

# TREATMENTS OF THE BODY IN OUR TIMES AND IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

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## **Online analysis**

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A psychoanalysis happens in the encounter of two bodies, both the analyst's and the analysand's, like all discourse that creates social bond. Nevertheless, it is not a body to body. When the pandemic imposed the interruption of the circulation of the bodies, psychoanalysis could have been extinguished. That was not the case; it persisted thanks to the desire of the analyst that propelled many, if not all, analysts to reinvent themselves in a new device, very distinct from the one invented by Freud: the online analysis, in the virtual and remote format. On March 15, 2020 I closed my office for the first time in more than 30 years of analytical practice. Like me, several others and, then, all analysts did it to prevent the Covid-19 plague to enter and respect the sanitary measures of social isolation. From then on, what it would be the destiny of psychoanalysis and its maintenance in a world that tended to close all in their homes as the sole effective measure to limit contagion? The only solution was to practice online analysis with everybody, as a general way, instead of that being reserved to the analysands who couldn't move from their countries or cities.

In 2020, some psychoanalysts came to public to vilify the online device, the one that differs from what we inherited from Freud. Today, more than 2 years later, some took their criticism back, others kept silent, and nobody else raised the voice against it. Even because if they kept saying "online analysis doesn't exist", what have they done with their analysands during this period? More than 2 years later, some analysts go back to their offices and the online analysis remains

on; however, the hybrid form, alternating in person and online sessions, now becomes occasionally an option.

The psychoanalytic treatment has the property to be simultaneously experimental and therapeutic, investigative and conclusive. After two years of experimentation, the online analysis has proved to have efficacy: analyses have started and ended; inhibitions, symptoms and anguishes were treated; phantasies were traversed; identifications were dropped. With accumulated experience, we can say online analysis came to stay.

No doubt online analysis has several drawbacks and conditions that interfere in the analytical work, as such, the instability of the internet connection followed by the repetition of the “are you hearing me?” that not always can be interpreted as demand, the interruption of the internet connection that caused an unintended cut of the session, the echoes, the metallic sounds, the fragmentation of the body image, which it is not seeing in its entirety. All of this can hinder the transmission of the said and the hearing of the analysand’s saying. The three-dimensionality, the displacement of bodies in space, the “atmosphere” resulting of the encounter with light, sound and ambient temperature are lost. On the other hand, there is the fact that analysand and analyst see themselves being seeing, which is something inexistent in the office. Despite that, analysis works online and has effects as many of us can verify in the clinical work and in the supervisions.

The strategic arsenal used by the analyst to operate was modified. No more waiting room with other analysands, opening and closing the door, using or not the couch, standing up to make the cut, following the analysand, etc. The psychoanalysts had to invent other maneuvers – very different ones – as strategies of semblances in order to put in place the tactics of the act and the interpretation in the online device: use the audio with or without the camera, appear or not on the screen, freeze the image, and several other new strategies and improvisations unlike the couch-chair device used in the office. In this case, the analyst has to be oriented not by the *setting*<sup>1</sup> but by the fundamentals and the ethics of psychoanalysis: the tactic of the act (which includes the interpretation), the strategy of semblances, and the politics of the surplus jouissance. To be clear, it is neither the office nor the cell phone that make a psychoanalysis to exist, but it is a psychoanalyst with her act who gives room to the discourse of the analyst. What does the online analysis make us to think about the body, the encounter, and the analytic act?

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<sup>1</sup> In English in the original. (note of the translator)

In the upcoming international meeting, we are to debate the questions that this new device present to us. Without considering to cease in person analysis and refraining from comparing both forms of analysis to find what is the best, our analytical community has the challenge to formalize the conditions of the online analysis which is currently an unavoidable reality and allowed for the reinvention of the psychoanalysts and a huge expansion of the analytical treatment beyond geographical borders. In this occasion, I intend to bring up some theoretical contributions to launch the debate.

Hasta Buenos Aires! Hugs, Antonio Quinet.

English version by: Gabriela Costardi