

Essay IV | Touch and the Sense of Being

第四篇 | 触觉与存在感篇

Touch as Attention: The Most Neglected Sense in Modern Life

触摸即注意力：现代生活中被忽视的感官

On presence, numbness, and remembering how it feels to be here

关于同在、麻木，以及重新记起“在这里”的感觉

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Abstract:

This essay explores the paradox of modern “presence”: that despite our pursuit of mindfulness and attention, we have grown hollow at the level of direct, embodied sensation. It examines how our civilization has elevated the distance senses—sight and hearing—while neglecting the proximal senses of touch, proprioception, and interoception, leaving us knowledgeable about our lives but unable to feel our way through them. Drawing on traditional practices such as Tui Na, it proposes a recovery of touch as a sense of participation and relation. Rather than a passive receiver of data, touch is understood as fundamentally dialogical—a two-way stream of information that defines boundaries, communicates relational boundaries, and anchors us in the present moment. By reframing attentive self-touch not as technique but as a medium of attention, the essay situates Tui Na within a cultural and non-clinical context: not as a method for fixing discomfort, but as an invitation to return to the sensory ground from which all genuine care—for ourselves, for

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others, for the world—can naturally grow.

摘要：

本篇探讨了现代“同在”的悖论：尽管我们追求正念与专注，却在直接的、具身的感觉层面变得空洞。它审视了我们的文明如何抬高了远距离感官——视觉与听觉——却忽视了触觉、本体感觉和内感受这些近距离感官，使我们知晓关于生活的种种，却无法感受着度过生活。借鉴推拿等传统实践，它提出恢复触觉作为一种参与和关系的感官。触觉并非被动的数据接收器，而被理解为本质上是对话性的——一种双向的信息流，它定义边界、传递关系性边界，并将我们锚定于当下。通过将专注的自我触摸重新定义为注意力的媒介而非技术，本文将推拿置于文化与非临床语境之中：不是作为修复不适的方法，而是作为一份邀请，邀请我们回到那感官的根基——所有真诚的关怀——对自己、对他人、对世界——皆可由此自然生长。

Main Text

正文

Introduction | The Unfelt Life

引言 | 未被感知的生活

We speak often of “being present.” We meditate to anchor ourselves in the now, we declutter our spaces to reduce distraction, we seek practices to quiet the mind’s chatter.

我们常谈论“活在当下”。我们冥想以锚定于此刻，我们整理空间以减少干扰，我们寻求让内心 chatter（喋喋不休）静默的练习。

Yet, for all this pursuit of presence, a foundational question often goes unasked: What does it actually feel like to be here? Not to think about being here, but to sense it—to have a direct, felt experience of inhabiting this body, in this place, at this moment?

然而，在这场对“同在”的追逐中，一个根本性问题却常被忽略：真正“在这里”感觉起来究竟是怎样？不是去思考在这里，而是去感知它——去拥有一种直接的、被感觉到的体验，体验正栖居于此时此地的这具身体？

Modern life, in its efficiency, has engineered a peculiar form of absence. We are mentally agile, visually saturated, auditorily connected, yet there exists a growing hollow at the level of direct, embodied sensation. We navigate the world through a screen of concepts and interpretations, while the raw, grounding data of touch—the pressure of the chair, the weight of our limbs, the subtle texture of our own breath—fades into a silent background, if it is registered at all.

现代生活以其效率，塑造了一种特殊的“缺席”。我们思维敏捷，视觉饱和，听觉互联，但在直接的、具身的感觉层面，却存在一个日益扩大的空洞。我们通过一层概念与诠释的屏幕来导航世界，而触觉那原始的、奠基性的数据——椅子的压力、四肢的重量、自身呼吸的细微质地——却退隐为静默的背景，甚至根本未被记录。

We may know many things about ourselves, but feel very little of ourselves. This, perhaps, is the core of our contemporary disembodiment.

我们或许知道许多关于自己的事，却很少感受到自己本身。这，或许正是我们当代“失身”（disembodiment）的核心。

Section 1 | The Hierarchy of the Senses

第一节 | 感官的等级制度

Our civilization has established a silent hierarchy among the senses. At the top reign vision and hearing—the “distance senses.”

我们的文明在感官间建立了一种静默的等级制度。高居王座的是视觉与听觉——“远距离感官”。

They are the senses of information, analysis, and abstraction. They allow us to observe from afar, to plan, to communicate complex ideas, to build civilizations. They are indispensable, and we have amplified them with technologies that extend their reach to global, even cosmic, scales.

它们是信息、分析与抽象之感官。它们让我们能够从远处观察、规划、交流复杂思想、建立文明。它们不可或缺，而我们已用技术将其范围扩展至全球乃至宇宙尺度。

Touch, along with its close relatives like proprioception (the sense of body position) and interoception (the sense of inner bodily states), resides at the often-neglected base of this hierarchy. These are the “proximal senses,” the senses of proximity, intimacy, and immediate reality.

触觉，及其近亲如本体感觉（对身体位置的感知）和内感受（对内在身体状态的感知），则常驻于这个等级制度中被忽视的底层。这些是“近距离感官”，关乎邻近、亲密与直接现实。

Their domain is not the distant landscape, but the boundary of the self. They answer questions not of “what is that?” but of “where am I?” and “how do I feel?” They are the foundation upon which the feeling of being someone—of having a coherent, located self—is built.

它们的领域不是远处的风景，而是自我的边界。它们回答的不是“那是什么？”，而是“我在哪里？”和“我感觉如何？”。它们是作为某人而存在的感觉——即拥有一个连贯的、有位置的自我的感觉——得以建立的基础。

In prioritizing the distance senses, we have inadvertently outsourced our sense of being to the realm of the conceptual. We know about our lives, but we are losing the thread of feeling our way through them.

在优先考虑远距离感官的过程中，我们不经意地将我们的存在感外包给了概念的领域。我们知晓关于生活的种种，却正在失去感受着度过生活的线索。

Section 2 | Numbness Is Not the Absence of Pain

第二节 | 麻木，并非不痛

When a sense is chronically underused or overstimulated in chaotic ways, it does not simply vanish. It adapts. For the proximal senses, the primary adaptation in a high-stimulus, low-attention environment is often **numbness**.

当一个感官长期使用不足或以混乱方式过度受激时，它不会简单消失。它会适应。对于近距离感官而言，在一个高刺激、低关注度的环境中的主要适应方式，常常是**麻木**。

This numbness is not a passive void, nor merely the absence of pain or pleasure. It is an active, protective damping of sensitivity. It is the nervous system's way of saying, "The signals from this channel are too constant, too meaningless, or too overwhelming to process. I will lower the volume so we can focus on what seems more urgent (the screen, the deadline, the next notification)."

这种麻木并非被动的空洞，也不仅仅是痛苦或愉悦的缺失。它是一种主动的、保护性的敏感度抑制。这是神经系统在表达：“来自这个通道的信号太持续、太无意义，或太具压倒性，无法处理。我将调低音量，以便我们能专注于更紧迫的事情（屏幕、截止日期、下一个通知）。”

We become numb not because we feel nothing, but because we have learned, for survival's sake, to feel less. We mute the steady hum of bodily existence to hear the louder, sharper sirens of modern demands.

我们变得麻木，并非因为毫无感觉，而是因为我们已学会，为了生存，去减少感觉。我们调低了身体存在那稳定的嗡鸣，以便听见现代需求更响亮、更尖锐的警报。

The consequence is a profound disconnection. We might perform all the right actions for health—exercise, eat well, sleep—yet approach them as further tasks on the managerial checklist, executed with the same detached efficiency. The body becomes, once more, an object to be maintained, its sensations mere data points, not lived experiences. The numbness that began as a shield against overload ends up cementing the very disconnect it was meant to manage.

其后果是一种深刻的分离。我们可能执行所有正确的健康行动——锻炼、吃好、睡好——却将它们当作管理清单上更多的任务来处理，以同样抽离的效率去执行。身体再次成为一个待维护的客体，其感受仅仅是数据点，而非活生生的体验。始于对抗过载的盾牌的麻木，最终却固化了他原本旨在处理的分离状态。

Section 3 | Why Touch Is Different

第三节 | 触摸为何不同

Touch cannot be fully outsourced or rendered abstract in the way sight and sound can. It is, by its nature, a sense of **participation** and **relation**.

触觉无法像视觉和声音那样被完全外包或变得抽象。就其本质而言，它是一种**参与与关系**的感官。

You can observe from a distance, but you cannot touch from a distance. Touch requires proximity, duration, and a form of reciprocity (even when touching an object, you feel the pressure returned). It defines boundaries—where you end and the world begins. It communicates safety, threat, connection, or isolation at a primal, pre-verbal level.

你可以从远处观察，但无法从远处触摸。触摸需要接近、持续以及某种形式的交互性（即使触摸一个物体，你也能感受到返回的压力）。它定义边界——你在何处终结，世界从何处开始。它在原始的、前语言的层面上传递安全、威胁、连接或隔离。

In this way, touch is fundamentally dialogical. It is a two-way stream of information. To touch

is to be touched in return, by the very act of sensing the contact. It forces a kind of mutual presence.

因此，触觉本质上是对话性的。它是一种双向的信息流。去触摸，即是在感知接触的行为中被回馈。它迫使一种相互的在场。

When we lose touch with touch—when we live primarily through the mediated, distant senses—we lose a primary anchor to the present moment and to the reality of our own embodied existence. We become spectators of our lives, not inhabitants.

当我们失去与触觉的联系——当我们主要通过中介化的、遥远的感官生活时——我们便失去了锚定于当下时刻以及我们自身具身存在现实的一个主要锚点。我们成了生活的旁观者，而非栖居者。

Section 4 | Self-Touch as Presence, Not Technique

第四节 | 自我触摸：作为同在，而非技术

This brings us to a practice so simple it is often overlooked: attentive self-touch. Not the clinical touch of checking for lumps, nor the perfunctory touch of applying lotion, but touch with the quality of **listening**.

这便引向一种因其简单而常被忽视的练习：专注的自我触摸。不是检查肿块的临床触摸，也不是涂抹乳液那种敷衍的触摸，而是带有**倾听**质感的触摸。

It could be as simple as placing a hand over the heart, not to change its rhythm, but to feel it. Or resting the palms on the thighs, sensing weight, temperature, and the subtle hum of aliveness beneath the skin. Or, in the spirit of practices like Tui Na, using the hands not as tools to “fix” a stiff shoulder, but as instruments of inquiry—applying pressure not to overpower, but to ask a question of the tissue and patiently attend to its embodied response.

它可以简单到将一只手放在心口，不为改变其节奏，只为感受它。或将手掌放在大腿上，感受重量、温度，以及皮肤之下生命那细微的嗡鸣。或者，秉承如推拿这类实践的精神，双手不是作为“修复”僵硬肩膀的工具，而是作为探寻的器具——施加压力并非为了压制，而是向组织提出一个问题，并耐心留意其具身的回应。

This is touch as a vehicle of attention. Its goal is not a physiological change (though that may follow), but a restoration of **connection**. It is a way of saying, through sensation, “I am here, with you.” The “you” being your own living body.

这是将触摸作为注意力的载体。其目标并非生理上的改变（尽管那可能随之而来），而是**连接**的恢复。这是一种通过感觉在表达：“我在这里，与你同在。”这个“你”，即是你自己活生生的身体。

Section 5 | From Sensation to Presence

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第五节 | 从感觉到存在感

Presence, then, is not a mental state we achieve by thinking harder about the now. It is a sensory state we drop into when we allow ourselves to feel the foundational data of our existence: the pull of gravity, the contour of contact, the rhythm of breath, the subtle, ever-changing symphony of sensations that is the body.

因此，同在并非一种我们通过更努力地思考当下而达成的精神状态。它是一种感官状态，当我们允许自己去感受我们存在的基础数据时，我们便沉浸于其中：重力的牵引、接触的轮廓、呼吸的节奏、那作为身体本身的、细微且不断变化的感觉交响乐。

It is the difference between thinking “I am sitting in a chair,” and feeling the full, textured reality of weight, support, and boundary that constitutes sitting.

这即是思考“我正坐在椅子上”与感受构成“坐”这一行为的重量、支撑与边界的全部、有质感的现实之间的区别。

This sensory ground is not the end point of a wellness journey. It is the necessary beginning. It is the fertile soil from which all other forms of intelligent care—movement that respects the body’s signals, nourishment that responds to true appetite, rest that is genuinely restorative—can naturally and authentically grow.

这种感官基础并非健康旅程的终点。它是必要的起点。它是肥沃的土壤，所有其他形式的智慧关怀——尊重身体信号的运动、回应真实食欲的滋养、真正能恢复精力的休息——都能由此自然而真实地生长。

When we can truly feel ourselves, we are better equipped to engage in the cooperative dialogue with our bodies (as we reconsidered in the second essay), and to align our lives with rhythms more forgiving than the rigid schedule (as explored in the third). It all starts with the courage to feel again.

当我们能真正感受自己时，我们便更有能力去进行与身体的协作对话（正如我们在第二篇文章中重新思考的），并使我们的生活与比僵硬日程更宽容的节律协调一致（正如第三篇所探讨的）。这一切，始于再次去感受的勇气。

Conclusion | The Ground of Being

结语 | 存在的基底

We live in an age that prizes output, optimization, and transcending limits. In this context, returning to the simple, animal fact of sensation can feel like a radical act—a quiet rebellion against the tyranny of abstraction.

我们生活在一个推崇产出、优化与超越极限的时代。在此背景下，回归感觉这一简单的、动物性的事实，却可能像一种激进的行为——一场针对抽象暴政的静默反叛。

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It is not about rejecting the modern world, but about reclaiming a birthright: the capacity to be a feeling creature, inhabiting a felt life. It is about remembering that before we are thinkers, managers, or achievers, we are living systems that sense.

这不是要拒绝现代世界，而是要收回一项与生俱来的权利：作为一个能感觉的生物，栖居于一个被感知的生活中的能力。这是要记得，在我们成为思考者、管理者或成就者之前，我们首先是能够感知的生命系统。

This return to the sensory ground does not solve problems in the way a tool fixes a machine. It changes the very ground from which we meet our problems, our joys, and our lives. It transforms the quality of our being here.

这种对感官基础的回归，并非以工具修理机器的方式解决问题。它改变了我们面对问题、喜悦与生活时所立足的基础。它转变了我们存在于这里的品质。

And from this ground, everything else—movement, nourishment, connection, creativity—can begin to flow not as a forced effort, but as an organic expression of a life that is fully felt, and fully lived.

而从这个基础出发，其他一切——运动、滋养、连接、创造——才能开始流动，不是作为一种强迫的努力，而是作为一种被充分感受、充分活过的生命之有机表达。

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