



Summary—Thank you for your presentation! I will use this occasion to summarise your theory-piece titled *Masking a Body*. I am using a course-standard to address your piece in 3 aspects: **1)** your field of inquiry; **2)** your discussion; **3)** your conclusions. The write-up is limited to one A5 page.

Specifically—you indicate a way of *caring* by defining the inside and the outside, as a key definition of *clothing*. Your lead motif in the theory piece you have called the *Hedgehog's paradox*, which is sparked by your experience of the Corona Pandemic and the care of distance it imposes.

Your *fable* of the hedgehog runs like this: on the one hand, it will seek closeness to other members of its kind for warmth; on the other hand, hedgehogs have spikes and cannot so close as to damage each other. From this point of departure you develop a theory of contemporary culture.

Everything relying on the premise of care for closeness and a caring distance, falls under the hedgehog's dilemma. This is certainly not limited to clothes. But clothes become a concrete instance and a cultural model for a widespread principle of which you analyse the application in many areas.

Precisation 1—On a philosophical note you apply the dilemma's principle to how we are removed from ourselves: our experience and the reality of our body are very diverse. The more we are informed the more diversity increases. With the democratisation of information diversity increases.

To manage the cacophony of information we also need to claim some distance. And with that distance comes the possibility to determine what it has to do with me/not. It becomes possible to recognise and take awareness of the fuzzy border of my personal mental space.

As an historical example of the hedgehog's dilemma, you mention the historical use of medical *masks* as containers for herbal scents, believe to prevent contagion in pandemics (cf, the theory of *miasmas*). The mask itself featuring—in its symbolic and medical aspects—the hedgehog's dilemma.

Precisation 2—these perspectives bring you to make some interesting, and at the same time uncanny, observations about human nature. Your historical retrospective showing for instance that face masks were used during the Spanish flu (1918-20). After the flu, the Europeans abandoned the mask.

However, the Japanese kept it. It became an expression of modern life and of care in that context. From face masks you move on to sun glasses: how the care of distance, afforded by shades, can affect social relations with some desirable outcomes. A preventive disconnection of eye-contact.

You move unto the *Walkman*. The alert reader will have guessed that *smartphones* also manage disconnection. But *hats* also come in. Wearing or removing hats manages closeness/distance. You conclude: “the sense of balance between oneself and others will become even more important.”