place tip of forefinger beneath lower lip then flip the fingertip up so that it barely grazes the underside of the tip: teasing. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(224) Hook extended forefinger over ear (from back) then slowly move it over the ear to the front part: sign to person not to argue with signer. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(225) Place palms together so that fingers are pointing forward then twist hands in opposite directions but still in contact: finished. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(226) Place thumb side of fist over mouth then twist the hand a half-turn: threat to *jinn* (spirits). Used by women in Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(227) Extend left forefinger, then form an inverted V-configuration with right forefinger and thumb and place it over the lower part of the left forefinger near the thumb: insult, or "I'll ride you like a donkey." Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(228) Touch tip of right forefinger on tongue then place it on the tip of the nose: sign for person to hurry. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(229) Place tip of right forefinger between eyebrows: shame, or "I can't do it." Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(230) Make a circular motion around ear with forefinger: mother's threat to child to behave, or that she will deal with him later. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(231) Place tips of fingers and thumb together then hit them on cheek: threat to child to behave, or that she will deal with child later. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(232) Place tips of fingers and thumb together then hit them on distended cheek exhaling as the fingers hit: mocking, or what person is saying is nonsense. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(233) Hold stiff left forearm with hand closed then place palm of right hand on inside of elbow: sign that signer has nothing, but said with anger. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(234) Place tips of left fingers and thumb together so that hand faces right then place tip of right forefinger directly on the left finger tips: obscenity, or insult directed at one's birth or parentage but specifically "You have five fathers." Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

(235) Place palms together so that fingers are in contact, then move all fingers back into palm except two middle fingers that remain extended: used by men to imply that they have slept with woman to whom the gesture is made. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(236) Hold elbows on respective hips, then move hips back and forth in rapid motions: obscenity. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(237) Pinch cheek of another person: show of affection, or promise to do something. Jordan. Semiotic gesture.

*(238) Kiss the right shoulder of a dignitary: sign of respect, or show of homage. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(239) Rub side of forefinger over bridge of nose: proposition to woman. Jordan. Semiotic gesture.

*(240 Slap another man's palm with open palm: sign that that person has done something good. Jordan. Semiotic gesture.

*241) Place back of hand beneath chin with fingers extended, then wiggle fingers at person: person to whom gesture is made is old. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(242) Kiss the nose of a person with whom one has fought: apology. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*(243) Judge ties a man's hands together with a head-cloth: sign that man is a felon. Saudi Arabia. Semiotic gesture.

*244) Belching: sign that person has enjoyed a meal. Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt. Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

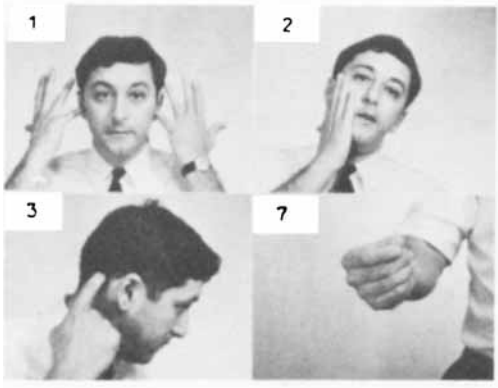
*245) Quick jerk of the head to one side: sign that person doesn't understand, or for that the person to whom gesture is made to repeat statement. Lebanon, Semiotic, or culture-induced gesture.

*(246) Place thumb in mouth then rub it down on tongue, and finally dropping the hand at about waist level with heel of hand forward then jerk the

fist forward once or twice: obscenity. Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

*(247) Men make slurping sound when flirting with a woman: flirting. Lebanon. Semiotic gesture.

Professor Barakat is on the faculty of the Department of Anthropology, Memorial University of Newfoundland.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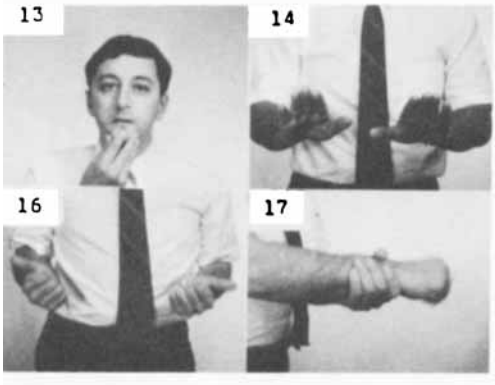
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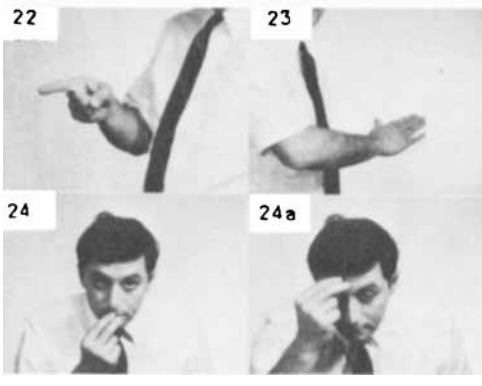
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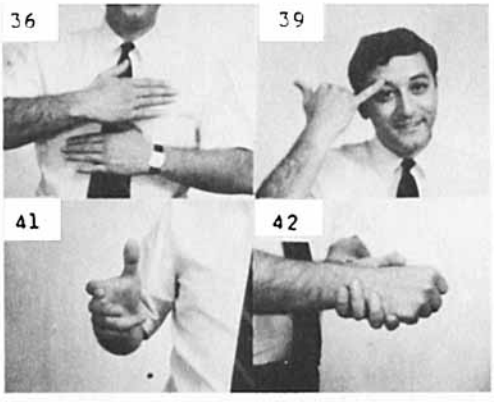
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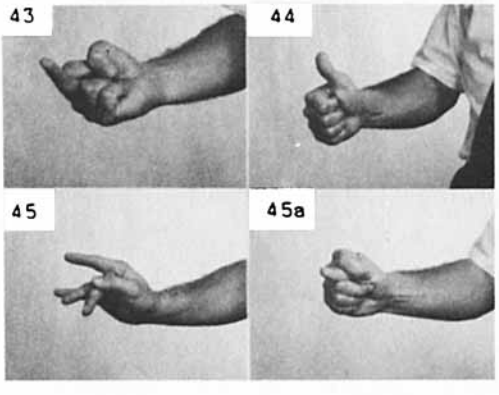
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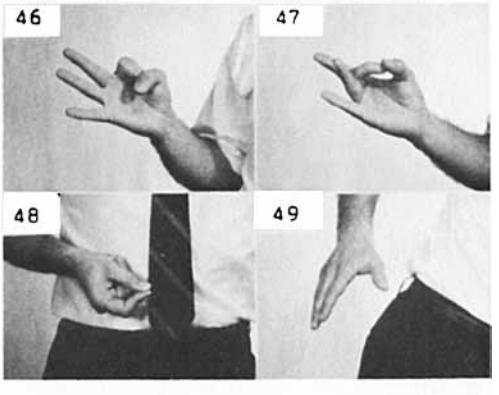
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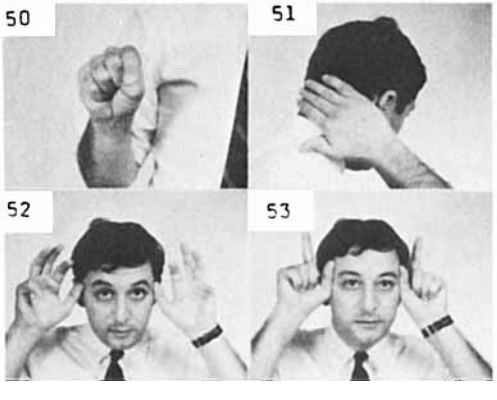
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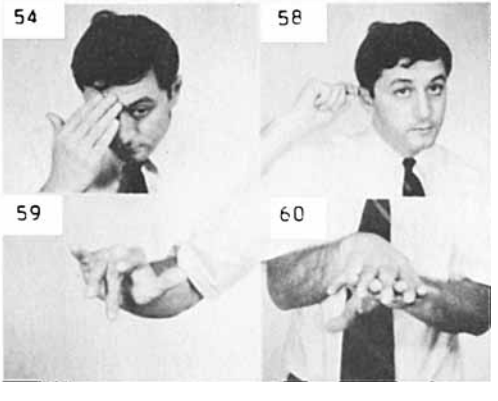
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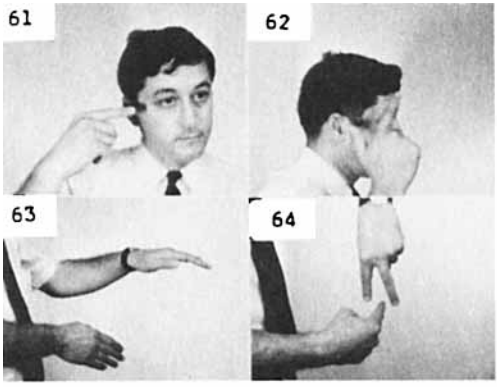
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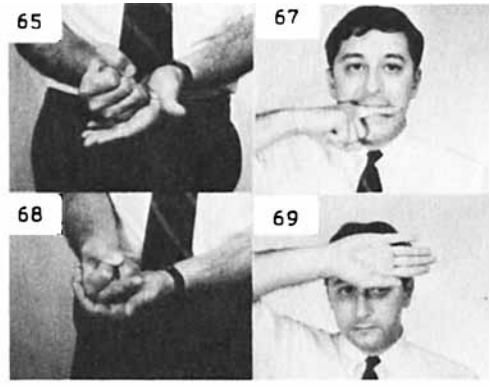
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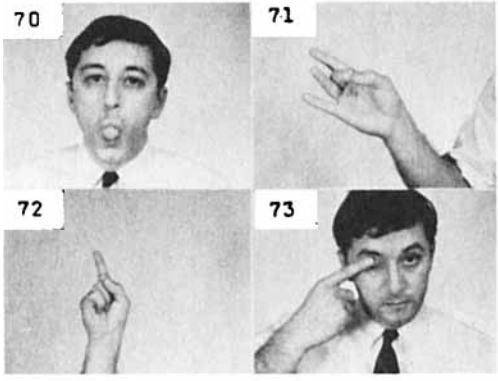
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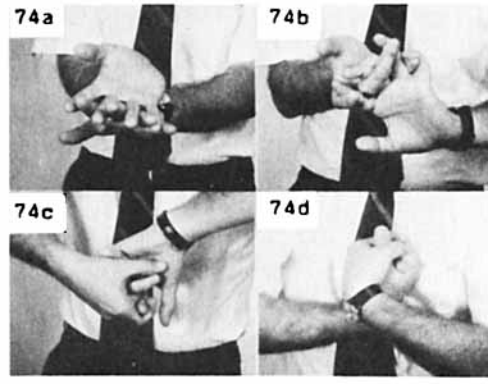
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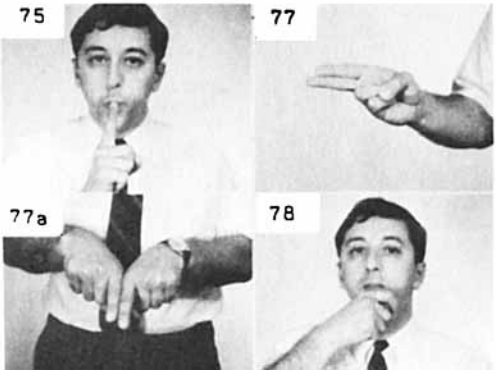
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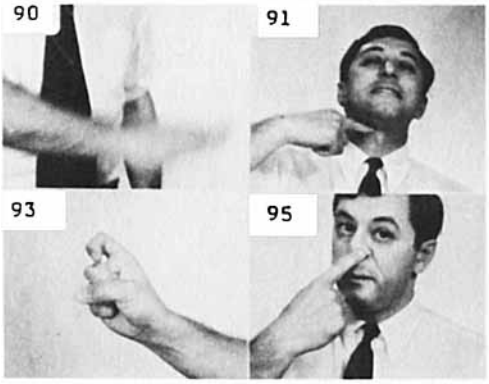
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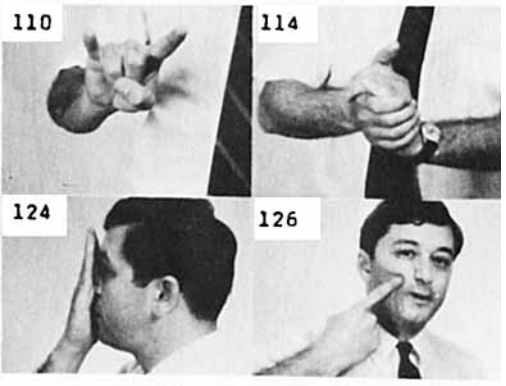
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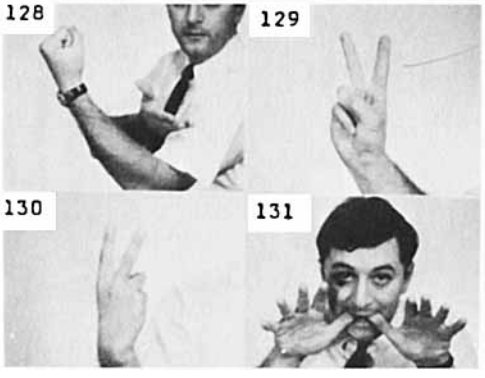
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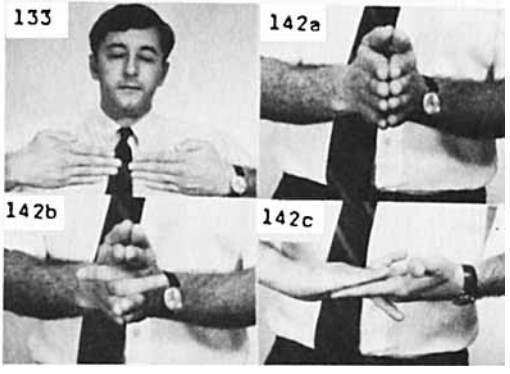
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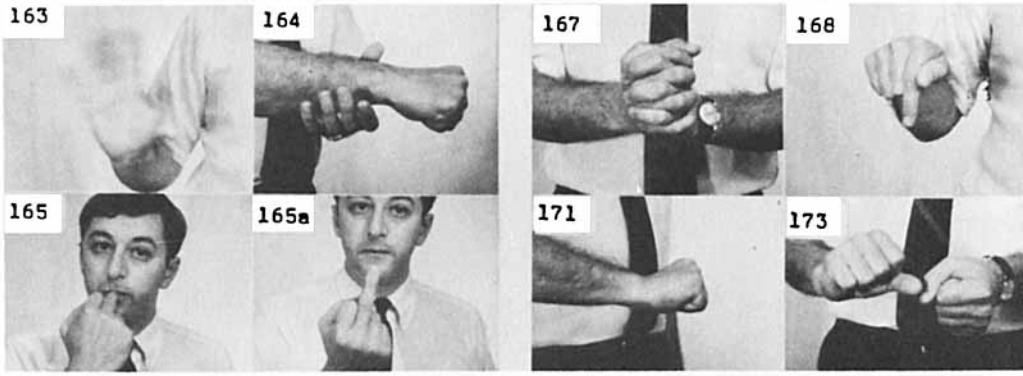
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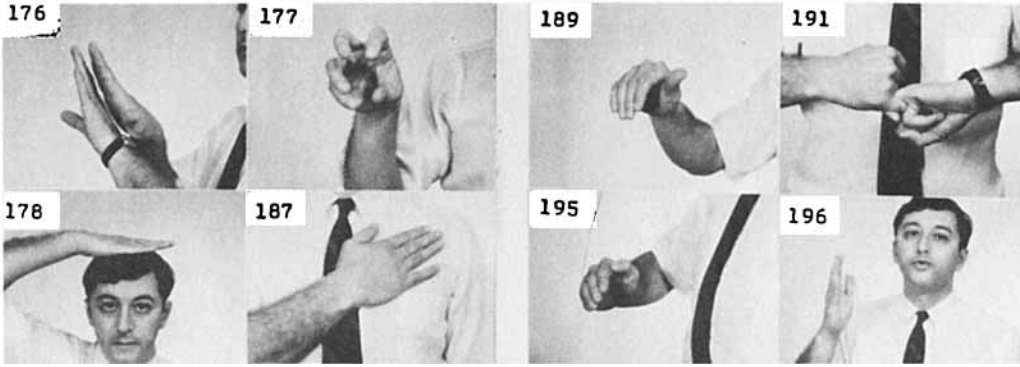
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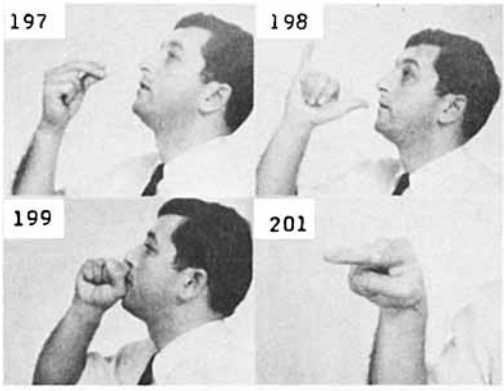
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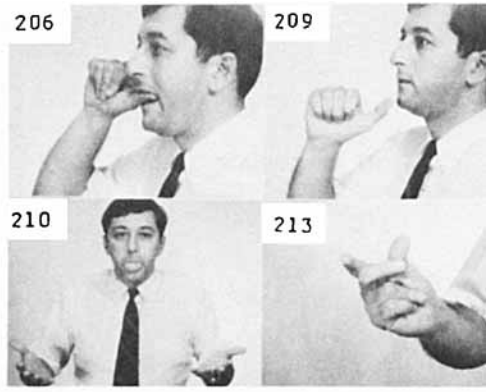
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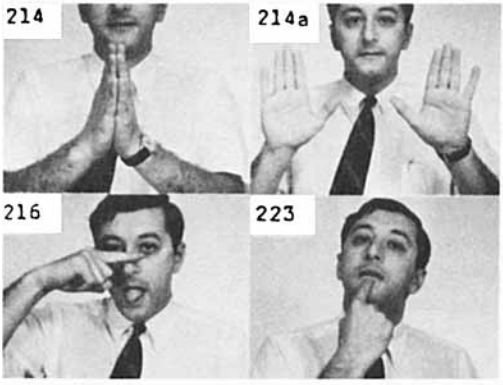
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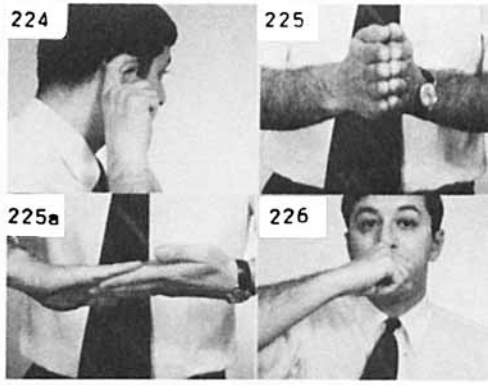
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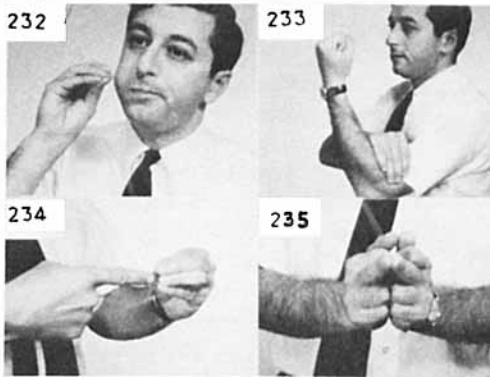
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