

Chapter 2

Education During COVID-19 in the Ortega– Marañón Foundation: Social and Cultural Response Through the Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The pandemic has challenged the human race, as it had been understood in the beginning of the 21st century, and it has been equalized under the effects of COVID-19. It is impossible to ignore the modifications with which transhumanism has superimposed itself on humanism. However, the pandemic has come to question this ‘power’ of man and science over man himself. The initially uncontrollable destructive action of a virus has been enough to almost paralyze all this progress, even in medicine itself. Health spaces and efforts had to concentrate on the search for resources to quickly stop the increase of contagions and deaths and to find definitive solutions to halt the disease. Economic, social, and cultural activities have required a response to the emergency and a capacity to react and adapt for survival. The Ortega-Marañón Foundation harmonizes humanities and sciences in its two research institutes: Instituto Universitario Ortega y Gasset and Instituto de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Salud Gregorio Marañón, affiliated to the Complutense University of Madrid.

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INTRODUCTION

If there is one thing that is crystal clear, it is that medicine is not merely a science, but a discipline inseparable from the humanities. Nothing like pain and suffering affects human beings and nothing like health and prosperity allows their fullest development. The pandemic has challenged society, the human race, as it had been understood without distinction in the 21st century so far. Also, it has been somehow equalized under the effects of COVID-19.

It is impossible to ignore the modifications with which transhumanism had superimposed itself on humanism. But, perhaps, the pandemic also came to question the solidity of this 'power' of man and science over man himself. It is evident that scientific advances merged with technological applications in recent years have surpassed the limits of human life known until then. But it is also true that the almost uncontrollable destructive action of a virus has been enough to almost paralyze all this progress, even in medicine itself and practically the whole of society, at least for more than a while. Health spaces and efforts have had to concentrate on the search for resources to quickly stop the increase in contagions and deaths, and to find definitive solutions in order to stop the disease. And the rest of the work, economic, social, cultural and educational activities have been required to give a response to the emergency and the capacity to react and adapt for survival as well.

Extreme situations put human beings to the test and make them react with all their capabilities and resources. Two of them, which are essential, are culture and education. Cultural and educational institutions have tried to respond in a responsible manner, using all their means and experience to contribute to the solution for the pandemic.

One of the most representative institutions of this kind in Spain, and also in Latin America, which brings together the ideal elements for this reaction in an effective manner is the Ortega-Marañón Instituto (OMI) –managed by a Foundation with the same name Madrid (Ortega-Marañón Foundation, FOM). Humanities, social sciences, health sciences and medicine are inextricably linked in its gestation and origin. Both José Ortega y Gasset (Elorza, 1984; Lasaga, 2005; Gracia, 2014; Zamora Bonilla, 2002) and Gregorio Marañón (Gómez Santos, 2001; Laín Entralgo, 1969; López Vega, 2011) are two unquestionable humanist figures in the full meaning of the term. In a specific sense, the former develops his humanism fundamentally in philosophy, while the latter finds in medicine the ideal field in which to put it into practice. But the perspective of both is humanistic, and them two developed a wide cultural, social, creative and informative activity. Them two developed their professional action, many times together, from the closeness of friendship and communion of beliefs.

As it has been said, the Ortega-Marañón Instituto (OMI) is one of the most important ones in Spain for the level and prestige of its members and collaborators, as well as for the quality of its activities. In fact, it was the first of all of this kind of institutions in the postgraduate level. Created in 1987, his interuniversity character let it to sum researchers and professors of over the world. As a consequence of this, OMI received posgraduated pupils from many countries (every year around of 70% of pupils are not Spanish). But it is not only interesting for this reason, but also because, quite uniquely, it combines a series of conditions that individualize it with respect to other very relevant ones. In addition to harmonizing the humanities and the sciences in its two research institutes: Instituto Universitario de Investigación Ortega y Gasset and Instituto de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Salud Gregorio Marañón, the OMI brings together high-level cultural dissemination and higher education through its affiliation to the Complutense University of Madrid. The Foundation –wich managed OMI- also offers graduate courses and promotes the teaching and learning of the Spanish language in close collaboration with the

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