Elementa

Intersections between Philosophy, Epistemology and Empirical Perspectives

SECOND SECTION

"Liquid" Identity and Otherness in the Phenomenon of Religious Alienation: The Loss of Critical Thinking and the "Barter" of the Self in the System of Communion

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Abstract

The "interior space" (Guardini, 1997) is inevitably influenced by the "external space", which can be the mother, the inter-personal relationships, the local community with all its particular declinations (community of peers, scholastic, academic, working, etc.) or society in general; yet the educational relationship (Kanitsa & Mariani, 2017), in particular in the parental and religious sphere, has the main function of "forming" the pupil, as a child or adult, student, or faithful; in the same way, also the whole society in which one is immersed is understood as an "external environment" which continuously influences the formation of an individual. Indeed, for the purposes of this analysis, is interesting to note what Marcuse writes about the constitution of the "conceptual paradigm" of a society: he warns of the fact that when a society is imbued with a certain ideology, it seems that it is "inhabited" by a paradox; since "Ideologies in particular tend to remain entangled in the dilemmas of the paradox, especially if their metaphysics is anti-metaphysics" (Marcuse, 1999, p. 189). What intervenes as a matrix and "interferes" in the educational process, and so what constitutes the original source from which an education springs out and which, therefore, creates an "educational interference" (Demetrio, 2020, p. 5), is undoubtedly multiple and multi factorial, not reducible to a single root. Precisely for this reason, in this investigation, various paradigmatic educational sources will be taken in consideration, also crossing the Global and Digital (Byung-Chul Han, 2015) dimensions typical of our age, since they act as a "stimulus" and so they are understood as "educating forces". These "forces" appear to be marked,

each internally, by a paradoxical logic: they could be realized, indeed, not only as "educational forces" but also as "alienating forces". It seems that we face a "power" then, which, taking the place of the authentic and beneficial "religious" or parental "care", "sets" a new bond of Attachment (Bowlby, 1972, 1975, 1983), capable of emulating some significant aspects of care or relationship, infusing instead, discomfort, pain and, ultimately, alienation. The aim of this study is, therefore, to thoroughly investigate this "inner space of consciousness" (Guardini, 2002, p. 41), when happens that it is "violated", voluntarily or unconsciously, by those who invade it, giving to an individual, at the same time, identity and the alienation of the identity.

Keywords: attachment; educational relationship; identity; internal working models; paradigm; religious alienation.

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Introduction

What happens to your own identity when it begins to be assimilated to the identity of another, no longer coinciding with your own, original, authentic Self?

How could happen that you start thinking as "another" person thinks? Without being the master of your own thoughts anymore? How could happen that you begin to desire in a different way than you did?

John Henry Newman suggests a method for this study, a philosophical-phenomenological one on one hand, and a pedagogical purpose on the other hand; this method always takes in consideration the construct of "system": speaking of identity, Newman proposes a "philosophy of the person" and in the same way as he does, I want to analyze the phenomenon of "alienation" as it occurs in the context of religious communities; a community of this sort proposes a "lifestyle" in "communion", that is, a community life governed by an "ideal" or "rules" that indicate or educate to a precise way of life and I carry out this investigation by tracing "every novelty of our conscience to what we already know, adapting and harmonizing it in a network of relationships" that Newman calls "system": in fact that philosophy, rather than a super-science with a defined epistemological status, deals with the relations among knowledge, constituting rather a "general attitude" of thought and a critical faculty that "acts and according to a spirit of unity, through comparing, adapting, connecting, arranging, classifying, synthesizing" (Newman, 2016, p. 13) and in this way, this "architectural science recognizes the whole in every part" (Newman, 2016, p. 13).

By sharing and following this methodological approach, I believe I can, therefore, establish a connection and a parallelism between the two privileged "places" where education is put in action; places where, paradoxically, alienation can take the over the development of identity in an authentic sense: the family and the religious community.

A common thread connects these spaces and calls the person who seems to be "trapped": dysfunctional relationships in the family or in the religious community can cause the person to "lose" his identity by "replacing" it with that of the alienating parent or religious leader.

The educational relationship (Kanitsa & Mariani, 2017), in particular in the parental and religious sphere, has the main function of "forming" the pupil, as a child or adult, student, or faithful; in the same way, also the whole society in which one is immersed, the community, is understood as an "external environment" which influences the formation of an individual, continuously: the "interior space" (Guardini, 2002) of Guardinian memory is inevitably influenced by the "external space", be it the mother, inter-personal relationships, the local community with all its particular declinations (community of peers, scholastic, academic, working, etc.) or society in general. For the purposes of our analysis, in fact, it is interesting to note what Marcuse writes about the constitution of the "conceptual paradigm" of a society: he warns of the fact that when a society is imbued with a certain ideology, it seems that it is "inhabited" by a paradox: since "Ideologies in particular tend to remain entangled in the dilemmas of the paradox, especially if their metaphysics is anti-metaphysics" (Marcuse, 1999, p. 189). What intervenes as a matrix and "interferes" in the educational process, and so what constitutes the original source from which an education springs out and which, therefore, creates "educational interference" (Demetrio, 2020, p. 5) by exerting an influence on man, is undoubtedly multiple and multi factorial, not reducible to a single root.

Precisely for this reason, in this investigation, various paradigmatic educational sources will be met, which, also crossing the Global and Digital dimensions typical of our age and of our society, act as a "stimulus"; they are "cause" of those aspects of human formation which, I believe, while presenting themselves as "educating forces" they could be also realized as "alienating forces": they appear to be marked, each internally, by a paradoxical logic.

The intent of this study is, therefore, to thoroughly investigate this "inner space of consciousness" (Guardini, 2002, p. 41), when happens that it is "violated", voluntarily or unconsciously, by those who invade it and by those who "grant" such an invasion.

We face a "power" which, taking the place of the authentic and beneficial "religious" or parental "care", "sets" a new bond of Attachment (Bowlby, 1972, 1975, 1983), capable of emulating some significant care or relationship, infusing in its stead, discomfort, pain and, ultimately, alienation.

1. "The 'I' of mind": representation of the Self, of the other and formation of the "vision of the world" in the Theory of Attachment

Craig Childress (Mazzola, 2016; Montecchi, 2016) addressing the phenomenon of parental alienation, since it seems to us that it presents the same "method" that causes the alienation of the Self in the religious sphere, refers to the Theory of Attachment: identity individual and personal is presented as a construct on which multidisciplinary studies (Martini, 2020) continue to develop their research and interpretation. Having said this, beyond any definition that can be followed according to the different disciplinary approaches, the fact that it is built "first of all" starting from the early relationship that each new born has with the main reference figure, called, in fact, "figure of Attachment" (Bowlby, 1972, 1975). This primary and original relationship, with one's mother or caregiver, traces the *initium* not only of the feeling of the Self but also of the archetypal structures through which relations with the Other and in general the "feeling of the world" will be conceived and "framed" as what is called *Weltanshaaung*.

John Bowlby's Theory of Attachment together with the subsequent researches and evolutions it inspired, especially over the last thirty years, could intertwine some aspects which seem to be linked to the Deweyan "Philosophy of the mind" (Filograsso & Travaglini, 2004), in particular with regard to the structure and dynamics of the "Internal Working Models": they have a sort of "transcendental" character, therefore they have an "a priori" structure that needs to be solicited from outside in order to be activated.

The Internal Working Models (IWM) also regulate, in a cognitive-emotional-affective and behavioral intertwining, the different areas of the "mental" and affectivity, therefore the ability to interweave relationships.

The Attachment System, in fact, is a system that "manages" and regulates all aspects relating to love and emotional bonds, such as parent-child relationships and sentimental relationships: this "organization" can take place thanks to the mediation of "mental structures" or saying it better

"representations" which are formed and transmitted also in an inter and trans-generational way from the caregiver to the child, since the early-years care relationship (Ortu, Pazzagli, & Williams, 2013).

During the relationship with the caregiver and throughout the course of life, in the development phase and beyond, together with the activation of the Attachment System, in all its structures and variables, "the internalized patterns of the representations of relationships are also activated. (IWM or schemes) contained in the attachment system" (Camerini, Pingitore, & Lopez, 2016).

There is, therefore, this adaptive and organizational capacity of the mind in its paradigmatic structures that is formed on the basis of the early relationship with the caregiver, which seems to recall the structure of Jung's "archetypes" (Montecchi, 2016, p. 36): this structure seeks a sort of logical coherence between conceptions, that are already possessed, and the new ones the person will necessarily assume gradually throughout his/her life.

Any change that occurs in the environment or in the caregiver itself will produce "adjustments and adaptations" (Santelli Beccegato, 1998, p. 40) to the archetypal structure formed at the early age and during the age of development. "The attention therefore turns to the evolutionary process and qualitative changes of the organization. […] the self finds its roots in the organization and relationship of the dyadic system" and in this context the representations of the Self and the Other "are formed within the relational matrix thanks to the construction of interactive schemes, of a series of adaptive expectations and behaviors that form the backbone of the Internal Working Models that the child is building" (Montecchi, 2016, p. 36).

On the same nature of Bowlby's investigations, Mary Ainsworth (Ortu, Pazzagli, & Williams, 2013, p. 63) conducted her research: the results of the Strange situation brought further clarity on the definition of the nature and structure of IWMs; Bowlby himself referred to Kenneth Craik (Ortu, Pazzagli, & Williams, 2013, p. 68) when, with regard to the IWMs, he believed that their structure was such as to allow children "to adapt to changes in the environmental context by expanding the behavioral repertoire at their disposal" (Ortu, Pazzagli, & Williams, 2013, p. 68) and underlining their inner dynamic, he highlighted that "the intrinsically relational character of the processes underlying behavior. The term Model indicates in fact that the structure of representation is relational and that it originates from the relationship with the real world, while the Operative term emphasizes the dynamic quality of the Models" (Ortu, Pazzagli, & Williams, 2013, p. 68).

What seems to be clear, therefore, is that starting from the early dyadic relationship, from the "interactive dance" (Ortu, Pazzagli, & Williams, 2013, p. 61) of mother and child and based on the responsiveness and sensitivity of the mother towards the "emotional needs" of the child, models and structures as "representational" of the Self, the Other and the World are built in the "mind"; they also constitute a "general conceptual horizon" in which to understand the general frame of the Self, the Other and the World. They also help the individual to predict and understand his/her environment, promoting behaviors that guarantee survival, such as "maintaining proximity to another clearly identified person, deemed capable of facing the world adequately" (Bowlby, 1983, p. 25) and they are responsible of the "sense of security" for the individual.

Of the same opinion and, in particular, on the genesis of the construction of the broader "horizon of meaning" and conceptual paradigm that is formed within the early relationship with the caregiver, Bretherton and Munholland (Breterthon & Munholland, 1999) believe that the IWMs define Self-Other representations not only in the relationship with the "figure of attachment" but above all in the entire "cognitive map" of the world: "the subject constructs an internal map of the external world" that is a conception of the Self, the World and Others, as said and which could be called, according to a Marcusian expression, a "Given Paradigm" (Marcuse, 1999, p. 188).

This "coherence" of the detail with the general structure is crucial since in fact

> Once constructed, the mental representations of oneself in relation to others tend to be relatively stable over time, thus allowing forecasts of future evolution, and to self-perpetuate, since each person is led to recreate congruent experiences with their own relational history. (Marcuse, 1999, p. 110)

Each Model, therefore, acts as a "filter" for future relational experiences and will select, unconsciously, relationships that will confirm the paradigm or the conceptual reference in which the same models were formed; from this, consequently, arises the character of self-perpetuation of the Models.

The Models, then, are stable and consistent, but adaptive and flexible at the same time; to use a metaphor found within the jurisprudential field, it seems is possible to understand them as basic "Constitutional Principles" of one's Weltanshauung: that is, principles we can refere that create a stable "hermeneutic horizon" for the individual, which are difficult to be modified but at the same time not totally "immune" to change even up to subversion: one's Vision of the World, therefore, becomes modifiable

should the external environment require it for the purpose of its conservation.

Understood as a Paradigm, then, the Model somehow prejudices the future destiny of the individual as it tends to seek and recreate the conditions of experience of the "given" reality; the same is for a relationship that needs to be coherent with the structure of the Model that has been being formed itself.

Intimately linked with mental representations, the Models then create "the internal onto-gnoseological environment" within which a total vision of the world, of the self and of the other is possible since it must necessarily respect an internal logical coherence functional to its own ecology: in this regard, it is interesting to note the correlation between autobiographical narrative and implicit memory that springs from the representations of the Internal Models; this is in fact the observation that Siegel (Siegel, 2001) adds to what has been analyzed so far. In fact, the author believes that the system of implicit memory, structured by virtue of the Models, is capable of extrapolating and memorizing complex rules that also govern co-variations; they are self-perpetuating in the interpretation of subsequent experiences since they seek that logical coherence with past experiences, as said.

Moreover, the very modality of the individual to organize his own experiences directly influences the mind's ability to integrate the "new" experiences: implicit and explicit experiences make themselves responsible and, at the same time, "builders" of the same personal identity that it is "continuously" shaped by the Models. It could then be argued that the Models influence memories and autobiographical narratives, both as a conscious experience and as an unconscious experience: in fact, Schacter (Schacter & Mennella, 2001) is of this opinion and argues that auto-biographical stories provide narrative continuity between past and future, configuring themselves as a set of memories that "continuously" form the core of the personality. It can therefore be argued that, in turn, the Internal Working Models, following precisely this logic, are influenced by an external "given" paradigm, both at the level of personal and family education, and at the level of society: elements that make up the "riverbed" in which the single individual is formed "while" his Models are configured.

One could therefore believe that it is exactly this self-preservation process that can be interrupted, at a certain point, intercepted and subverted by an "Other": what does allow this "subversion" capable of directing the paradigm differently? what does allow the opening of a "new conceptual horizon" recognized as "truer", worthy, therefore, capable to modify and replace the previous one?

2. From the early care relationship to the "given paradigm": the "interference" in the Attachment System

It is not only the early dyadic relationship to form the Internal Working Models and Representations that create Identity and Vision of the world: as a testing ground let us take the "desire", which "behaves" exactly like a Model, and it appears to us "conditioned" not just by the attachment relationship with the caregiver but also by the "given paradigm", in which the same caregiver is formed, receiving himself/herself a continuous education.

Indeed, it is Herbert Marcuse's analysis (Marcuse, 1999) to elicit some reflections that somehow create a conceptual "bridge" between the conception of the formation of representations, due to the dyadic relationship with the caregiver, and the alteration or interference that an "external paradigm" may have.

The parallelism between the Marcusian socio-economic conception "of man in relation to society" and that of the Internal Working Models of the Attachment Theory theorized by Bowlby "of a child in relation to the mother", seems evident to us: on one hand, we would like to investigate the modality in which a "conceptual paradigm" is formed, as said, at the level of "philosophy of mind" in the Deweyan sense; on the other hand, we also want to deepen what is the process, through which the identity can be altered, reaching the point of alienation, if it "impacts" another "given paradigm" and another Weltanschauung.

The "paradigm shift" which we are witnessing today specifically concerns the philosophical-economic horizon of neoliberalism, the digital revolution and globalization: all these are the vectors within which to understand and define the conceptual horizon, which properly generates the general conceptions humankind can think of in our present era.

Marcuse's "individual" is immersed in an empirical "a priori" of a given conceptual horizon, in a certain sense, "taken for granted": "By virtue of de facto repression, the world as it is experienced is the result of a restricted experience, and the positivist clearing of the mind brings the mind into alignment with the restricted experience" (Marcuse, 1999, p. 189).

As said, we seem to be able to establish a comparison between this conception of Marcuse and the conceptual focus of Bowlby's theory: in the "care relationship" the child's innate abilities can find expression and development if the caregiver is emotionally available since

> The presence of an emotionally available figure constitutes the only possible
> context for the realization of innate programs and [...] today we tend to see
> development in terms of a continuous reorganization of innate abilities and

emotions in which the previous levels of organization are integrated into more complex and new levels. (Ortu, Pazzagli, & Williams, 2013, p. 104)

We believe we can put forward the hypothesis that Identity and Desire are structurally formed and conditioned, in principle by the child's relationship with the caregiver at an early age, and subsequently, during adolescence and adulthood, when it "impacts" society, or in Marcusian terms, the "given paradigm": whether it belongs to the socio-economic environment in which one is immersed, and, if impacted, belongs to the religious environment, in some way "integrates", modifies or replaces the "Attachment System" in its entirety, not just one or some conception.

This phenomenon can occur if the "source" of that new paradigm "is emotionally available" or available in an improved way with respect to the caregiver.

The research, especially by Peter Fonagy (Allen & Fonagy, 2006) has demonstrated the interconnection between the security of attachment and the ability to mentalize: representation, or mentalization, consists in the ability to "imagine", to "feel" the whole one's own and one's own mental states. In addition, one can also feel and understand other's mental states and so this capacity is the basis of reflective and interpersonal competences; it is, in fact, only by virtue of the personal ability to "feel", to "listen to oneself" in one's own needs that one can open up to those of others. This can be learned, assumed as a capacity, thanks to "mirroring", offered in interpersonal interaction, by the "care figure" when it shows itself to be "sufficiently good" (Lingiardi & Gazzillo, 2014):

> This mentalizing representational system would offer immense evolutionary advantages for survival because it would allow individuals to understand, interpret and predict their own and others' behavior. As such it constitutes the cornerstone of social intelligence. (Lingiardi & Gazzillo, 2014, p. 132)

The "responses, or answers" of the caregiver are in the womb of the educational relationship, at the heart of the interpersonal interaction which allows mentalization and affective regulation; this is is configured as an "emotionally responsive social environment": the emotionally connoted and socalled "highly contingent" facial expressions allow the child "to discover the mental self in the social world" (Lingiardi & Gazzillo, 2014, p. 133).

Somehow, it seems clear to us that, where responsive "emotional gaps" have formed on the part of the caregiver, probably, "the new paradigm", whether it comes from a person, society or the religious environment mentioned here, may be able to "activate" the Attachment System that has shown itself to be "incomplete": and it is in this sense, therefore, that we can better understand what we mean when we assimilate the attachment figure

to the Marcusian matrix or "paradigm": it is in this way that we assume that happens the "Other" can easily fill this gap "of Attachment" to replace it.

According to Marcuse, in fact, the cornerstones of a society, of its socio-economic organization above all, are based on a philosophical-meta-physical conception, which is in a certain sense preliminary, and acts as a theoretical matrix, as a conceptual framework, for everything that can be organized as a social practice in every sphere and sector of society (Marcuse, 1999, p. 189).

Compared to the historical period mentioned by the author, the positivist philosophy "erects for its use a self-sufficient world, closed and well protected against the entry of external disturbing factors" and it is easy to understand how, without reporting all the philosophical-historical-economic evolution here indicated by the author, it acts as a paradigm; first of all, this occurs at the level of the very possibility of "creating and conceiving" concepts that can be thought of by man: "The transformation of critical thinking into positive thinking takes place above all in the therapeutic treatment of universal concepts" (Marcuse, 1999, p. 189); In the Marcusian conception and analysis an assumption emerges, which we think is fundamental: when a conceptual horizon is given, being on the same wavelength, this is transformed for man into a real total Weltanshauung, within which is possible to conceive all aspects of the human life; consequently is possible to giving life and shape, based on its theoretical basis, to the various socio-economic sectors of a society, for which this conceptual horizon "once accepted, it constitutes an empirical a priori that cannot be transcended" (Marcuse, 1999, p. 189).

It is interesting to note that precisely by virtue of the influence exercised by the paradigm, the empirical "a priori" given, even in its acceptance, in any case "violates" the empirical itself as what speaks "in it" is the "abstract mutilated individual who experiences and expresses only what is given to it, which affects only the facts and not the factors, whose behavior is one-dimensional and manipulated" (Marcuse, 1999, p. 189): it seems to us that we can identify in this nature of the paradigm the root of any "prejudice" generally understood.

We have seen how, what applies to the structural ontological order of man in society, by virtue of the intimate and innate connection that exists between the "I" and the "Us", between Identity and Otherness, applies primarily and first of all to man as an individual: we now want to turn and analyze, on the basis of what has been said so far, the implications of the phenomenon of vocation in the religious sphere with the constitution of the paradigm that interferes in the system of what we have called "incomplete" attachment.

3. The concept of "vocation": the irruption of the new paradigm and the new Weltanshaaung

Peter Fonagy, speaking of mentalization (Fongay & Target, 2001) refers precisely to the early interpersonal experience that a child has with the adult: in the literature there are several references to the ability to mentalize previously done before Fonagy but it is with his work that the intrapsychic component is best configured, as much as that of the intrapersonal component of the mentalization itself:

> The psychological self can therefore develop through the perception of the fact that another person thinks of us as having mental states. Parents who cannot reflect comprehensively on the child's internal experience, and therefore respond accordingly, deprive him of a nuclear psychological experience, necessary to build a sense of vital self. (Lingiardi & Gazzillo, 2014, p. 132)

Mentalization, the ability to reflect on one's mental states, to recognize them, and the very ability of reflexivity, which is discovered in the narrative capacity, somehow coincides with "a vital sense of self": if the caregiver has unfortunately created "responsive emotional voids" what is penalized is above all the ability to mentalize, the reflexivity as such. This will lead to a confused sense of the Self that will not be able to structure, develop and elaborate nor a "positive and real thought" of oneself and others, as seen in Insecure Attachment, nor, consequently, any kind of "critical thinking" (Tani, 2007).

The phenomenon of the religious vocation, as belonging to the inner sphere of conscience, probably fits and "nestles" in this "emotional void" caused by the inadequate responsiveness of the caregiver during the early relationship: the condition of total dependence and the need for survival manifest themselves first of all in the search for affective closeness, correspondence, reflection and confirmation of the Self, which is realized, as we have seen, in the Attachment System.

If the internal experience is "empty" due to the "not happened" mirroring, probably, one will look for a "fullness" and a sort of a "fullfillment" throughout his/her life: the need to be confirmed in one's own identity, the emotional-affective needs first and foremost correspond to the survival of the unitary sense of the Self, of that "vital sense of the Self" we have mentioned.

It does not seem bold to us to believe that a "vocation", while retaining the purely "religious" sphere of transcendence in which we do not enter here, can be "hosted" more easily by those consciences that in some way are "wounded" by the gaps left by an Insecure Attachment; because of its

marked character of "filling" or "correspondence" for the affective level and for the identity, the phenomenon of vocation corresponds, phenomeno-logically, simultaneously to a "call", on the one hand, and to a "Advent" of one Good from the other hand.

Romano Guardini, in fact, affirms that "every" vocation has something to do with "The Good", the Good as it is conceived for the Self, and which grows in the interior space: "[…] this interior space exists" he affirms and "includes a second concept: the depth" (Guardini, 1967, p. 15). Speaking of the interior dimension and depth we speak of concepts linked to the "voice of conscience", which resounds in the "personal conscience".

> Depth means a special dimension, different from quantity or extension […] it is a stratification towards the interior and precisely in such a way that the more internal the layers become, the more precious they become ours, delicate, living. (Guardini, 1967, p. 15)

Gathering in its interior space, therefore, the Self discovers its depth, its face, its identity; and this identity has a voice that speaks, the voice of conscience that has a precise, clear content, identifiable with the Good. The Good "beats to the conscience" and speaks to it; the Good, while presenting itself to consciousness as an infinite ideal totality (unendlicher Inbegriff), presents itself to it from time to time in the situation; "The Good is the Good" Guardini says and it cannot be broken down into simpler elements, it cannot be identified with a precise, single content; doing this would only result in a single manifestation of the good; but it is at the same time an ideal totality and still a specific content; it is therefore not an abstract idea, not a simple "law", but something "spiritually alive" (Guardini, 1967, p. 14).

It is necessary to dwell on the concept of good as it is intimately linked not only to that of conscience:

> conscience is something more than the simple "knowing" something: it means having something within oneself, […] something intimate, […] something that is related to what the ancient concept of the "bottom of the soul", of "scintilla animae" expresses. (Guardini, 1967, p. 14)

Consciousness is then that organ that "knows" and "feels" the good, it is that organ "through which I respond to good and become aware of this" (Guardini, 1967, p. 14): then every identity possesses in itself this precious, universal and absolutely particular at the same time, this capacity, this organ, capable of grasping the good in its evident existence.

The passage from the gnoseological to the ethical-moral level takes the form of a sort of logical consequence; the making of the good, which "beats" the conscience and wants to be understood and implemented, shows itself as a richness, a value that requires form not only content:

"good therefore is equivalent to a real creation; it is not a simple execution of an order but a creative actuation of something that is not yet" (Guardini, 1967, p. 18).

The first good that man/woman, in a certain sense, creates and must create for him/herself is the response to the call to his/her own existence; the vocation is part of the order of realization of this fundamental call. Every man/woman "hears" the call to self-realization, which can only consist in the realization of a good for him/herself, for his/her own life above all. But this, somehow, needs to be learned, needs an example, a guide. Here the Attachment Theory reveals its essential and fundamental importance for the sense of existential fulfillment, task and destiny of humankind in every age. It is the mother, or in general, the caregiver, who transmits the sense of self-fulfillment, with the care and love she/he offers; it is above all with this recognition of the essential emotional-affective needs of the child that is transmitted the sense of the Self. And this happens through the "reflection and correspondence" but also with the example of the caregiver's life.

When this care is non sufficient and creates "emotional voids", the vocation, placing itself as a "promise" of that Good that in some way has not been received, or has been received in an inadequate way, penetrates into the depth of consciousness by "giving" a sense of emotional-affective "fullness" together with the recognition that is needed.

Trying to take a further step, we want to underline also the "historical" character of the vocation: it is never abstract, detached from a precise historical context; the figure of Christ himself is historically located and many studies of a philosophical-theological nature, that could not be enumerated here due to their enormous vastness in time and space, traces it as a cornerstone and distinctive element of Christian doctrine: compared to other doctrines, it is this precisely historicity of the advent that characterizes the Christian announcement.

Indeed, the Christian proclamation, which preludes and permits vocation, is always located in time and space and finds both body and hospitality in the community of the faithful people: an example for all of this Christian "method" is the conversion of Augustine of Hippo, also documented in a vast multiplicity of philosophical-theological works, in which the "Tolle lege" (Guardini, 1967) represents the novelty under the theoretical aspect, that is the beginning of the change of the conceptual paradigms and of the total vision of the world; while the Community of Cassiciaco, founded by him, embodies the ethical novelty under the historical-existential aspect (Agostino d'Ippona, 2000).

The historicity and being historically "situated" of the phenomenon of vocation are well documented in the well-known trilogy by Luigi Giussani:

> The Mistery makes itself known only by revealing itself, taking the initiative to place itself as a factor of human experience, how and when it wants. The human reason, in fact, awaits this revelation but it cannot make it happen. (Giussani, 1988b, p. VII)

As Augustine "found" the Church, understood as the "Body of Christ", in any case he founded the community of Cassiciaco as a particular need for fraternal life to lead life in communion, yet today vocations are accepted because they "are born" in the current stream of the Church; it also happens today that they are "raised up" precisely in the bosom of the various particular ecclesial communities, which belong, despite the diversity of charisms, to the same womb, to the same unique Church, called, precisely, "Mother".

The phenomenology of the vocation first occurs in the interiority of the conscience, then translates in the joining a community and following people immersed in a concrete "Christian environment", made up of a visible human reality; one might ask:

> But today, after two thousand years, how is it possible to achieve certainty about the fact of Christ? How does it make sense today to adhere to the Christian claim? This identifies the heart of what is historically called the Church, that socially identifiable phenomenon that appears in history as the continuation of the event of Christ. (Giussani, 1990, p. IX)

According to Giussani, the vocation, therefore, seems to trace the existential story of Christ and his first apostles on a methodological level in fact

> In a certain historical moment a man, Jesus of Nazareth, not only revealed the mystery of God, but he identified himself with it. How this event began to attract the attention of men; how Jesus created a clear conviction in those who began to follow him; how he communicated the mystery of his person, how he confirmed his unveiling with a new and perfect intelligence of human life. (Giussani, 1988b, p. IX)

The content of all this constitutes the core of the author's intuitions expressed in the second volume of the trilogy mentioned; while the joining to the religious community, that is, the phenomenology of "the encounter with the human reality in which he is present" (Giussani, 1988b, p. IX) is documented in the third volume.

It seems, then, that by hearing and responding to the call of Good, of the full realization of the Self, man joins at the same time a community of believers, the faithful people, who share the same event that has erupted into conscience and into life, "modifying", "replacing and ultimately converting" the previous Paradigms, representations, values, ideals and desires: it is precisely for this reason that we speak of conversion, precisely because a *cum-verto* occurs into another total existential direction.

The moment in which one adheres to the vocation, which is precise in the space-time coordinates, puts in place a real revolution of the Being: it represents a watershed with the past, with what one was before, what was believed, thought and desired.

This revolution of the Being that is visibly concretized in the Christian community, in the single persons belonging to the community to which one has joined, presents itself to the "wounded conscience" by a "failed" Attachment as fullness of Being: as that recognition and emotional-affective responsiveness which, as documented, was asked to the mother or the caregiver and which did not happened in a "enough good" way, to recall Winnicot, or which did not happen at all: what further consequences can this revolution entail?

4. The gnoseological-ethical consequences of vocation and the "to join" the religious community: the loss of critical thinking and integralism

Let us now try to face the modality of interaction, which exists in the organization of a religious community, with the "communication" that accompanies it: we will not deepen the sociological aspect, so to speak, but we will focus on what we consider as fundamental aspects of the relationship that is inaugurated in such of situation and which, as mentioned, replaces the attachment relationship. Widely validated by the numerous researches in the field, the theory of Attachment, through the complexity of communication, resting on the two intrapsychic and relational bases (including in this the person and the environment), explains the "style" of attachment of the child, which we find in the adult; the style of Attachment, which, as known, was deepened in Ainsworth's research (Ainsworth *et al.*, 1978) in the famous "Strange Situation" (Marris, Parkes, & Stevenson-Hinde, 1995), depends on the "quality" of the parental care received, and organizes the "Attachment System" so as to determine, already in early age, both the personality and the "thinkability of concepts", or the "paradigm", as well as the concepts of the Self, the Other and the World, as already said.

We have seen that, the general "Worldview", as said, depends, to a very large extent, on the matured Attachment System and on the interactions with the "given Paradigm"; while on a social level, as we have analyzed it in the Marcusian theory, the "attachment style" defines the type of relationship that is expected fromwho is felt as a "guide", as it is from a parent or a caregiver.

Now let's see how the "paradoxical communication" works within the relationship with those who lead the religious community and how it "opens" the space of what we think could be a "cognitive-emotional-affective alienation".

Let us take up what we have said about the interior situation that creates the phenomenon of vocation and the "joining" the religious community: we expect a Good, we have joined the community of brothers who expect the same thing; the conceptual paradigms and representations will change and we will adhere to those communicated by the religious community in which and through which the vocation took place. The different defense mechanisms (Tani, 2007, pp. 20-21) will selectively exclude all information coming from the outside that could "disturb" or "question" the system, newly adapted, thus allowing its conservation and the sense of unity of identityalong with it that has been formed in that apparently "new" emotional-affective relational situation.

Paradoxically, this could be what happens: the very "first" true alienation, formed with the original imprinting of the Attachment System, is re-actualized precisely when the encounter with that human reality pre-announced as Good occurs, which is it was communicated as the bearer of that existential Good, corresponding to the expectations of cares, typical of the educational relationship and of occurrence, which were not realized.

It remains in its basic structure for life through a whole series of defensive mechanisms aimed at the conservation of the system itself and is perpetuated in the "choices" or relational preferences of the adult. We have also seen how what formed us and, at the same time, "wounded" as children, by virtue of the self-perpetuating Attachment System consisting of a closed conceptual horizon, will continue to be sought to be maintained and preserved, through a sort of pre-selection of information, a kind of "selection at the entrance".

The vocation and the religious community are placed as a place of that "safe" relationship, of full support, comfort and development of the self that was expected from the caregiver: in reality, when the original conceptual representations and paradigms change by adhering to those proposed by the community, the identical alienating dynamic of the "failed" attachment relationship, that we wanted to replace with and in the vocational phenomenon, occurs again. What, in fact, could open to a true understanding of one's identity, emotional-affective needs, which were not reflected in the care relationship and which led to the failure of the attachment system, would be the processing of the "attachment trauma" (Lingiardi & Gazzillo, 2014, p. 79).

If, on the other hand, one adheres to an "other" paradigm without reviewing what happened in the "failed" attachment, adherence to a creed or a religious community does nothing but re-proposing the same identical dysfunctional dynamic for the self that has occurred in the relationship of care characterized by the failure of attachment. From whatever source it comes, then the "paradigm" is closely linked to its communication: in this regard, Cumming believes that "it is necessary to continually reconstruct the concept of the Self if we are to exist as persons and not as objects: a reconstruction that generally takes place in 'communication activity'" (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1971, p. 73); certainly, the Insecure Attachment (Ainsworth *et al.*, 1978), in its various forms, which in a certain way predisposed to "hearing the call" and to joining the religious community is characterized by a "paradoxical communication": it seems to us that we can identify with it the "Key" of alienation which is found as a communicative and relational modality in the interactions of the religious community with the person. Analyzing the works of Watzlawick and Jackson we see, in fact, how the paradoxical communication, generating confusion and inducing a sort of "transcendental epochè", creates a sort of "opening" in the definition of the representations matured up to then, but felt, so to speak, as "unsatisfactory": in this suspension of judgment, "anyone" can enter and "take" the place in the creation of the representations, generating a new "programming" of the same; the emotional-affective area is of absolute importance since, in the absence of the original attachment, the subject (be it a child, adolescent, young or adult) looking for the attachment figure, especially on the emotional-affective side, with one of his substitutes, will "attach" him/herself to anyone whoenters in the door left open by the suspension of the thought.

It is precisely the paradoxical communication that generates the "availability" or "vulnerability" to openness, to the reorganization of representations, through confusion and suspension of judgment, thus fully investing the cognitive level; alongside it, the "emotional-affective request" of the "abandoned child" plays the other important part, giving rise to the "new attachment", a harbinger of new representations more or less integrated, superimposed or totally substituted to the previous ones.

It is, in fact, the pragmatic paradoxes (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1971, p. 186) that reveal the functioning of the "black out" that is created at the "level of representations" in the mind engaged in the attachment relationship: descending and showing its fascinating unity with the previous logical and semantic levels (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1971, pp. 184-185), the pragmatic paradox at the same time reveals the end and the beginning of the disorganized, contradictory attitude of the

mentality, and therefore of the Vision of the World and of the Self of the attachment figure; it is in fact the total Weltanshaaung of the attachment figure that is "handed down" intergenerationally to the child/learner and it shows itself with behaviors; it is also communicated with the different levels of communication within the educational relationship felt as "an intrinsic need" of relationship itself.

5. The "key" of joining the "alienating" religious community: the paradoxical communication and the attribution of role

Let's go back, then, to the paradoxical structure of communication that characterizes this particular type of attachment relationships that favor alienation, introducing the pragmatic paradoxes, metacommunication and the "double bind theory".

To understand the nature of these types of human communicative interaction that has the characteristic of the "paradoxical", we are met by the pragmatic behavioral evidence that these interactions produce, that is: the levels in which the paradox occurs are first of all the "logical" ones, secondly the "semantic" and thirdly the "pragmatic" place (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1971, pp. 146-207); starting from the latter it is easy to detect, in some way, the path that the paradox itself takes to get to "enter the existential experience of man" (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1971, p. 180).

What interests us here, leaving aside the logical-semantic levels and therefore the semantic antinomies, are the "paradoxical injunctions" that most exquisitely belong to the "pragmatic" level of human interactions and communications; and which, in our opinion, permeate that specific field of relations that we are investigating here.

As already seen, the attachment relationship of an insecure type (avoidant-ambivalent-disorganized in the various forms it can take) is characterized by a paradoxical type of communication; it presents three clear elements: first of all it occurs when a strong complementary relationship has been established; secondly, within this relationship we find a scheme that provides for "an injunction" that must be obeyed but to be obeyed must be disobeyed; thirdly, the person who is one-down in the relationship is not able to get out of the pattern and therefore to dissolve the paradox through "metacommunication".

Indeed, the role of the "comment" on the paradox is interesting, and therefore of metacommunication, which represents, together with irony,

the means to overcome or unmask the paradox itself. But this possibility, which we would say to be a sort of counter-manipulation strategy, cannot be adopted by the one-down person who is not aware of the paradox since it is subordinate: this is the "role" or position, in the dysfunctional educational relationship we are delineating, in which it is conceived or "put", more or less voluntarily and knowingly, the child or the faithful.

We understand, then, through the form of communication, the nature of the relationship that is the basis of the interaction we are talking about: from the pragmatic paradoxes, moreover, it is possible to "go back" to the origin of the type of communication that animates that relationship and therefore to the relationship itself; we look at an example of a complementary relationship to analyze its communication and trace the injunction that generates the paradox by "paralyzing" the one-down person in the impossibility of resolving the paradox itself: we then can transfer what we see to the educational relationship of the insecure attachment and to the relationship of the faithful towards the religious community or the leader of the community. This is the "place" in which, through paradoxical communication, alienation is generated. Watzlawick proposes a series of examples: we borrow one that guides us both towards understanding parental alienation, which takes place between a parent and a child, as towards the religious one.

> Perhaps the most frequent form in which the paradox enters the pragmatics of human communication is an injunction that requires specific behavior, which by its very nature can only be spontaneous. The prototype of this message is precisely: Be spontaneous! Anyone who receives this injunction finds himself in an unbearable situation because to comply with it he should be spontaneous within a scheme of condescension and non-spontaneity. (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1971, p. 190)

Alongside the formula "Be spontaneous" we can find many that apparently seem harmless and absolutely legitimate, such as "you should obey and follow", "don't be so sentimental", "you know that you are free but it is impossible not to say that out of here there is no the possibility of happiness" and so on; truly, such injunctions are paradoxical since they require symmetry in a relationship established as complementary, and here is the point: the nature of the attachment relationship when insecure and dysfunctional as well as the relationship of the faithful who must place him/herself in the position of following with respect to the leader or to the entire religious community, it is characterized by paradoxical injunctions that paralyze reflexivity and critical thinking; in the same way as the child, trapped in the paradoxical scheme, typical of the following relationship with those who lead and who participate in the community, the faithful,

unable to free themselves from the paradoxical injunction, suspend his/her judgment.

The disavowal or rejection or avoidance of the emotional-affective mirroring put in place by the leader and by the members of the community who play a role (group leader-deacons-responsible of groups) does nothing but re-actualizes exactly the wound created by the failed Attachment; especially when the believer does not "manage" to follow or shows discomfort in fully adhering to the injunctions, beliefs or values shared by the community, the joining the community that at the beginning was thought it would have been a "salvation" from the "attachment trauma" through the "new life" promised by the vocation, tragically re-closes what was glimpsed as true communion and liberation, in a sort of hermeneutic circle, in the cage of alienation.

6. Educate in critical thinking, personal identity and an authentic religious sense

"I would say then: if you want to become adults without being deceived, alienated, slaves of others, exploited, you get used to comparing everything with elementary experience" Luigi Giussani writes in one of his most beautiful works (Giussani, 1988a, p. 13); the author argues that the "heart" of man understood as a sort of unity of reason and feeling, is endowed with first evidence, with criteria of judgment on the basis of which it is easy to compare an experience that one lives by every kind with the elementary needs of happiness, goodness, justice, love.

Through this comparison of reality that impacts with one's own needs that call for a sense of fullness, wholeness and satisfaction, man could make a sort of ascent towards his own liberation; he writes: "In fact, as a rule everything is dealt with according to a common mentality: supported, propagated by those who hold power in society" (Giussani, 1988a, p. 13). In this way the tradition that permeates the context in which we grow up, the whole of society, but above all starting from the abusive attachment bonds, do nothing but embody a sort of power and "settle on our original needs and constitute a great encrustation that alters the evidence of those first evidences" (Giussani, 1988a, p. 13), so that if one wants to contradict or critically judge by virtue of an unease one feels, he/she is faced with a difficult task since he/she will find him/herself "having to challenge public opinion" (Giussani, 1988a, p. 13).

It is paradoxical to think that the very community that Luigi Giussani himself found with the aim of educating to the authentic religious sense

based on the full and correct use of human reason, would become, in his practices of community life, exactly a power society, characterized by a strong alienating power by virtue of what has been said so far.

"The boldest challenge to that mentality that dominates us […] is precisely that of making the judgment on everything habitual in us in the light of our first evidence and not at the mercy of more occasional reactions", so sounds the warning, the fascinating existential solicitation of the author who presses on saying "it is always necessary to pierce these images induced by the cultural climate in which one is immersed, to go down to take in one's own needs and original evidences and on the basis of these to judge and evaluate every proposal, every existential suggestion" (Giussani, 1988a, p. 13); and it is precisely on the basis of this solicitation, by comparing everything with elementary evidence, to its "exercise", that one can "realize" the alienating work that, every type of community, company, organization or person, when in the field a relationship of power can exert on man, on the child, on the faithful, at the level of representation, images and thought.

We believe that an education on the authentic religious sense corresponds in fact to the education of critical thinking that "rests" on the first evidence of reason: the personal identity that is formed starting from the original attachment relationship, as we have seen, is not other than the product, the visible result of an adequate care and education of and "to" this "system of evidences" of which humankind is made by nature; care, in its form of "mirroring", as has been said, taking the form of a "secure relationship" can become the privileged place for an education in the "primary evidence of reason", the basis of critical thinking and the exercise of reason and the affectivity of man, able to free him/her from any form of alienation, dependence and, ultimately, existential discomfort.

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Riassunto

Può esistere una connessione e un parallelismo tra due "luoghi" privilegiati in cui l'educazione viene messa a tema e agita: la famiglia e la comunità religiosa, come luoghi in cui, paradossalmente, lo sviluppo dell'identità può cedere il posto all'alienazione. Un filo comune connette tali spazi e interpella la persona che può restare "intrappolata" in relazioni disfunzionali: essa può "perdere" la propria identità "sostituendola" con quella del genitore alienante o del leader religioso. La relazione educativa ha la funzione principale di "formare" l'educando, sia esso bambino o adulto, ma allo stesso modo, anche la società o la comunità, intese come "ambiente esterno", influenzano continuamente la formazione di un individuo: lo "spazio interiore" è inevitabilmente influenzato dallo "spazio esteriore", sia esso la madre, le relazioni interpersonali o la società in generale. Per questo, incontriamo diverse fonti educative paradigmatiche che fungono da "stimolo" per la formazione umana e che, mentre si pongono come soggetti "educanti", possono realizzarsi come forze "alienanti", presentandosi, alla coscienza dell'uomo, spesso in contraddizione l'una con l'altra, segnate, al proprio interno, da una logica paradossale. L'intento di questo studio è, dunque, quello di indagare questo "spazio interiore della coscienza", quando accade che esso venga "violato" volontariamente o incoscientemente sia da parte di chi lo invade sia da parte di chi "concede" tale invasione. Si è di fronte ad un "potere" che, prendendo il posto del "religioso" o della "cura" genitoriale, "imposta" un nuovo legame d'Attaccamento, capace di emulare cura o significatività, infondendo in sua vece, disagio, dolore e, infine, alienazione.