Growing up on the edge of fading

The prospects of a Pedagogy of Emergency

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Life itself is a challenge of emergency and, therefore it fits together with every pedagogical and educative intention aimed at the development of utopian ideals pursued by emancipatory, empowered and democratic care. However, the Pedagogy of Emergency defines a specific field of reflection and action that does not arise simply in the dictation of this perspective but focuses on the logics and teleologies that arise as a problem when emergency is linked to catastrophe.

Thus, the paper intends to present the source of the Pedagogy of emergency and then focus on some central categories useful to define its theories and practices.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Emergency, Catastrophe, Human development, Life design.

Crescere ai margini della dissolvenza. Le prospettive di una pedagogia dell'emergenza

La vita stessa è una sfida emergenziale e, pertanto, ben si accorda con ogni intenzione pedagogica ed educativa orientata allo sviluppo di ideali utopici perseguiti da una cura emancipativa, autorizzata e democratica. Tuttavia, la pedagogia dell'emergenza definisce uno specifico campo di riflessione e di azione che non emerge semplicemente dal dettato di questa prospettiva, ma si focalizza sulle logiche e teleologie che sorgono come problema quando l'emergenza è legata alla catastrofe.

Il contributo intende dunque presentare l'origine della Pedagogia dell'e-
mergenza per poi soffermarsi su alcune categorie centrali utili a definirne
teorie e pratiche.

Parole-chiave: pedagogia, emergenza, catastrofe, sviluppo umano, progetto
vitale.

The otherness of catastrophe and the pedagogy of risk

Catastrophe, for those who in recent times have grown up with the *end of
history* myth, is a reality which is distant, *other:* it always unfolds somewhere
else or in a different point in time or it always occurs at the expense of com-
munities with which you don't identify. In ancient times and especially in
the Middle Ages, the *otherness* of the great upheavals (at the hand of nature
and history itself) did not take shape and meaning from the "distance" in
time and space or from the feeling of estrangement from one's own pecu-
liar human experience, but rather from otherworldly forces that practiced,
for example, their warning or punishment functions in reaction to human
actions later to be revealed as sinful precisely through said forces. History
did not finish, as Fukuyama announced (1996) in the aftermath of the Cold
War, with his hopeful, optimistic but also ethnocentric (and not politically
neutral) vision of a world that now would be characterised, from his point
of view, starting from the growth of the economy and technology, by liberal-
capitalistic democracies and by the Western lifestyle.

If faraway wars and new conflicts in the world's most critical areas aren't
enough to arouse the need and the urgency to feel *inside history* (as a subject
and as a society), facts and events, like the Twin Towers attack on September
11th 2001 or the more recent attacks in the heart of Europe should remind us
that History has not finished and it's quite useless – or, better yet, it becomes
dangerous for the human subject – to pretend that life flows in a scene whose
evolution can be marked solely by linearity and predictability. The *end of his-
tory* in this sense becomes a mere erroneous and disorienting *perception of the
end of history*, in which – amidst anxieties and fears that start slithering re-
gardless – we only place the answers regarding safety, perhaps not sufficient to
frame and "solve" all the complexities of the contemporary moment in history.

If history has not finished, not even technical rationality, heir of the *solid* conceptions of modernity (Bauman, 2003), can guarantee that sense of *certainty* that actually characterises it. The certainties that modernity brought to its culture and its social and technological transformations and that, at a later stage, consumer culture has translated into an idea of existence completely oriented towards the fruition of prosperity, to the *here and now*, to a development only sought in an economical sense, can no longer be the human subjects' answer to their time and their social, political, geographical space.

For Latouche (2007), catastrophes play an ultimately educational role: in this sense the *Pedagogy of catastrophe* is linked directly to a need for world re-enchantment, as if to say a necessity to find meanings, perspectives and values that restore the possibility of an alternative life plan for humanity, that in the economic and environmental fields translates to the *de-growth* perspective or one that, for others, could be more realistically comprehensible as the *sustainable development* perspective.

The concept of catastrophe leads us to a complex, multidimensional reality, in which not only do the material and visible factors (the endured damage/damages, the event and its impact on a system, in the immediacy with which it occurs) emerge, but also the horizons of its general or specific meaning, the conceptualising of what has taken place, the picking of sides, whether it be in the field of ethics, politics, society and last but not least, education. The catastrophe, therefore, also alludes to immaterial dimensions and comes into contact with other equally complex concepts, like the ones of *risk* and *emergency*.

Ancient and medieval culture did not have a general abstract concept for those phenomena that these days fall under the heading of catastrophe, although it has etymological origins in Ancient Greek, which employed the term in dramaturgical language, to indicate the solution for the ordeal, the coup de théatre, the turning point in the disentangling of a story (Tagliapietra, 2016). A vital meaning, this, that widened only after the scope of the modern conception of *catastrophe* did, when it presents itself as a dynamic "figure" in which the event (the breaking point, the point of no return, the *coup de théatre*) changes the course of things, laying the foundations for the quest for new balance and new future scenarios.

We're in late modernity when, with the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, "catastrophe" begins to be introduced also in the semantic sphere that we know today, so as to mean the fraying of the state of things, but also an immediate

shift of direction, radical and irreversible subversion (Tagliapietra, 2004). Thus, "catastrophe describes the collapse of an order, its ruin, and thematises the causes of that order's downfall along with the intellectual pursuit of a new order, a new continuity" (Tagliapietra, 2016, p. 17).

The French mathematician René Thom, conceiver of contemporary catastrophe theory, identifies catastrophe as "the 'leap' from one state to another or from one path to another. Catastrophe, therefore, doesn't mean the utter end, but a mutation of form, perhaps a re-adapting" (Woodcock, Davis, 1982, p. 47).

The Lisbon earthquake sparks the observations of intellectuals as elevated as Rousseau, Kant, Voltaire, and lays the foundations of a new conception and notion of catastrophe, also coming as a prelude to what nowadays we know as "risk culture". If in the Middle Ages *Disaster* (from *disastrum*, adverse stars) announces divine wrath, now catastrophe can announce the idea of change and transformation, under a lay and secular lens, through which the theme of potential human responsibilities begins to be framed within terms of technical rationality and, in a Weberian sense, of a rational action with a precise aim.

Rousseau answers Voltaire, about Divine Providence, and says it plays no role in determining catastrophes and that Nature had not gathered twenty thousand six/seven-storey buildings in that place: if that big city's inhabitants had been distributed more equally on the land and housed in less imposing buildings, the earthquake would have been less violent. After all, don't earthquakes also occur in deserts? If they're not talked about it's because they don't cause any damage to cities (Tagliapietra, 2004, p. 23).

The concept of catastrophe, in its potential of new notion of the events that radically change the course of life as individuals and as a collective, needs to be read, nowadays, in a rational and scientific key, alongside the concept of risk, which has emerged also as an interpretation of sociality viewed in its entirety. We live, as said in many places, in *risk society*.

Luhmann (1991) believes that the term *risk* has risen in modernity to the detriment of concepts like fate and danger, through the recognition of a new logic and semantic realty, adjacent to the idea of probability and previsional calculation. Risk, claims Beck (2000), is not synonymous with catastrophe, but alludes to its anticipation, the way in which it presents itself, therefore an evaluation based on chance and possibility, as well as likelihood, of its translation into fact.

In the second half of the twentieth century, in agreement with Giddens (1994), *engineered risks* established themselves, bound not only to the devastating forces of natural phenomena but also to the manipulation and alteration of ecosystems, environmental, territorial and political balance (ecological/geological risks, nuclear proliferation, the spread of new diseases and international terrorism).

Risk production, management and distribution has thus become a strongly defining trait of contemporary societies. When talking about risks we inevitably are also talking about education and prevention. New cognitive and social skills are required in a somewhat latent fashion to face risks and uncertainties, and with Morin (2000) the pedagogic need to prepare for this unstable world and to expect the unexpected, as well as educate on how to deal with unforeseen events, appears (p. 61).

The weakening of the deterministic concepts of history, the analysis of the century's great unexpected events that are now behind us, the character of the human adventure itself, must invite us, claims Morin, to arrange mind and knowledge to expect the unexpected to then be able tackle it, as Euripides had already written in ancient times: "What men expect is not brought to pass, but a god finds a way to achieve the unexpected" (Morin, 2001, p. 14). Educating on uncertainty thus means acquiring new cognitive and mental powers that allow the psychological management of human limits, human error and the actual implementation of knowledge, strategies and behaviours, but also new values, to expend in emergency situations, following a more or less broad scale (from local to global) in relation to phenomena or events of different types (natural and environmental catastrophes, political and economical crises etc.): from the establishment of an active and operational ecological sensibility to the education to foster solidarity, from the awareness that grants us the chance to be active citizens to the knowledge of the causes and management protocols of catastrophic situations.

Pedagogy, critique, militance

In a general sense, pedagogy considers itself a theoretical/practical science (Baldacci, Colicchi, 2016; Riva, 2011; Colicchi, 1995; 2011) which, being rational and historically located, completes and achieves its mandate at the moment when, by means of an educational design aimed at the putting into

practice of a critical-reflexive rationality (Contini, Demozzi, Fabbri, Tolomelli, 2014) that is translated into intervention, it acts to improve social reality and the capacity of individuals to act efficaciously within it (Bertin, 1968).

In this way, pedagogy acts by influencing, in the medium-long term, both the subject and the lived context, the representative (auto and hetero) assumptions that impede the processes of disalienation, by intervening on the critical-interpretative capacities, calibrating behaviours and devices in relation to inclusive principles, promoting the possibility of generating new symbols and social meanings (Castoriadis, 2007), functionings (Sen, 2000) and, thus, aspirations (Appadurai, 2004) and capabilities (Nussbaum, 2001). From this perspective, the act of pedagogical research takes on meaning as the practice of a militance that implies historic commitment and a practical approach but that demands of pedagogues an awareness of their own identity as subjects who "appear with all that this term brings with it of inadequacy, limitation, and egocentricity, but also of all that it implies of will, conscience, of research and investigation, not only with the uncertainty, contradiction, bewilderment towards the cosmos and the loss of a privileged point of view, but also, and at the same time, with the awareness of its cultural roots and social hic et nunc" (Morin, 1983, p. 103).

Educational action, seen like this, cannot be considered separately from what educators and pedagogues "are" and "do" and that is worth even more in the case of *Pedagogy of emergency*, for which militance means, above all recognition of the difference between the given and the desired, between the current situation and a possible one, the real and the utopic, where all the second terms of these alternatives point to the quest for more efficacious strategies (content, methodologies, languages etc.) to support a humanisation of *sapiens,* reclaiming an autonomy for pedagogy that is defined in the characteristic construction of an ever-more interwoven network of relations between subjects, knowledge and contexts (Pinto Minerva, 2013) which provides structure to an educational action which unites the future and the past. Thus, pedagogical militance means mediation and systemic coordination, never indifference and otherness towards the sense and the overall and previsional value of every instance and position set-up from which stems the importance of recognising the material and historical features. Every context presents an extremely dynamic profile in which so many variables are reciprocally interlinked and influence the final overall result. And emergency is one of these contexts that nowadays is just as important as ever to investigate and thematize.

The *Pedagogy of Emergency* refers, therefore, to circumstances of crisis accompanied by a transformational stretch. Unwanted and unasked for, the crisis in this case imposes itself as a state and a situation which destructures everything we can consider everyday and routine, thus touching on both the interior dimension (image and representation of the self) and the exterior one (relations with the world) of women and men, forcing them to face an unexpected adaptive and evolutionary task. The pedagogy of emergency, therefore, means a very specific field of educational practice characterised by the pre-eminent importance of some basic constructs (some of which we will put forward here in an open and always reassessible way) that we consider useful in identifying a state or situation in which the sense of educational practice is defined in a specific way, implying and raising questions around just as many specific options and possibilities of intervention that are methodologically oriented, linguistically aware, and ideologically prepared. (Annacontini, Dato, 2020; Gennari, 2019).

So we proceed to the analysis of the term "emergency" compared specifically to "catastrophe" and to other similar terms, and of the construct of "exception", by turning to sources that often are not native to or do not have a direct reference to the the field of education but which certainly have, in themselves, as useful critical potential for pedagogy as educational studies and the education of humans for humans.

Emergency is a framework (in the sense of a fundamental dynamic) that over time we have come to consider a characteristic inherent to the complex systems that make crisis the auroral moment of their reorganising motion, that, incidentally, lives alongside it as a continuous transformation (von Hayek, 2011; Balandier, 1991; von Bertalanffy, 1983; and, in the pedagogical sphere, *inter alia*, Fabbri, 2019, 2020; Contini, 2009; Traverso, 2019; Ulivieri, 2019; Annacontini, 2008).

It is understood that, in the case under consideration in this paper, the crisis we refer to, while presenting a basic dynamic analogous to the above definition, is lacking in most of its positive characteristics, being far from desirable, hoped for, deliberate, or implying a transformation that takes place following on from the passage through one or more specific "markers" that take on the *traumatic* features of catastrophe.

As we have already mentioned, catastrophe refers, in Greek etymology, to the action of the upsetting that overturns everything "from top to bottom", very optimistically related to the image of the action that a plough car-

ried out in the bringing to the surface of whatever was to be found under the hard and consolidated top surface of the soil, thus making it possible to renew the soil and increase its fertility. However, that very same movement from top to bottom has been more frequently understood in terms of "the fallout of events" and, by extension, the turning point that leads to the conclusion of a drama (Tagliapietra, 2016). More generally it is the unexpected that relativises, to the point of annulling human finalism and every chance of control. The linearity of temporal unravelling clashes with the discontinuity of the moment with unpredictable and irreversible effects (Prigogine, Stengers 1999; Prigogine, 1997) on what everyone has processed in terms of symbolic, imaginative and planning capital. As Thom put it, a real "phenomenological discontinuity" (Thom, 2008, p. 16).

The destructuring event introduces itself into the (material) state and (existential) situation of emergency as a time-space specific of transformation of subjects and contexts and, therefore, is of clear pedagogical interest. If, indeed, crisis has its peak of concentration in catastrophe, the latter is a moment, the zero point of an emergency that could be very long, and extended over time (Longo, 2020). It is difficult, therefore, to think of the usefulness and practicality of a pedagogy of catastrophe, while, on the other hand, it would appear legitimate to think of a pedagogy of emergency:

> we could say that an earthquake, tsunami or a bombing never finish with the diastrous event itself, or in the immediate response that the organisations involved in the emergency try to provide, but continue to be *earthquake, tsunami or bombing* for months and years, in their effects on the material and intangible dimensions of the territories hit and the communities involved (Vaccarelli, 2017, p. 346).

Emergency is, therefore, that "unravelling of time" that originates from an "event time", the explorative response, disturbing and lacking in a clear framework, born of an "uncontrollable arbitrariness" and of the "irrefutable violence" of the catastrophe. The time of catastrophe as *Kairos*; the time of emergency as *Chronos* (D'Addelfio, 2018). The differences of temporality that exist between these two moments imply two specific logics of the actions that accompany the evolution that leads from the catastrophe to the emergency, one first one of timely "containment" and a second one of "change/adapting" over a longer period. Emergency is the process of recon-

struction through actions of personal, community and social reorganisation, and for the emergency; the destructuring event is the *incipit* and "new story" contained within an *ex novo* re-constructive working dynamic of social and organisational systems in the face of the most disquieting effects of human limits concerning calculating rationality.

That makes the emergency a "prospect" and not a simple "contingency" that can, in theory, open up to innovation, even when the post-catastrophe resembles a path of sudden deregulation both personal and collective, that, at least in the most worrying and bleak of descriptions, takes the shape of greater intrapersonal exposure and vulnerability (autonomy, personality, subjective ethicality) and also in the interpersonal sphere (weakening of social ties, diminished sense of responsibility, loss of social capital). What Jaspers (cit. in Cuzzolaro, Frighi, 1991) wrote on this subject is still of great relevance today:

> acute emotional experiences can lead to some very strange manifestations in the most violent movements of the soul, in the desperate mortal anguish we can sometimes observe a total loss of all the proper sentiments and reactions. There is an odd apathy, a type of chaining oneself to the site of the event, together with a callous, objective observation, that in a certain way solemnly registers the events. This has been observed most clearly in those who have survived fires and earthquakes. They appear indifferent to everything. Sometimes these states are difficult to distinguish from great self-control in a difficult situation. This stiffening in the face of pain is described outwardly as a subjective tranquillity (*ivi*, p. 64).

It is evident, even from this preliminary reconstruction, how necessary it is, in a situation of emergency, to proceed while maintaining close contact, as far as possible, between all pedagogical reasoning and the concrete nature of the subjective reactions and the field of intervention.

Exception, dizziness, anxiety

The need to keep close to the reality in which the educational problem emerges acts as a natural reducer of the problematics connected with the various forms the emergency can assume. The variables that come into play in such a situation are, indeed, myriad and sometimes even contrasting,

forcing the "pedagogue in emergency" to train a plural gaze on the situation and accompany it with a no less complex work of evaluation, synthesis and operative decision-making regarding the responses to be made in the field. All this because the monitoring of the effects of the educational action is indispensible, if we take into account that, in an emergency, single and collective lives can often give birth to inter- and transgenerational imaginational nuclei that could be handed down - not without risk – within the families, cultural communities and societies involved (Pergola, 2011). And a context which is already undermined by the arrival of a catastrophe cannot afford to risk underestimating the social cost connected to the weakening of the ties of reciprocity and those that every society enjoys and that constitute that experience of cooperation with which to tackle the emergency "together" (the community as a whole). Strengthening this sense of reliance (Morin, 2005) is part of the educational action that, in an emergency, reactivates education communities, educational counselling services, long term support programmes, etc., thus enabling them to strengthen, or, if needs be, redescribe the territory, by organising hubs and spaces for gatherings, meetings, reading, studying, play, assistance, therapy and solidarity. Opportunities to reconstruct history by means of stories that, however, "to be an efficient instrument, must be of quality: narratives that are able to offer and stimulate a constructive and not a simplistic perspective on the world" (Zizioli, 2017, p. 458). The careful re-planning of socio-educational infrastructures (both institutional and informal) is, therefore, an important step in the facilitating, on a personal and social level, positive dynamics which enable lives in an emergency as well as new social ties.

The crisis situations that come under the category of state of emergency are part of a conversation that presents dynamics and logics beyond what might be characteristic of life as it is normally represented and lived out. Life "in an emergency" becomes different from the moment of entering another state, with consequences that radically compromise visions, ethics, behaviour and values that were previously recognised as reliable (regardless of the opinion that one might have of them). There is, we may say, a type of "withdrawal" from normality (which remains desired but suspended) that aims at a more efficacious functioning *in due time*. Emergency is, therefore, actually a historical condition that requires a new constructive duty of a relationship to be applied to a more or less unknown context (especially in an initial emergency) in the face of which one feels the need to act in an attempt to "frame

the situation without a framework", exponentially increasing both quantitatively and qualitatively the tasks inherent to the adaptive/evolutive duty laid down in the depths of the memory of the human species.

Opening up to the future is, however, a substantial condition of humankind, but in an emergency it becomes particularly incumbent and the "dizziness" is perhaps one of the most appropriate emotional nuances when identifying the situation of emergency above all if, by following the etymological reconstruction of Heidegger, as well as the evident reference to a situation of suspension of the capacity to interpret, react and respond to events, we consider the more hidden, but no less important sense in this case, of withdrawal (from a world), total absorption, (from the lack of a world) (Heidegger, 1999) that renders it impossible to have experiences and to act in an authentic way. In this way, the dizziness binds to the experience of simply "enduring" on the part of subjects in emergency (Sofsky, 1998) both externally – in the body, in property, in rights, in relationships – and internally – unleashing "interior forces that knock them to the ground" –. The violence of the catastrophe terrifies, but, above all, paves the way for the possibility that the unpredictable could occur again, and with that, it fuels fear as a "restriction of the field of perception" and "the crushing of the individual's temporality to the present" (Longo, 2020, p. 27). The problem of defuturisation becomes evident, as an exasperation and anticipation of the condition of constitutional finitude of mankind that, however, normally tends to be removed, thanks also to the human capacity to plan and build personal, cultural and social narrative infrastructures that create a stable and safe *habitat* for one's life. The onslaught of the violence and the proximity to the experience of finitude, as an anticipation of death in the catastrophe, renews this emotion more radically and the dilemma it places us in is the choice between the above-mentioned dizziness or "reflections on human, and one's own condition of fragility" (Longo, 2020, p. 29).

This presents one of the educational aims that are part of a *Pedagogy of Emergency* that, naturally, in its implementation, has to maintain a stable rapport with the resources (or rather, with the stories and the traditions) of the people and the territories in which it has to work. In this the work of Nussbaum (2009) and its "implication of judgement" in demonstrating emotion is a prospect we need to consider when interpreting educational action in situations of emergency, and is bound to specific *conditions*, *circumstances, form, function and finality* (Annacontini, 2019). Thus, the implementation

of strategies to lead dizziness and fear back into a conversation aimed at expressing a judgement, but this implicates the promotion of opportunities for reflection, verbalisation, and linguistic and expressive production about the catastrophe in such a way as to refer to an "object" to manipulate mentally, both cognitively and emotionally. If, like McNelly, we consider how an emergency can be characterised by a "state triggered by an external threat, whose function is that of activating forms of defence" that we can link back to "anxiety", it is not difficult to understand how this will be the main sentiment (because we would not be dealing with emotion, at least not of the primary type, anymore) that the emergency educator has to tackle, welcoming the possibility of an infinite declination of the phenomenon while trying, nonetheless, to overcome the compression into the moment that the catastrophe has generated.

The Pedagogy of Emergency and its sources

Pedagogy, unlike other sciences like psychology, for instance, which has built up a corpus of knowledge and practice with epistemological status that is widely recognised, has not reflected greatly on the meaning of *emergency*, even though its history and the history of education have been distinguished by important moments and protagonists that have laid the groundwork for the construction of an idea of *Pedagogy of Emergency* (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013).

Although it was Rousseau who opened up the prospect of an analysis of catastrophe to modern, rational thought, forerunner of the idea of *risk*, in the contemporary age we find important traces marked by an idea of pedagogic intervention in emergency that is, on one hand, strategic and functional when considering situations one by one, ethically aimed at the axiological limits of education and, therefore, towards the goal and the value of humankind and humanisation, as well as towards the need for a social transformation. Very briefly, we can mention some of the foundations of the idea of *pedagogy of emergency*:

– Maria Montessori and the application of her Method with the orphans of the Reggio Calabria and Messina earthquake of 1908 and with refugee children during the First World War (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013);
– the spread of the Montessori nursery schools in the areas hit by the big earthquakes in the "Liberal age" (Reggio Calabria and Messina in 1908,

but also Avezzano in 1915, where the figure of Don Luigi Orione distinguished himself) (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013);

– the Montessori idea, that never became concrete, but was prophetic and a forerunner to the ideas behind international organisations in the defence of children of *Croce bianca dei bambini*, an organisation that was intended to give a response not only to natural catastrophes, but also to those provoked by history, and, therefore, by war (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013);

– the contributions that, within, or on the margins of the Shoah (which in Hebrew, in fact, means just that, catastrophe), come from the figures of: Janus Korczack, with his work with the orphans in the Warsaw Ghetto; Reuven Feuerstein, whose method based on the idea of structural cognitive modifiability draws its origins from the experience with survivors of Nazi concentration camps; Boris Cyrulnik, a neuro-psychiatrist who was very interested in the question of education, and who luckily avoided deportation, later becoming recognised at an international level as one of the greatest scholars of human resilience (Vaccarelli, 2016);

    – the work of Danilo Dolci in the aftermath of the earthquake in Belice in 1968 and his activities aimed at stirring resistence, participation from the rank and file of society, and human and economic development in a territory already affected by socio-economic factors (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013);

    – the foundation and the growth on an international scale of so many organisations for the safeguarding and protection of children that operate in situations of crisis and emergency on a global scale (Unicef, Save the Children etc.), and that have contributed to setting up intervention protocols infused by the principles of human rights and the rights of minors (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013).

The term *emergency* needs some clarification regarding the use made of it frequently in the pedagogical lexicon, when reference is made, for example, to educational emergencies connected to processes of social change, social emergencies of various kinds, or pressing needs in the educational field. This use refers to a mix of meanings intended to underline particular situational data relative to emerging phenomena that require strategies to be applied in the short and medium term. However, considering also what other sciences include in the concept of emergency, we can limit our attention to a much more specific meaning, that includes the idea of *catastrophe* along with that of *risk*. In that direction, the system responses must have, indispensably, the

properties of promptness, speed, and immediate action on the occurrence of an event. With the concept of *emergency* we mean therefore to underline the reactive character of a system by means of the application of a more or less efficient procedure that is aimed at re-establishing a state of equilibrium. The term "emergency" implies in its etymology (from the Latin *ex-mergere*, come out of the water, spring up, stand out, rise) both the event in itself (sudden and often unexpected, disastrous and catastrophic), and the capacity of the system to hold, and its ability to re-boot, in the short term, the conditions of safety, and in the medium term, the conditions to achieve a new equilibrium (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013).

In this sense, pedagogy can present itself as a key science for a system in crisis on at least three fronts: 1) that of prevention and also education about risk, about the acquisition of knowledge and approaches that are not only related to the implementation of behavioural procedures, but which raise issues of a greater reach and touch on environmental, territorial, political and ethical questions; 2) that of the management of the emergency: on one hand the lived psychic experiences that require a therapy of an educational nature (educating for resilience, replanning existence, reformulating the traumatic experince through educational techniques etc.), and on the other the social and territorial questions (reorganising of the schools and educational services while avoiding social exclusion and the fragmenting of society and of social relationships, educating towards social resilience in the presence of any possible political or economic speculative pressures, etc); 3) that of the management of the post-emergency that often runs the risk of taking on the role of making the emergency phase chronic. Dealing with education within a community struck by a catastrophe (whether it be natural, environmental, due to disease or war) means getting involved in the sense of the perspective of the community itself, of working on social identity and at the same time on the plan of resistence, of a "change of scene" which does not mean taking anything away, rather an improvement in terms of values. Reflecting on the possibility of individuating an epistemological statute, we could say that the pedagogy of emergency might put itself forward as: reflective, in probing or digging deep in categories like risk, uncertainty, the sense of the precariousness of existence, trauma, stress, resilience, and resistence, etc.); explorative, since it tackles, also by means of field research, emerging phenomena and their implications for individuals, educational and community institutions; critical and transformational, operating to raise awareness and involve social

actors in the management (democratic, participational and from the ranks) of the search for solutions that involve the replanning of the territory and the rebuilding of the community and social fabric; operative and methodological, since it studies and applies models aiming at primary and secondary prevention, it defines the actions and the best educational practice; oriented towards openness between disciplines, since it establishes interdisciplinary relationships (above all with the psychology of emergency and social sciences) and intradisciplinary ones (social and intercultural pedagogy, adult education, etc.) so as to better define concepts, methods and research and intervention instruments (Isidori, Vaccarelli 2013). It needs, therefore, disciplinary perspectives and fields of experience, that in this direction must be referred to the Deweyan idea of source (Dewey, 1973).

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