

Chapter 14

Jordi Casanovas’ #Coronavirusplays: Spanish and Catalan Micro- Theatre Within the Framework of the Project COVID-19 LiTraPan

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 and the diffusion of the COVID-19 disease had and still has a huge impact on the world’s population. The pandemic has also psychological implications and online activities can help to support people experiencing its consequences. The project COVID-19 LiTraPan aims to contribute to meet the needs that emerged during the pandemic in the field of humanistic higher education and quality assurance of distance learning. The line of research consists of the creation and study of corpora of works inspired and composed during the health emergency, and of their use for distance learning and discomfort management. In the first phase of development of the project, the author’s choice fell on the Spanish and Catalan microtheatre production published online as a result of the initiative #Coronavirusplays, launched by the playwright Jordi Casanovas on 13 March 2020, which ran until 8 May 2020. In this contribution, the author synthesizes the first results of the investigation and distance learning activities in the framework of the COVID-19 LiTraPan project.

INTRODUCTION

The worldwide outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 and the global diffusion of the COVID-19 disease had and still has a huge impact on the world’s population and radically transformed the life of the planet’s inhabitants (Sohrabi et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2020). Indeed, this is an epochal event: the Spanish flu pandemic dates back to 1918-1920, while other epidemics had a heavy but different impact, as was the

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case with the HIV, the SARS, Ebola, and the MERS (Coronaviridae Study Group of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses, 2020).

In the present situation, from the very beginning, the infection showed an uncommon virulence and aggression, it soon spread and became a worldwide health problem (She et al., 2020; Cheng & Shan, 2020). Consequently, people had to face with limitations in everyday life, social relationships, leisure activities and ways of working. As to be expected, the pandemic had also psychological implications and issues, such as typical acute stress responses, because it suddenly and unpredictably created a rapid and diffuse uncertainty, undermining the conviction of both our personal and societal sense of safety. The negative psychological impact of a pandemic, of the consequent quarantine and of other measures to combat it is well-known, due to its consequences for subjective as well as collective psychological health; although, this type of relapse is less visible than others (Brooks et al., 2020), and that is why psychological health is probably the most neglected aspect of the actual situation (Schimmenti et al., 2020, p. 41; Marazziti, 2020, pp. 39-40).

From a psychological point of view, the present pandemic needs attention and interventions in different fields of everyday life, such as supporting people in quarantine to cope with reclusion, isolation and other restrictions (Brooks et al., 2020). It also must be taken into consideration the unavoidable long-term psychological disorders and how to prevent them (Xiang et al., 2020; Srivatsa & Stewart, 2020; Marazziti & Stahl, in press) as well as the psychologically negative impact of the resulting economic crisis (Marazziti et al., 2020).

The most evident individual and societal reaction to this situation is the emergence of fear. According to recent studies (e.g. Schimmenti et al., 2020), at a psychological level the experiences related to fears and different forms of anxiety linked to the pandemic are manifested in four domains: corporal, interpersonal, cognitive and behavioral. The survey carried out describes these four domains and their characteristics and proposes some approach methodologies to manage their consequences (Schimmenti et al. 2020, 41). The classification of the four fear domains can be summarized as follows:

- Corporal domain: fear OF the body / fear FOR the body the subject perceives her/his body as a potential source of danger via infection, as a threat; or as a treasure that may be lost and that s/he must protect.
- Interpersonal domain: fear OF others / fear FOR others the subject perceives that the others could infect her/him; or that her/his beloved ones could be infected by others.
- Cognitive domain: fear OF knowing / fear of NOT knowing the subject avoids to know what s/he thinks is better left unknown; or s/he needs to know, due to the impression of partial and therefore unsettling knowledge of the pandemic.
- Behavioral domain: fear OF acting / fear of NOT acting the subject is afraid to take actions that could put her/him at risk of becoming infected; or s/he is afraid to be unable to act, even in case of actions that guarantee her/his safety.

These manifestations can alternate and coexist in the psychological response, even with its apparent opposite, in both individual and collective behavior (Schimmenti et al. 2020, 41). Facing these fears is critical on the individual level, but effective coping can also help the whole society to manage in a better way the situation. These are relevant aspects, because the resilience of a society dealing with a pandemic also depends on how its members endure their anxiety and fears of loneliness, contagion, death, etc. So, improving psychological health of individuals is decisive for strengthening the resilience of the whole

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