

Nodes that Bond Podcast – Episode 2

“Virus”

Portal sem Porteiras, Monteiro Lobato – São Paulo, Brazil.
June, 2020.

A song plays, birds sing, Woman 1 (Lu Pêra) starts speaking:

“Who did I touch and shouldn’t have? Well, I am a Doula, and I went to São Francisco Xavier (*the town next to ours*) to assist on a childbirth. I already knew that this would happen in the middle of this pandemic scenario, social distancing times, trying to imagine how this would happen. How to do this work as a Doula, which has a lot to do with our bodies, and there’s a lot of touching, there’s a lot of actual physical support. What protocols to follow, right? Anyway... I went there, with my humble little face mask, the oils, the resources we have as Doulas. And the birth happened, I had a lot of physical contact with the mother, massaging, physical support, keeping the hands clean at all times, spending the entire time wearing my mask... but, yeah, I did touch the mother, loads. With the goddesses surrounding us, guiding the situation, there wasn’t much else I could do but to be there, supporting that mother during childbirth.

It turned out that the mother had to be transferred to the hospital, and I stayed at their home by myself and slept on the couch. The couple went to the hospital, and they have another son, a small child, who had gone to the neighbor’s house. When it was sun rise, the little boy enters his home, hoping to find his mom, dad and new little brother were there. And the little boy came in, sat down in the couch, crawled into my lap and gave me hugs and kisses (laughs)! I had no mask on, I was waking up there and this loving little kid just woke me up with hugs and kisses... I didn’t even have a choice, he was on my lap! It is crazy to think that we might have the virus, and that other people might have it, and that such contact could be contagious to other people...”

A violin song plays, woman 2 (Cacá) starts to speak:

“Yes, I gave a ride. I gave a ride to two different people during these past 60 days of isolation. One of them was an old lady who works in a place in SP50 (*the main road, outside of the neighborhood*), who needs public transportation, and the public transportation is operating in a much smaller schedule. The other day, I was returning home and I saw her from my car, going up our road in the neighborhood, under such a strong and hot sun, and I was taken by this anguish and a lot of doubts: should I offer her a ride? And so, I asked her.

Obviously, she accepted it. And we get apprehensive, right? Especially with other people’s safety. I’m not sure if I have the virus or something, right? Who can guarantee anything?

Woman 3 (Paulinha):

“Nobody really knows what we can and can’t do... I was at the girls’ home, and taking all the measures to keep a distance, right? I was on the porch, and they were inside, I wasn’t touching anything, all of that. And then Ava (*the dog*) was right on the street and cut her paw. It was bleeding, and she was crying... at that exact moment, the three of us ran to help her, and suddenly we were so close, and I yelled ‘Oh my gosh, we are too close!!’, and we had touched each other... There are moments when we completely forget that there even is a pandemic, that coronavirus exists, we forget this whole thing... and I wonder what are the things that make us forget, right?”

Woman 4 (Lia):

“Once I was touched. I was hiking with a friend, on our way to solve a water harvesting structure, and I accidentally cut my finger. And this friend of mine helped me closing the wound, stopping the bleeding, she hugged me and kissed my forehead. I was still a bit dizzy from the pain, and turned to her and was like ‘hey, you kissed me! Why would you do that?’ (laughs) and she just said ‘Ah, now its done. Oh gosh, what am I gonna do?’ It was stronger than her – she saw me there, bleeding, with a wound... and she acted on solidarity.”

Woman 3 (Paulinha):

“Also, the other day, when I was really, really sad, and crying, and I thought I was alone, there was nobody in the street and it was very early morning...”

Woman 4 (Lia):

“And I saw her walking down the street, I could see from a distance that she was crying.”

Woman 3 (Paulinha):

“But then, a friend of mine arrived, and saw me crying loads.”

Woman 4 (Lia):

“Last year I went through a similar situation, when I was crying in the middle of the street. And when we cry on the street its because we are really really sad, right?”

Woman 3 (Paulinha):

“She saw me like that, and her immediate impulse was to touch me!”

Woman 4 (Lia)

“I got closer to her and I didn’t even think, I completely forgot about pandemics and all that, and just grabbed her and gave her the biggest hug. And it was funny, we both said the same thing...”

Woman 3 (Paulinha):

“No, you can’t touch me!”

Woman 4 (Lia)

“But it was bigger than me, it was something I didn’t really think, I just did it, I could see she was going through a painful moment, and I identified with that”

Woman 3 (Paulinha):

“In these times when we are trying to protect one another, and things happen without us expecting them, and suddenly they take us away from coronavirus and social distancing, and bring us closer... and suddenly the awareness of being in this moment comes back again.”

Woman 4 (Lia):

“In any other moment I hadn’t given in to touching other people... except in these situations of embracing someone. And that is good – to know that we have this solidarity, bigger than ourselves. Even during pandemic times, it is good to know that this feeling exists in a bigger place.”

A song plays, Narrator 1 (Marcela) enters:

“The information we have so far suggests that the main transmission route for Covid-19 are the respiratory droplets. The respiratory droplets are generated when someone who is infected coughs or sneezes. Whoever stands near that person, for about a meter or less away, is exposed to infected respiratory droplets. The hard part is to know who is infected, since many times, we may not present any symptoms at all. Also, these droplets can remain on things, on surfaces in general. And if you touch that surface and then touch any mucous membranes in your body without sanitizing your hands, you might catch the virus.

This is all very new. Everyday, we have more news that make us wonder if we are taking the correct measures according to our context, which can be very diverse: from the risks of contagion to the kinds of possible interactions...

And Nodes that Bond, always committed to the self care of the extensions of our bodies-machines, wants to know: what about the viruses from our digital devices, what do we know about them? And how can we protect ourselves?"

A song plays, Tânia (the projects tutor) enters:

"Virus, Virus, Coronavirus... who here is afraid of viruses? The same way coronavirus can impact our society, a computer virus can do the same to the computer's life. But the computer's life can also affect your life... (laughs). Who here never had something very important to do right when the computer suddenly stopped working? 'Oh, that's a virus, girl' - you might hear. How can we tell if a computer has a virus or not?"

The computer is a machine that basically executes commands. These commands are something that someone writes down. The fact that you can open Facebook on a computer comes from someone saying: 'you click here, type this, you will then see this screen, with these images...'. The computer virus is a command through which someone can say 'Hey, you know all these computer files right there? Send them all to this address here, to me, and without the computer's owner knowing, ok?'. The computer can't tell if this command came from you or from someone else without your permission. The message arrived to it from some digital corner and told it to execute that command."

Narrator 1 (Marcela):

"It is important to remember that who gives the commands to the computer are people. Which means, someone who speaks the language of machines can tell my computer to do something with which I do not agree and that can put me, my data and my machine in danger. But how is that, Tânia? Through which digital doors can such conversations happen?"

Tânia:

"Emails, links, files that you download can be a way. You open someone's e-mail, download the file, and turns out it was just a text file, and it seems like its blank, its nothing... it could be executing actions in your computer. It could also come through a USB that downloads a virus automatically when the USB is plugged into the computer. What the virus will do depends entirely on what are the commands that the person typed in, what they wanted exactly... how can we understand what's inside the mind of someone who creates a virus?"

The same way the flu works, this virus can propagate itself in a contagious manner, which could be through the USB, links that you open, attachments in messages, webpages that contain a virus... so we should always be very much aware about what websites we navigate around... or we receive a link that says "This is a super app that you can download for free right now, usually it is paid for, but hey in this link it is for free, cause we cracked the software!" People are still not so much aware of how internet works... what is a cracked software? It's when someone changes the license of the software somehow, the person manages to put a false license... but sometimes the cracked software could have its very code changed, changes in what kinds of things the software will execute in the computer. At the end of the day, the computer only executes commands that someone gave it.

If someone downloads Photoshop, they go and use the Photoshop software... if it was cracked, it could be something like someone who cracked Photoshop and put a command into it for the computer to share the images that are being manipulated in that machine's photoshop. So the person who cracked it and sent it around as "Free Photoshop download link" is able to see all the images that are opened and manipulated in computers of those who downloaded it... I don't know why people do that, and the computer doesn't know if it was you who told it to do something or a virus. The same way I can circulate in places where I can get infected with something contagious, I can also circulate in online spaces where the computer can get

infected. If you go and watch a movie with online streaming, and you click “play” a thousand times and nothing happens, or a thousand new windows open... suddenly, the computer is acting strange...”

Narrator 1 (Marcela):

“Wow, this whole thing really makes us feel insecure... Makes me a bit nervous! Is there a way out of all this?”

Tânia:

“Should I install an anti-virus software? Do anti-virus software work? Personally, I’m not a big fan of anti-viruses because they are softwares made by companies that can screen and see everything the is inside your computer, and can send to other companies information that they could say is “suspicious”... And I don’t want my information going around without me knowing about it! (laughs) And so I use the Linux System, where there are a lot less viruses... What about Windows System, should you use anti-virus? Well, It might eventually remove something, but the ideal thing to do is format the computer, and if you use the “Windows Defender”, it does the same job an antivirus does.”

Narrator 1 (Marcela):

“I would like to insert a comment here to mention Linux. Linux is an Operational system just like Windows, Android, Mac... but the big difference is that Linux is free and open-source. What does that mean? It means that its code is available for anyone to use it, study it, modify it and distribute it freely. It is opened and for free. Which means that it does not create a dependancy and power like Softwares that have owners. They also have a very friendly interface, just like any other Operational System. And because there are so many people using Linux, there is a massive online community always willing to help solving the doubts and issues that might come up in the internet forums – from the simplest commands to complicated problems.”

Tânia:

“A lot of times the people who develop computer viruses are trying to reach the highest amount of people possible. Not aiming at one specific target, but aiming everywhere, all around. And when doing that, if the vast majority of computers in the world are Windows and I’m aiming at everything all around, it is easier for the person to “infect” a Windows computer simply because there are more people using it. In Linux’s case, besides the fact that there are less people using it, there’s also the fact that the way Linux deals with the commands and executions inside the computer is different. But that does not mean that there are no viruses for Linux!

An effective way of not getting infected is to go to an island (laughs)! All by yourself! [fun music playing]

At the end of the day, being connected is to assume some risks... but being connected is also assuming that you can protect others! When you are connected with someone, you are willing to share things with them, sharing insecurities, knowledge and also risk of infection (laughs)! Is it worth it being shut inside an hermetically sealed glass box in order to be safe? Yes, no? I don’t know...

I hope you don’t catch corona or any other virus, but if you catch it, we’ll fix it! That’s life, right? Kisses, miss all of you guys!”

Narrator 1 (Marcela):

“This was another episode of the Nodes that Bond podcast. A channel that me and Bagope [Luísa] chose to keep on meeting you guys to discuss some of the big themes on our daily life that may seem far away from us: the digital self care.

It is hard to replace our loving and rich meetings, but we hope to somehow still be opening windows to the ways in which we exist in the online world, and warming your hearts during this cold pandemic. For our next

meeting, we would like to know from you: What have you been dreaming with during this pandemic? Also, expanding our dialogs, we will have a new series within this podcast: “Girl, get it off your chest!” - with the mic opened for you to say whatever you want to.

We begin editing this podcast the moment the new moon begins to grow. That’s the due date for you to send your contributions.

Be safe!”