

# Do We Move on, or Do We Go Back?

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*No pain, no gain.*

Anonymous

This pandemic era is an age of conflicts, an age when a little of what we were counting on will be lost. Or a lot. It is time when there is time to think. What if everything were different? The wish to 'go back to how things were' lingers, nevertheless, a product of yearning mixed with fear of the uncertain, perhaps some guilt about mistreating the planet, and just a touch of repetition compulsion. These are the contents of this ideo-affective medley. Little by little, uncertainty has sustained anticipatory fantasies that vainly attempt to make certain what is, in fact, uncertain. The comfort produced by the belief in certainty anesthetizes any yearning for something else, something different. Newness, at first, brings with it a shaky insecurity.

On the other hand, others perceive 'the uncertain' as an opening to something new, contemporary, and relevant. To some extent, retreating home becomes a "stop along the way" that can stimulate reinvigorating opportunities to 'think-feel-and-do'.

Cervantes began to write *Don Quixote* while imprisoned. His incarceration produced a kind of mental agitation that, as he described in the Prologue to *Don Quixote*, 'turns even the most sterile muses fertile, filling the world with wonderful, delightful offspring'. Prison provided a reset, allowing Cervantes to rid himself of the preconceived notions, habits, norms, and prejudices of daily living that usually 'trap' the creative imagination.

The current shelter-at-home period – sudden, unexpected, and without a certain end date – allows for an experiential space of reflection where one can discover a way to adapt to the new rhythm that has emerged from the destructuring of the former socioeconomic conditions. During this isolation at home, protective and indefinite, news spreads about that citizens are losing their lives because they may not have had a healthy body. How many reflections on the body: was it treated well or poorly? What was its lifestyle? How it was cared for, or was it at all? Was life well spent or wasted?! A similar attitude can be discerned in discussions about whether we are treating the planet well or poorly. Conscientiousness about ecological care has become self-referential, where previously 'others' diluted it.

This social moment is experienced from a given perceptual-operational paradigm that I have called: *Base Logic*: something that refers to a personal axiomatic position, operating in the mind like a protagonist who acts at the moment of perceiving-feeling-thinking, when he makes a decision or takes an action. It is a qualitative point of view that functions, subliminally, as a glass lens that attributes qualities and meanings to what was apprehended, that fosters a particular orientation or approach to stimuli from the self and/or the environment (Carlino, 2000; 2010; 2011).

Today, the operating principle among the general population is short-term thinking. Prudent hygienic practices dominate people's *base logic*. As the number of days of the stay-at-home mandate increases, some people begin to exhibit manic defenses and negate the real risk of contagion. Some people exhibit ego splitting (Freud, 1938), and they either perceive the danger of contagion and staying home, or they operate as if there were no risk whatsoever.

Compelled by these social circumstances, many analysts decided to suggest to their analysands that

they continue analysis through an online platform.

Both analysts and analysands, lacking previous experience with cyberanalysis, are trying a new frame. Initially, this obviously affects the skillful execution of their roles, since both are learning about and training each other in this new medium, requiring a common effort to find analytic harmony in an environment of mutual cooperation before a shared challenge from the adult part of their respective personalities. This drastic shift in frame and function puts to the test the capacity for adaptation and creativity.

Working from the adult part of each member may result in a healthy therapeutic experience for the dyad.

Everyone perceives and responds to this change in social framework, abrupt and forced though it may be, through *base logic*. Recently, a colleague commented that she was getting ready to return to the consulting room soon, an expression of a wish that cannot be certain to become realized. Heraclitus, a philosopher and materialist from the 6th century BC, affirmed, 'No man ever steps in the same river twice, for its not the same river and he's not the same man'. It is impossible to return to 'how it used to be'. 'It' no longer exists; 'it' constituted one of the previous frames in the 'film of life', which is composed of an ongoing series of frames that form a steady movement, a sort of 'being in becoming' in which new events produce different frames.

External events imposed another frame. What started out as accidental became habitual. Each, assuming a role that is now more symmetrical, is experiencing another analytic praxis that will doubtlessly enrich psychoanalysis and its legacy.

It is presumptuous to pretend to know the future of these practices. Will they continue as cyberanalysis, will they return to office-analysis, or will mixed analyses develop? This will be subordinated to what the dyad decides, depending on what they experience. A suitable decision would mean progress in the tools available to the profession.

Cyberanalysis, a mode of practice that has been used since at least the turn of the century, has now appeared all over the world at all levels, and has achieved a legitimate identity. It will no longer be treated as an undocumented immigrant but rather as a citizen with an official entry visa and permanent residence within psychoanalysis.

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