Editor's note

Looking from the future

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The World is changing. Science is changing, gaining more insights and discovering, systematically, some “new” ideas that are actually ancient. Health is changing by the occurrence of a pandemic, by raising anxiety and fear, and by reorganizing the importance of diseases. Education is changing from onsite relation to online classes, in which the teacher is not anymore the pillar of the class, but the laptop is. Actually, the entire human society is changing, while the entire natural world mechanisms remain the same.

In all this change, there is a paradox: most people do not accept the change, even it is a fact. And when a switch is happening, but people don't accept it, the anxiety raises. We see this change in individuals, in families, and in society (especially in schools).

Most people consider that the change was imminent, but when it comes to changing personal habits, the individuals cannot do it. The neural correlates of a still existing world are strong. Hedonism has been developed by the consumer society and people do not want to diminish their desires. In a time when the lockdowns and emergency situations due to pandemics are numerous, Black Friday is very alive and new malls arise in towns.

A potential future

How does this would look from the future? Could we try to imagine a script in this regard?

From the educational view, will human society have more or fewer specialists in different domains, considering the years of online education? Would a surgeon know how to execute a surgery? How about a dentist? Or maybe people will continue to stay home and machines will do different activities for them. The beauty of onsite classes in university or in high school could be lost. Engineers would work from home, through machines and drones, farmers would conduct the machines' activities on the land from the chair, in the front of a computer. The symbiosis between man and nature would be almost lost. Eric Fromm considered that humans lost their equilibrium when they separated from nature; they lost symbiosis, but they gained anxiety. They built cities and a separate world, but nature still existed in their cities. What about this possible future when nature remains mostly memory and the artificial world will take its place?

From the health view, we already assist to anxiety level rising. Different studies analyzed the impacts of lockdown on the mental health of children and young people (mentalheath.org.uk). Different instruments have been applied on children and young people and the results indicated a strong raising in PTSD in health-related disasters (4 times higher scores in quarantined children than those not quarantined, according to

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Sprang and Silman, 2013 and to Brooks et al., 2020). Another study in India during the actual pandemic arrived at a similar result (Saurabh, 2020), while in China young people reported anxiety and depressive symptoms (Xie et al., 2020).

With all these facts, with the worries from the lack of perspective in life, one could see from the future generations of people having personality issues. On the other hand, maybe these personality disorders could become so numerous that they would become normal.

If education and health could look this way from the future, how the world will function with all these issues?

The analysis method proposed by this editorial is to look back from the future. This method overturns the current paradigm, in which an analysis starts from the current state. It could be a more efficient way to analyze radical changes, such as the present one. A completely new dynamics of the world redefined could be better understood this way, instead of extrapolations based on historical trends. Thinking "back from the future" broadens the perspective of education and health (without reducing the analysis to these sectors) by several possible scenarios, in which the activity could be completely redefined.

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