

The Transversal Navigation

We Have Stopped Communicating with the World Long Ago, GAMU, 2021

*Sin realized how fragile this world was, like a beautiful soap bubble floating through
blackberry bramble. One passing touch and it would disappear.*

— Remembrance of Earth's Past

*We live in an interconnected world, with porous boundaries, much more like living
membranes than inorganic walls.*

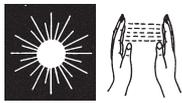
— Michael Marder

A: Is the SARS-COV-2 epidemic an example of radically expressive love?

It is us who have failed, as we are unable to think beyond ourselves. Every illness is a
guest in the architecture of the one previous.

The history of architecture is, to a large degree, an attempt at controlling contamination
and its largely subtle racial codes. When the emergency measures recede, people start
being afraid that they will return. There thus remain many ambivalent people, passively
expecting a return to the previous state (of normalcy), but this full return to a previous
state will most likely never occur.

Note: When they were preparing for the SARS-COV-2 pandemic in, for example,
Pakistan, it was said that it was necessary to wash one's hands and somehow self-isolate.



But what if we aren't able to do either of those things? Washing your hands with soap a few times a day for the span of 20 seconds sounds pretty simple. But there are still many people who for example live in settlements or slums, where this activity is virtually impossible. Access to water is very different there. The idea of repeated use of water for washing hands is a huge luxury. If our lives become more interconnected, without properly resolving these issues the entire city comes under threat.

Hands and other limbs are considered as parts of the body. Why then couldn't all beings who possess a body be considered as parts of a single being? There is no such thing as a disabled body, only disabled sociopolitical systems.

From the perspective of the other, being slow needn't be considered a weakness, and the weak/weaker needn't be slow/slower – they merely achieve a different speed than the speed of the medium which they inhabit at a given time. Sickness does not go away, and that is why it needs constant care. To accept one's vulnerability and fragility in order to reorganize – reprogram relationships, not only towards oneself, but also within a broader social context.

Are our bodies this dangerous biological factor? Is the body itself at the core of this crisis? Do we only start paying attention to bodies once they become sick?

{input and output rituals}
{lack of touch – we suffer for sharing breath}
{we observe the distance between bodies}

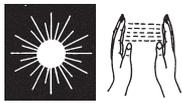
The body can fall sick and spread disease to others. There exists a general suspicion towards the bodies of others, but also towards our own bodies. Generally (in Western society), we focus only on the visible bodies. But what about invisible bodies? What is their protocol? How to care for invisible bodies? Are there more types of invisibility? What does it mean to stand next to or near an invisible one? Try to imagine.

Note: Some forms of invisibility are concentrated into one moment. Others plague us for a longer time. Some are provisional. Others still are more resistant to that which tries to penetrate their field of vision. For some, it is enough to discover them by turning on the light or lamp. Others need more sophisticated instruments. Invisibility escapes everyday experience, which it is also able to dissolve through its passing. Sometimes invisibility is unbelievably close. And what role does sight play in all this?

Are we safe when the weaker ones are able to isolate themselves? Where to fix the boundary between our own bodies and those of others? Do we start paying attention to bodies only after they fall sick? What form of care could we imagine?

Note: A "sick" person needn't mean "visibly sick." Sickness also includes that which has not yet been recognized, and which is treated as if it weren't sick at all.

In other words, who are we taking care of and on what do we base our choices? How does this form of caretaking – care for others, which takes place through asymmetries – translate into practice of chaotic situations? How does the idea of the body's integrity



(untouchability) relate to the way we imagine a body, experience it, represent, or define it? Can care be construed differently, rather as a process of mindfulness which extends solely to properly existing phenomena? Sensorial awareness? Testing relationships? A boundless ethics?

[... in order to not pay attention merely to those in similar life situations as those in which we find ourselves].

It is not just about healing the body, but rather about returning to the body and recreating a healthy environment where it might thrive.

Note: The SARS-COV-2 pandemic is an x-ray image of awareness, but also a pressing call for mutual understanding. It calls for a leveling of imbalance which is closely connected to services functioning within (urban) infrastructure. These “invisible” bodies constitute somewhat of a critical part of any functioning city.

B: Is the SARS-COV-2 epidemic a form of radically expressive love?

Mental states follow one another, and each erases the previous. There is no cause, as nothing is ever forgotten. Touch forces us to face the reality that we are mortal, that we are mutually lost.

How to become untouchable?

A: Losing someone about whom we have cared makes this person untouchable. That which we had considered to be a part of us has become separate.

B: To become untouchable = isolation or complete solitude.

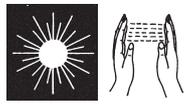
The presence of touch needn't necessarily mean understanding its influence. Touch itself is an impossible feat, but also necessary for becoming an actor in a world of experience.

Touch = a turn towards at least a partial understanding of action.

Trust can in this sense become an unavoidable condition which fosters an openness to touch. To touch means to acquire. If touch expands us, it also reminds us of our finitude. Touch is not given. It stems from contact with the world. It is a process through which the body learns and develops. The specificity of contact is that which is produced – and this fosters diversity. Touch amplifies and multiplies other related effects.

Skin = An active, living surface which becomes a territory for new possibilities.

Touch creates and develops the world. As if human sight suddenly became unreal. That means that people and things are commonly, mutually and actively touching. Touch opens the world to collective sensation. How do we learn to be with others? Touch branches out and forms responsibility. Thinking through touch = the future of touch which can emphasize (ethical) awareness about material effects. The nearness of the



touching sight – everything is very slow and careful, with attention to detail. Without a trace of hurry. Touch can not only amplify nearness, but can also complicate it. Touching relates to having faith in reality.

Touch = meeting in space and time.

On the other hand, monitoring by means of touch can be understood as redress to ineffective sight, as a means of compensation, as allegedly infectious or pathological. In various practices, touch is considered a form of healing. The so-called companion of healing. In an abnormal situation, for example an epidemic, touch itself becomes the source of illness. An epidemic thus uncovers conflict and contradiction. The tension between desiring and avoidance (of touching).

Note: Visibility wrapped in invisibility reaches our consciousness only in retrospect, and so it surprises us in the future. The invisibility of seeing the cause and the effect. We are constantly being watched, but we don't realize that what is in fact doing the watching is our own self – that which stands above the framework itself and constitutes one of the strangest projects ever.

