

At the limits of attachment

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If you have read "The story of octogenarians: mutual aid and loneliness" I would like to point out that the two octogenarians mentioned above have returned to their homes and private lives. I wanted to show how the falls have expanded the private life by the intervention of extreme caregivers (responses from the neighborhood, hospitalization, kinesitherapy, meals on wheels, etc.). But the story of two other octogenarians will show how the disease can intervene in the modalities of common life.

I would like to use the story of the telephone dialogue between two. This is particularly true when an identity crisis occurs in one of them, who starts to lose her temporal and spatial references (already mentioned in "The paradoxical process of identization" but which had, unfortunately, a dramatic continuation).

Here is the real dialogue experienced by Helene who faithfully reported it to me, with much emotion (September 2021).

Helene: "The phone rings, I take the call.

- I am Sylvie, (I don't recognize who is speaking)
- Sylvie? Sylvie what?
- I am Sylvie, repeats the person (I still do not recognize the voice)
- Sylvie Redon? (She does not answer directly!)
- I'm calling to tell you that we are moving!
- Ah well! Why are YOU moving?
- I don't know, they didn't tell me... But you know, we're going to a house that is the same as this one... the same as here! .. And Alain (their son) will live not far away, in the South! I can't talk to you for long on the phone! Here is Jerome (her husband), he wants to talk to you.

Jerome takes over the communication

- Sylvie tells me that you are moving?
- Not at all! she is talking nonsense... there is no question of that, these days! (this said very calmly)... Goodbye!"

(The name and surnames have been changed, of course!)

Identization, as a paradoxical articulation between identity and project, is clearly at work in this dream equivalent! The personal identity is disturbed (she does not answer the question of her identity), the project (to move to the South) is paradoxically harmonized by the identity of the house (the house in the South is the same as the one here!) and by the maintenance of the maternal identity (her son is here but he will be there, too)

Of course, identization cannot be understood without the historical aspects, without placing the personal and contextual conditions, without the emotional dynamics that inevitably accompany any conflict, any crisis.

P.S. One year later, Hélène informed me, crying, of the death of her friend Sylvie, who had been placed in an Ehpad reserved for Alzheimer's patients. The real move was therefore the separation that Jérôme tried to avoid until the end. Their couple was, according to their friends, very "fusional" (with a very strong *attachment*). Jerome takes care of everything. Despite her illness, Sylvie probably understood what was going to happen. She goes out at night while Jerome is sleeping, asking the neighbors for help, because **they** wanted to "put her in jail". The following nights, to avoid new exits, Jerome attaches her "wrist to wrist". In the middle of the day she escaped again. She was found on the road leading to her own family home. The couple's doctor scolded Jerome who, desperate but exhausted, accepted the placement. The mental confusion thus took over the relational fusion. Three months after her placement, Sylvie had a fatal fall. Many friends accompanied her to her final resting place.