An Exploratory Study of Body-Accessibility

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A body-accessibility questionnaire was submitted to 168 male and 140 female unmarried college students. The aim was to determine the extent to which college students permit their parents and closest friends of each sex to see and touch their bodies, and the extent to which they have seen and touched the bodies of these 'target-persons'. The bodies of the Ss and of the target-persons were reportedly more visually than tactually accessible. The greatest range of tactual interchange occurred between the Ss and their closest friends of the opposite sex. Significant relationships were found between the measures of seeing another's body and being seen by that person, and between touching the other's body, and being touched by him. The male Ss touched fewer regions of their mothers' bodies than were touched by their mothers, and they were not touched by their mothers on as many regions as the females were. The females exchanged physical contact on more areas of the body with their fathers than did the males. There was also significant correlation among the measures of contact with each of the target-persons under consideration, suggesting that body-accessibility is a personality trait. Protestant and Catholic females reported being touched by their boy friends on more body regions than did Jewish females. Ss who rated themselves as plain or unattractive reported being touched on less of their body surface than did Ss who rated themselves as average or attractive in appearance. There was much variability in body-accessibility associated with region of the body, and both sexes showed similarity in the regions which were most, and which were least accessible to the touch of others.

We know that touching another person is a significant act. Touches can convey love, goodwill, hate, and myriad other meanings (Frank, 1958). Lovers arouse their paramours, mothers soothe their infants, and healers relieve their patients, all with a touch. We also know that there is much variation between groups and individuals, and between settings in the amount and style of permissible body-contact.

As investigators, we have encroached upon many realms deemed sacrosanct. We have enquired into people's sex lives, probed their religious sentiments, peeped into their unconscious fantasies, we have even eavesdropped on the psychotherapeutic interview. But for all this, we know little about the conditions under which a person will permit another to touch him, the meanings people attach to touching and being touched, the loci of acceptable touch, and little of the consequences of body-contact. It is as if the touch-taboo most of us learned in childhood has produced a scotoma of our professional vision, making us describe man in our text-books as if he did not get closer to his fellows than a foot or so. Illustration of such differences is provided by some observations I made during pilot stages of the present investigation. I watched pairs of people engaged in conversation in coffee

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1 Adapted from a paper read at the convention of the Florida Psychological Association in Tampa, Florida, May 1, 1964. The present version was written during my tenure as a Special Fellow of the United States Public Health Service under Grant 1-F3-MH-3374-01.

2 I would like to express my appreciation to Dr Jefferson Sulzer, now of Tulane University, for help in preparing the questionnaire used herein; to Carol Raff, Mohammed Inayat-Ullah and Zalmon Neumark for assistance with the statistical work; and to the Director of the Computing Center, University of Florida, for a grant which underwrote the cost of some of the data analysis.
shops in San Juan (Puerto Rico), London, Paris, and Gainesville (Florida), counting
the number of times that one person touched another at one table during a one-hour
sitting. The 'scores' were, for San Juan, 180; for Paris, 110; for London, 0; and for
Gainesville, 2. On another occasion, I spent two hours walking around the Teaching
Hospital at the University of Florida, seeking episodes of body-contact. I watched
nurses and physicians tending to patients, I observed relatives in conversation with
patients, and I patrolled corridors, watching interchanges between nurses and nurses,
physicians and nurses, and physicians with each other. During this time, two nurses'
hands touched those of the patients to whom they were giving pills; one physician
held a patient's wrist as he was taking a pulse; and one intern placed his arm around
the waist of a student nurse to whom he was engaged. Clearly, not much physical
contact was in evidence. By contrast, I have seen happily married spouses touch
one another dozens of times before others—a kiss, a handclasp, a hug. And miserably
married persons whom I have seen in psychotherapy have often complained of too
little, or too much physical contact. Finally, I have encountered individuals who
become furious, and jump as if stung if they are brushed against, or touched on the
shoulder or chest during a conversation.

It is time for systematic study of the parameters of touching. I suspect that many
people suffer from deprivation of physical contact during their adult lives, but there
is no way to prove this without knowledge of normative and desired touching patterns,
and their sources of variation. The present study was undertaken as a first step in
this direction.

METHOD

Materials and procedure

The term body-accessibility was proposed as a general term to describe the readiness of a
person to permit others to contact his body. We can make our bodies accessible to others via
several sense modalities, viz: touch, sight, smell, and even taste. In the present study, I
confined myself to the tactual and visual modes. I constructed a questionnaire that would
inquire into the site of visual and tactual contact with their bodies which Ss permitted certain
'target-persons', and the extent to which the Ss had seen and touched the bodies of those
others. No inquiry was made into the frequency with which the contact occurred. The
questionnaire was developed as follows:

A drawing of the body was prepared (see Fig. 1), with 24 regions demarcated. The idea
for such a diagram was suggested by beef-charts on which butchers delineate the various
steaks and chops. This diagram was to serve as a guide to Ss for indicating which regions
of their bodies had been seen and touched by the mother, father, closest friend of the same sex,
and closest friend of the opposite sex, and which regions of these target-persons' bodies they
had seen and touched. A booklet was assembled, with face-sheets for biographical and
demographic data, and pages inscribed with a diagram referring to each of the target-persons.
Four columns and 24 rows were drawn below the diagram. The Ss were requested to indicate
with a check-mark in the appropriate column (a) which regions of their own body had been
seen, unclad, by the target-person in question (b) which regions of the target-person's body
they (the Ss) had seen unclad (c) which regions of their own body, clad or unclad, had been
touched by the target-person, and (d) which regions of the target-person's body they had had
physical contact with.

Entries were to be made only if visual or tactual contact had occurred within the past 12
months. No inquiry was made into the frequency, circumstances, or meaning of the contact;
a man could make an entry if he had wrestled once with his male friend, or if he had repeatedly
kissed his mother or girl-friend. We were seeking to measure sheer occurrence and locus of
body-contact, visual and tactual, under any and all circumstances in the past 12 months.
The questionnaire booklets were administered by the writer or his assistant to a total of 380 college students who were tested in groups. The Ss responded anonymously. Their cooperation was enlisted by explaining the purpose of the study, and the need for honesty in responding. There was considerable laughter, and some embarrassment expressed by the Ss over the nature of the task, but they complied with a great deal of interest. Only the returns from unmarried Ss between the ages of 18 and 22 years were analysed—a total N of 168 males, and 140 females.

Each S's entries, classified by mode (visual versus tactual), direction (being seen or touched versus seeing or touching), and target of contact were summed for statistical analysis. The percentage of Ss reporting that they had touched each target-person, and had been touched by them was also computed separately for each of the 24 body regions.

RESULTS

Reliability of the questionnaires

Odd-even reliability coefficients were calculated for the visual and tactual contact scores of 50 male and 50 female Ss selected at random from the total sample. The r's (corrected for attenuation) ranged from a high of .98 for tactual interchange between the male Ss and their fathers and same-sexed friends, to a low of .27 for the scores depicting the visual accessibility of the female Ss to their fathers. All the tactual contact scores showed reliability coefficients above .85. Examination of the visual contact scores showed that the lower r's resulted from restricted variance in the pairs of subtotal scores.

It was concluded that the questionnaire measures had adequate consistency for a survey-type study.

Analysis of contact scores

Means, SD's, and 'critical difference' values for the several contact scores are listed in Table I with N's of 25 males and 25 females selected at random.

Analysis of variance showed significant (P < .001) differences in overall scores between modes of contact (F = 293.27) and target-persons (F = 25.36). The interactions for mode-by-target (F = 72.54) and sex-by-mode-by-target (F = 4.07) were also significant beyond the .001 level of confidence. The F-ratios for the
comparison between sexes, and for the sex-by-mode and sex-by-target interactions were not statistically significant.

**Visual accessibility.** The means listed in the first two columns of Table 1 show that the bodies of the Ss and the target-persons were reportedly more accessible to visual contact than to touching, an exception being in the Ss’ relationship with their opposite-sexed friend. There the visual and tactual contact scores were more nearly similar. From 20 to 23 body regions were mutually accessible between the Ss and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Ss See</th>
<th>Ss seen by</th>
<th>Ss Touch</th>
<th>Ss Touched by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>19.64</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>21.60</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>21.76</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>22.12</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>22.96</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>21.60</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>19.88</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Same-sex friend</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>21.84</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>21.68</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opposite-sex friend</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>19.96</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>19.76</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>20.72</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>21.08</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Critical differences for $P < .05 = 1.61$; $P < .02 = 1.91$; $P < .01 = 2.12$. N = 25 males, 25 females.

each of the target-persons, likely attributable to the fact that the study was conducted in Florida, where people spend considerable time throughout the year clad in bathing costumes.

**Tactual accessibility.** The means in the two right-hand columns of Table 1 show that compared to visual contact, relatively few body regions were touched in the relationship of the Ss with their parents and friends of the same sex. This is graphic illustration of a touch-taboo, at least in those relationships. Substantial means for touching were found for the relationship with the opposite-sex friend, happily enough, indicating that the touch-taboo is not wholly generalized. These findings suggest that most regions of a young adult’s body remain untouched unless he has a close friend of the opposite sex.

The scores for exchange of physical contact with parents showed an interesting pattern. The males were reportedly touched by their mothers on as many regions as the females were, but they did not touch their mothers’ bodies in as many places as their mothers touched them, nor on as many as the females touched their mothers. Moreover, the females touched their fathers on more regions than the males did, and they were touched on more body areas by their fathers than were the males. When it comes to physical contact within the family, it is the daughters who are the favoured ones.

**Inter-modal correlations.** The questions were raised, ‘Is there a correlation between modes and directions of body-contact? That is, are seeing and being seen, touching and being touched mutual transactions? And is there any relationship between visual and tactual accessibility?’ To answer these questions, $r$’s were
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computed for the 25 males and females (whose scores were recorded in Table 1) between (a) their summed scores for seeing the bodies of the 4 target-persons, and the summed scores for being seen by them (b) scores for touching and being touched (c) seeing and touching (d) being seen and being touched (e) being seen by the others, and touching them, and (f) seeing others, and being touched by them. The r's are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Intercorrelations among scores for various modes and directions of body-contact*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>See others</th>
<th>Seen by others</th>
<th>Touch others</th>
<th>Touched by others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>See others</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'91</td>
<td>'95</td>
<td>'59</td>
<td>'61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen by others</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>'66</td>
<td>'74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'95</td>
<td>'58</td>
<td>'59</td>
<td>'64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch others</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>'96</td>
<td>'97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 25 males, 25 females.

The highest r's were between directions of contact within modes, suggesting a strong 'dyadic effect' in disclosure of the body to the other's sight and touch, similar to that noted in the study of self-disclosure (cf. Jourard, 1959; Jourard & Landsman, 1960). The r’s between modes of contact were lower, indicating that visual and tactual accessibility were somewhat more independent of one another, though they were still significantly correlated.

Tactual accessibility of regions of the body

Table 3 shows the percentage of the 168 males and 140 females who reported touching, and being touched by, each of the 4 target-persons on the 24 regions of the body distinguished in Figure 1. Considerable variation between bodily regions may be noted, ranging from a high of 94 per cent (for females reporting being touched by their opposite-sexed friend on the back of the head and neck) to a low of zero, with regard to tactual interchange between the females and their fathers in area 10, the genital region. A target-by-region interaction is attested by the relative deluge of tactual contact reported by both sexes in relation to opposite-sexed friend in contrast to the contact reported with the other three target-persons.

Similarity between the sexes in their reported receptivity to the touch of others on each of the 24 regions of the body was shown by r’s of .97, .85, .85 and .88 between the percentages of males and females indicating being touched on each region by their mothers, fathers, same-sexed friends, and opposite-sexed friends respectively (with N = 24 body regions). These r’s likely signify that males and females share norms governing which body-regions they will make accessible to others' touch, and which they will withhold from the touch of others.

Tactual accessibility as a personality trait

If body-accessibility is a personality trait we should expect to find correlations in our present data between the number of body regions exposed to the touch of one
Table 3. *Percentage* of Ss who report touching, and being touched by, various target-persons, on twenty-four regions of the body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body region No.</th>
<th>Touch by Mother</th>
<th>Touched by Father</th>
<th>Touch by Same-sex friend</th>
<th>Touched by Opp.-sex friend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M F M F</td>
<td>M F M F</td>
<td>M F M F</td>
<td>M F M F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>63 77 74 78</td>
<td>35 65 47 69</td>
<td>50 68 49 65</td>
<td>89 92 86 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>31 39 44 44</td>
<td>18 35 7 34</td>
<td>23 28 23 31</td>
<td>81 78 79 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>41 51 53 52</td>
<td>22 48 22 46</td>
<td>30 28 28 29</td>
<td>88 85 85 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>41 46 53 42</td>
<td>22 42 23 43</td>
<td>33 28 34 29</td>
<td>87 89 84 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>54 49 59 52</td>
<td>18 50 16 52</td>
<td>22 31 20 31</td>
<td>93 93 90 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>52 57 58 56</td>
<td>31 51 36 59</td>
<td>44 42 44 42</td>
<td>89 90 86 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>35 54 54 55</td>
<td>43 52 45 48</td>
<td>53 49 55 50</td>
<td>88 83 84 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>8 6 29 9</td>
<td>23 22 24 6</td>
<td>39 6 41 6</td>
<td>73 70 76 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>15 24 27 21</td>
<td>20 27 21 21</td>
<td>39 20 41 21</td>
<td>81 72 78 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>1 2 2 2</td>
<td>1 0 2 0</td>
<td>10 1 9 1</td>
<td>53 42 50 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>10 15 21 16</td>
<td>16 15 14 16</td>
<td>31 18 31 18</td>
<td>78 62 72 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>15 18 24 30</td>
<td>19 20 19 22</td>
<td>36 25 35 25</td>
<td>79 70 73 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>18 21 26 29</td>
<td>19 18 19 20</td>
<td>36 23 34 23</td>
<td>77 68 70 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>21 24 30 31</td>
<td>21 25 20 25</td>
<td>34 28 33 27</td>
<td>73 65 67 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>70 72 71 75</td>
<td>59 72 59 70</td>
<td>71 75 70 75</td>
<td>88 89 86 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>74 73 73 76</td>
<td>61 75 61 74</td>
<td>71 79 71 80</td>
<td>89 90 89 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>83 78 82 82</td>
<td>86 82 86 77</td>
<td>88 81 87 82</td>
<td>93 90 92 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>49 66 64 71</td>
<td>36 56 43 62</td>
<td>48 67 47 71</td>
<td>88 89 86 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>54 59 60 60</td>
<td>40 56 46 58</td>
<td>48 54 46 60</td>
<td>89 91 88 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>61 71 67 76</td>
<td>57 72 57 67</td>
<td>57 67 58 74</td>
<td>80 88 85 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>34 50 50 59</td>
<td>39 52 34 51</td>
<td>43 52 45 55</td>
<td>88 82 83 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>6 14 13 17</td>
<td>8 5 11 13</td>
<td>21 12 22 14</td>
<td>61 48 54 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>12 15 21 19</td>
<td>14 15 16 16</td>
<td>29 19 30 22</td>
<td>73 61 68 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>18 20 26 29</td>
<td>18 18 19 21</td>
<td>33 23 34 24</td>
<td>71 65 71 72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on N = 168 males, 140 females.
† The numbers refer to regions shown in Fig. 1.

Table 4. *Intercorrelations* among scores for extent to which Ss† were touched by each of four-target-persons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Same-sex friend</th>
<th>Opposite-sex friend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>.64 (.87)</td>
<td>.46 (.80)</td>
<td>.35 (.39)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>.45 (.72)</td>
<td>.30 (.38)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same-Sex Friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.36 (.38)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 50 males, 50 females, all Protestants.
† The r inside parentheses is for the females Ss, while that outside parentheses is for the males.

target-person, and the number exposed to the touch of others. Table 4 shows intercorrelations for the total 'being touched' scores reported by 50 male and 50 female Protestant Ss for their relationships with each of the 4 target-persons. In general, the females show higher r's than the males, suggesting more consistency in attitude and behaviour regarding body contact, or perhaps less discrimination than the males in accepting or spurning the extended hand of others. Also to be noted in this table
is the consistently smaller size of the r's in the column for the friend of the opposite sex; evidently one cannot as well predict the amount of body exposed to touch in the heterosexual dyad from that exposed in the relationship between an S and his parents or his same-sexed friend.

Some further group comparisons

Several exploratory analyses were made of differences in mean 'being touched' scores when the total sample was classified by age, religious denomination, and level of self-rated attractiveness.

No significant differences were found to be associated with age, but this was hardly surprising, in view of the limited age range under considerations, viz.: from 18 to 22 years. For the interdenominational comparison, one significant \( (P < .05) \) difference was found: Protestant \((N = 89)\) and Catholic \((N = 18)\) girls reported being touched by their male friends on an average of 20 body regions, as compared to a mean of 16 regions for the Jewish girls \((N = 28)\). The reasons for this difference are not clear, but the presence of a difference of this sort points to the value of future comparisons among various sociological groupings of their practices with respect to body-contact.

All of the Ss had been requested, on the face-sheets of the questionnaire booklet, to rate their attitude toward their bodily appearance by checking one of 4 adjectives, viz: very attractive, attractive, plain, or average. The Ss who checked either of the first two terms \((N = 60\) males, \(78\) females, designated the Attractive group) showed higher 'being touched' scores than those checking the latter terms \((N = 89\) males, \(60\) females, designated Plain) vis-à-vis all target-persons. The single exception was in the case of the Plain females, who reported receiving contact on more body areas from the girl-friends than did the Attractive girls. The only significant \( (P < .02) \) critical ratio that was found in these comparisons was for the males, with respect to the range of contact received from their girl-friends. Of course, it was the Attractive males who reported the higher means. One does not know whether the Attractive Ss regarded themselves as such because they had been touched on more body regions, or whether others touched more of their body surface because their bodies appeared more inviting and attractive.

DISCUSSION

The most important finding in the present study is that body-accessibility can be reliably measured. Provided that Ss will respond to a questionnaire with honesty, a way is opened for investigation of diverse questions, from those relating to group differences to the study of personality correlates of body-accessibility.

I am going to confine the remainder of this discussion to touching, not because visual accessibility is less important—indeed, there are probably marked differences between cultures, and between individuals in readiness to reveal the body to others. Rather, it is because there was less variance in visual accessibility scores, and because I included this dimension in the study primarily for purposes of comparison with touching.

The touch data prompt a number of questions. Why is less of the body exposed
to touching in the Ss' relationships with parents and same-sexed friends? Why does the most extensive body-contact occur in relation to the friend of the opposite sex? Is it that the 'touch vocabulary' in America is limited only to sexual meanings? What about age trends? My sample was confined to young unmarried adults. Would we find patterns of contact similar to those noted in the study of self-disclosure, where increasing age brought about a decrease in confiding between a person and his parents and same-sexed friend, and increased disclosure to the opposite-sexed partner (Jourard, 1961)?

Why do sons exchange physical contact on fewer body regions with their parents than daughters do? Is there some taboo which restricts the number of points for physical contact between fathers and sons? Several of the males reported that they could recall no physical contact with their fathers! And why do we find the mother-son touching asymmetry? Why can mothers touch their sons on more areas than the sons can touch them? Is it because mothers can contact more body-surface without sexual significance than the sons can?

Why did the Jewish females report fewer regions of their body were touched by their boy-friends than the Protestant or Catholic girls? Is it that the bodies of Jewish girls are less accessible? Or is it a function of the fact, noted by a colleague, that at the University of Florida, the Protestant and Catholic girls are outnumbered by Protestant and Catholic men, whereas the Jewish men and women students are about equal in number—the implication is that the Jewish girls, if they date within their faith, have fewer men to whom they can grant access to their bodies. Or it may mean that the men are more reluctant to touch many areas of a Jewish girl's body.

In an earlier paper (Jourard & Secord, 1955), we reported that Ss' attitudes of like and dislike toward the appearance of their bodies were related to their parents' attitudes to their (the Ss) bodies. That is, the Ss tended to like their bodily appearance if they believed their parents did. This finding may be linked with the present data, which showed that Ss who rated themselves as 'attractive' in appearance reported receiving more physical contact than those who saw themselves as less attractive. The hypothesis may be proposed that parents convey their acceptance of their children's bodies through physical contact, and the children come to experience themselves as acceptable in appearance in this way. More specifically, the children may come to like or accept only those areas of their bodies which the parents have touched or caressed in a positive way. Presumably, a person who likes and accepts his body will invite and accept more physical contact than one who experiences his body as unattractive or bad.

The presence of significant correlations among the various scores depicting touch received from others is especially interesting. It implies that readiness to enter into broad-range touching relationships with others is a dimension of personality which cuts across role-relationships. Presumably there are people who freely exchange touches with others, and another population which sharply restricts the points of physical contact. Through the use of questionnaires, it should be possible to locate the 'mustn't touch' people, and study other dimensions of their personalities. The large SD's found for the measures of touching offer additional warrant for studying personality correlates of tactual accessibility.
Body regions were found to be highly variable in touchability. The hands, arms, shoulders, and top of the head received the most contact, while the areas most obviously linked with sexuality were touched less. A more detailed study of touching in the marriage relationship seems especially warranted, in view of the close association between touching and sex. Perhaps we would find a correlation between expressions of marital satisfaction and the number of body regions that are included in the loving caresses of spouses.

I think that body-contact has the function of confirming one's bodily being. We

Fig. 2. The Ss' 'Body-for-Others', as experienced through amount of touching received from others. Percentages are based on N = 168 males and 140 females. The darkest portions signify that from 76-100 per cent of the Ss reported being touched by the target-person in question on the body-region indicated.
live in an age of 'unembodiment' (Laing, 1960), or disembodiment, and I believe that the experience of being touched enlivens our bodies, and brings us back into them. This is one implication of references in novels to the loved one who 'came to life', or was 'turned on', or 'realized I had a body' in response to the lover's touch or caress. The data reported in Table 3 permit us to depict a dimension of body-image in addition to the 'boundaries' mentioned by Fisher and Cleveland (1958), and cathexis (Jourard & Secord, 1955): viz., our Ss' experienced 'body-for-mother', 'body-for-father', 'body-for-same-sex-friend' and 'body-for-opposite-sex-friend'. Figure 2 shows a front view of an hypothetical S in this study, with the regions that have been touched most by a target-person shaded in most heavily, and the lesser-touched regions shaded more lightly. The diagrams suggest, for example, that a male's experienced body-for-father is composed primarily of hands, head, shoulders and arms, whereas for his girl-friend, much more of his body is experienced, and is included in the relationship. We might propose on the basis of these findings that only those persons who have a relationship with others that includes touching and caresses will have a fully experienced body and a fully embodied self (Laing, 1960, pp. 67-81). Sartre's superb discussion of the way in which a caress incarnates the flesh of the one caressed as well as the one caressing certainly suggests this (cf. Sartre, 1956, pp. 389-397).

Kessen & Mandler (1961) have stated that physical contact between a mother and her child is a 'specific inhibitor' of the unlearned, periodic 'fundamental distress' to which children are subject, and which is the anlage of anxiety in the adult. Indeed, Harlow's (1958) monkeys ran to the surrogate 'mothers' of terry-cloth, and even of wire, presumably for the comfort they derived from contact when they were frightened or stressed. The animal data suggest that contact is the primitive language of love. If this is true, then extensive physical contact may indeed be the natural or primordial sedative and tranquilizer, one without the dangerous side-effects of pharmaceutical compounds. Perhaps people rely on drugs because they do not receive enough contact, caressing, or body-massage in their everyday life. But touching must also be a disturber, especially for defensive people, or for those engaged in tasks involving concentration. It would be interesting to study what happens to an Ss' pulse, his reading efficiency, his learning ability, or his willingness to disclose personal information in an interview when he is being touched by the experimenter or by some other person, e.g., his mother, or a friend of either sex.

In the introductory section of this paper, I noted the rarity of body-contact that occurred in a general hospital setting. I have made similar observations in mental hospitals in the United States, where physical contact of any kind between professional staff and patients, and among patients is discouraged as a matter of policy. By contrast, at a French mental hospital which I visited (in 1964), physical contact is deliberately encouraged, and is seen as an important aspect of the total rehabilitative plan. Patients receive massage, and they engage in all manner of group activities, such as games, in which touching takes place (cf. Sivadon & Gantheret, 1965).

We may conclude from this exploratory study that body-accessibility is a promising field for further study. In future investigations by the questionnaire method, I would recommend modifying the way in which body regions are demarcated. Our division
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of the body was somewhat arbitrary, and did not assign distinct status to such important body zones as the cheeks, or the ear-lobes. It would be valuable, too, to construct a verbal questionnaire, to inquire especially into the meaning and the frequency of contact, e.g., 'On what regions of your body have you been kissed?' 'Do you receive a hug or embrace from parents?' 'How much contact would you like, and how much do you get from a given person?' It would be possible in this way to obtain a better picture of the role of body-contact in an individual's interpersonal life.

REFERENCES


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