

Salvan and the Order of the Solar Temple: a laboratory of the workings of the media

A small catalog of preconceived ideas.

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Summary

After briefly recalling the main points of the Order of the Solar Temple "drama", the paper seeks to put into perspective four preconceived ideas about how the media work, showing that the media do not tell the truth, that the media are increasingly adrift from ethical moorings, that those on the receiving end of media accounts are not all equally equipped when it comes to deciphering information and false information, and the village of Salvan changed in the wake of the Solar Temple events as portrayed by the media. These four points represent four axes: truth, professional ethics, reception, effects.

First, the media secrete a "false truth" of "media correctness": the illustrative example of the media treatment of the Order of the Solar Temple is paradigmatic in that the journalists put forward presumptuous, far-fetched hypotheses (drug trafficking, money laundering involving millions of dollars, etc.) whereas the police inquiry has turned up nothing of the sort. We will try to show that the media, far from being content to just recount the actual facts fabricate accounts by mobilizing myths destined to feed a "reception rhetoric" in the interests of audience ratings.

Second, the media practice an ethical code of variable geometry: the village of Salvan was the involuntary witness to a series of problematic media excesses. These are reported because ethical considerations tend to become an argumentation strategy widely used by journalists. We therefore turn our attentions to their home ground.

Third, readers of the press and TV viewers are not all equal before journalistic accounts: a certain media sociology is trying to rehabilitate the position of the recipient who -- as the person being manipulated -- is accorded the status of intelligent manager of the flow of information. We will show that there is nothing to this, because the social position of the individual remains the determining factor in how information is received.

Fourth, the media can change our daily life and our perception of it: so there are detectable media effects. We emphasize one particular effect of the "media-ization" of the drama: the effect of resistance confirmation. Faced with the mediaized drama, the inhabitants of Salvan generated a strategy of exclusion and resistance. In this perspective, surprising as it may seem, the media fed this resistance by offering -- for example -- hyperbolic media coverage: thus the majority of the population of Salvan did not bother going to the site of the drama to see what was happening in their village on the spot; they followed the events in the national and international media, sometimes including foreign TV channels like CNN and TF1. Thus in Salvan the drama possesses a virtual reality that coexists with a physical reality.

Introduction: a brief review of the events

At 3:30 in the night of the 4th to the 5th of October 1994, firemen discovered twenty-five bodies in two chalets at Salvan in the Valais. At almost the same time, a farmhouse at Cheiry, canton Fribourg, went up in flames. Swiss Radio then announced that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had found five bodies in a house at Morin Heights near Montreal that had been burnt down. Altogether, fifty-three people died and the mystery was complete: the event made no sense and media round the globe, utterly fascinated, immediately came up with "exclusive" journalistic accounts.

In this paper, we approach the matter from the other side, deconstructing the media rhetoric and looking at the ethnography of the people on the receiving end by proposing -- in addition to a catalog of preconceived ideas -- a panorama of the effects of these "media-ized" events on the village of Salvan, placing special emphasis on the media mobilization of myths as a strategy for making sense of it all.

Preconceived idea No. 1:

The media tell the truth. Wrong.

Justice time, as is well known, is not the same as media time: in fact, the investigating judge's report on the inquiry is not yet available a year after the events. But, without wishing to prejudge their contents, those elements of the inquiry that have been published are likely to give the media world a hard time: "*Let's face it, they haven't got anything spectacular*"¹, one journalist admitted, not even crestfallen at the prospect, while media from around the globe were publishing exotic hypotheses and dissecting the Solar Temple drama along the lines of classical mythology.

Preferential category logic

The media success achieved by the Solar Temple "drama" was not due solely to the personality of Luc Jouret -- itself partly a journalists' construct. Other, better-known logical aspects of the workings of the press were also involved. I'm thinking above all of the fact that a narrated "drama" is a "drama" onto which another dramatic effect has been grafted, namely that of the tale, or story, in this case that of media accounts. Words like "sect", "suicide", "massacre", "crime", "madness", "slaughter" and "murder" peppered journalists' language from the very first minutes of coverage of the events, at a time when no specialist could yet say whether it was a sect², suicide³, a massacre, a crime or even an act of madness they were dealing with. No matter the real meaning of these concepts for journalists, because the media can only relate the events according to their own preformatted categorical logic: Leblanc has shown that the media give preference to bad news⁴. "Sects", "suicides", etc., are realities the media are dealing with all the time: they have enough bad news in them and are sufficiently predictable to justify column space: these realities have the benefit of maintaining close links with the potential media consumer. After all, we all harbor religious or spiritual uncertainties as well as a certain attitude toward death. Weaving these strands together in spectacular media rhetoric is therefore sure to guarantee an audience.

Obligatory scenarios

The words I have just quoted obviously refer to several invariant media scenarios whose features have been teased out by structural analysis: let me just mention the most caricaturesque of these scenarios, the thesis of a scam or swindle⁵, in which the Salvan and Cheiry deaths were considered simply as individuals who had to be disposed of for their money⁶. In this scenario, the media logic at work ruled out for the journalists any thought of a spiritual dimension as the cause of the event. Let me also mention the gross thesis of mental manipulation⁷, which can obviously not be left out of the picture.

Tintin brings back startling pictures of the OST

Besides the dramatic aspects of the press account and the temptation for the media to give preference to bad news, we can also mention the status of "reporter" espoused by the

journalist-policemen. Newsmen and detectives⁸ at one and the same time, they have to dig around like the police to make up for the lack of information and the discretion imposed by the investigating judges. Derogy, a French investigative journalist, makes no bones about it: journalists are skilled in police investigation methods⁹. So for the members of this profession it's not just a matter of "reporting" information but quite clearly of constructing it, unearthing it, and if the worst comes to the worst, making it up.¹⁰

The accusing picture: theory

These professional practices find their concrete expression -- partly -- in the editorial choice of pictures. The limited pictorial material available to the journalists forced them to publish photographs that no editor-in-chief would normally have accepted. Take the picture of Jo Di Mambro -- a blurry, almost unrecognizable image of the man¹¹. Since the semiological work of Barthes, we know that newspaper layouting is not a matter of chance. The manner of presentation also invests meaning: the fuzziness of the only picture of Jo Di Mambro is perfectly suited to the logics of unscheduled news items, a specialty of some tabloids: this reference to the stolen, secret, sensational, rare, exclusive photograph acts as an exhibit, an item of evidence, that the journalist should not normally have in his possession; above all else, the journalist's task is to reveal. Thus the poor quality of the photograph becomes a real journalistic asset when the media logic gets hold of it in the context of the inquiry: "*The miscellaneous news-item photo is easy to recognize, even without a caption; it has a style. It's generally taken with a telephoto lens or with a wide-angle lens very close up. The conditions in which it was taken often make it grainy and sometimes slightly fuzzy.*"¹² The language of the sensational now becomes the mainspring of the mystery: as a rule, our cultural codes tell us not to take fuzzy pictures seriously¹³ because they are a sign of poor photography or bad processing. But in the case in point, the lack of a crisp image is just what is wanted as a dominant attribute: above all, the graininess, the accentuation of contrasts, symbolize the nebulous nature of their subject. The photographs of Jo Di Mambro or Luc Jouret therefore lie somewhere between pictures of the Turin Shroud and police mug-shots à la Alphonse Bertillon (their inventor), in other words they occupy the middle ground between the mysterious and the guilty.¹⁴

The accusing image: practice

Naturally, experienced journalists will retort that there is often not enough time to get hold of a good shot in line with cultural norms (i.e. not blurred, well framed, with a normal pose) in the rush to get a newspaper ready for the presses. However, this argument does not affect my analysis of the facts. A week after the start of the drama, some journalists did manage to come up with a good-quality black-and-white picture of Jo Di Mambro. In the body of the article, this picture was treated according to the usual codes¹⁵. But on the cover the same picture was given a very different computer treatment: the grain was accentuated, giving it a special aura in keeping with the rhetoric of the other available pictures. We can see, then, that the fuzziness, the lack of crispness, the bringing out of the grain are deliberate, because "good photography" is turned into "bad photography" to match the logic of the scenario intended to make the event speak: simple identification does not do justice to the executioners in an iconic representation. At this point, the power of connotation is marshalled to underscore the aspect of mystery, guilt -- in a word, accusation. Barthes himself recalled that his western face printed by the Kobe Shimbun was "*japanized, the eyes lengthened, the pupil blackened by the Japanese typographer.*"¹⁶ Closer to the present time, in a more manipulatory aspect, The Times failed to avoid the spectacular trap of blackening O.J. Simpson's face to make it look blacker than it was, i.e. more guilty, on its front page¹⁷. The rhetoric of blur cheats.

A mythological message: a rhetoric of reception

Justice, the sacred, power, death, blood, crime, success, sex, good, bad, lies and mystery are the daily bread of media rhetoric. These themes become standing symbols which partly escape class reception because the signs refer to the great universal founding stories of society, not to a "class reading" of the social dimension: they "*are part of the mythological crystallizations that accompany collective suggestions.*"¹⁸ Informing citizens thus means

giving form to a choice of the representation of the real and "showing facts that from then on are part of a society's memory, reiterating the structure and myths of that society, updated again and again by the present."¹⁹

Bis repetita placent

We observe, with Silverstone, that television always stages the same scenographies and, in the end, always uses the same "language": "(...) a large part of television culture consists in showing simple, easily recognizable stories that are continually repeated and which are remarkably similar in form and content not only among themselves but also in respect to other stories from other cultures in other ages."²⁰ A simple glance at program schedules accompanied by a short analysis will prove the truth of this statement; there are redundant themes served up again and again by the media which end up as the butt of humorists. It's not by chance that television stutters on like this. We interpret this repetitiveness -- masked by the seal of generic diversity -- as the indicator of the mythographic messages conveyed by privileged pathways between the sender and the recipient: the sempiternal televised love-story feeds on the recipient's affects but also harks back to the Judeo-Christian values of the couple and the myth of the "work--family- -country" trilogy; detective thrillers with all their twists and turns, in their myriad variations, relate to the contemporary realities of crime but also to the notions of good and bad shared by the community; Dr. Garetta, indicted by the media tribunal, clearly ties in with the professionalism and ethical code that his status expected of him, with the dangers of a tormented love-life, but also with the mythologies of blood (Life), of the gift of blood (Christ), Aids with the epidemic whiffs of the plague, leprosy, cholera (the curse from On High), homosexuality, forbidden but tolerated (abnormality, vice), death, suffering, mystery. As Nicolas Mauriac writes: "*media handling of illness produces mythologies*"²¹ which take on the attributes of tragedy, fear, then identification of the victim: Garetta is guilty and will be treated as such. These mythologies, at one and the same time the product of past social history and myths that are in the process of creation, are particularly effective links between the poles of reception and transmission: every society is governed by beliefs that are largely shared by both the recipients and the senders.²²

Order of the Solar Temple: a mythical saga

In the case in point -- media treatment of the Order of the Solar Temple "drama" -- the mythological dramatization hooks into cultural invariants tirelessly invoked by the press²³: the sacred, sex²⁴, money²⁵, death²⁶, drugs²⁷, secrecy²⁸. In the background: the loss of the sacred, individualism, the atomization of individuals, the lonely crowd, in other words from a moral and justificatory media point of view the need to communicate²⁹. This brings us back to Barthélémy's analyses of the desecration of the tombs of Carpentras: "*The contingent events are not constructed in the strict sense: they arise outside of anybody's will. Nevertheless, they do not have the power to evoke anything precise, apart from a certain relationship that lends them meaning. Their individuation is therefore a social process which mobilizes not only contextual information but also symbolic resources, beliefs, social and cultural conventions, making it possible to interpret them from an intersubjectively valid perspective.*"³⁰ Journalists, too, incorporate into their accounts "*interpretation and action patterns taken from common opinion (images, myths, judgments, values, ...)*"³¹ They then manipulate, in a way, scenarios and ready-made set-ups to make the media account familiar to their readers. We think, with Morley, "*that care should be taken not to underestimate the force of textual determination in constructs of meaning arising from media products. Such an oversight makes it possible not only to present a romantic version of the reader's role but also to neglect everything we know about the very weak degree of ambiguity manifested on several levels by the sign systems used by the media.*"³²

Preconceived idea No. 2:

The media are ethically hygienic. Wrong.

The events in Romania and the journalistic fabrication of the "Timisoara charnel-house", the Gulf War and its political scenography, the show of the United Nations humanitarian

landing in Somalia, the long-running sagas of the Yugoslav crisis, the Greenpeace-Shell-Mururoa stories, the O.J. Simpson trial, the slow TV agony of little Omeyra Sanchez, the swift TV agony of Khaled Kelkal, the false Castro interview, and much more besides, have sensitized us to the fact that information is a weapon and that media ethics come in variable geometry. Observers, practitioners and journalists hoped that, despite everything, the cumulative effect of the media excesses observed in these painful examples would be to restore an ethical balance in their ranks. It is true -- in defense of the journalists -- that, as Max Weber noted: "*The journalist belongs to a kind of pariah caste that 'society' always judges socially by the behavior of its least worthy representatives from the point of view of morality.*"³³

To this -- non-exhaustive but revealing -- list of a certain number of serious but by now classic excesses we can add the Salvan-Cheiry-Solar Temple trilogy: the inhabitants of the Valais village had the distinction to live -- for the space of a few days -- in a privileged observatory of the workings of the media. Because, like the emperor in the fairy-tale, the journalist-kings had no clothes: they furnished the codes of their working practices by operating in full view of all the villagers, who were thus able to compare the reality of the event -- and the telling of it by the journalists -- with the published media reality. In addition to the debatable -- and endlessly debated -- problems of the spectacularization of information as a commodity, the inhabitants underscore above all concrete problems in their relations with journalists: attempts to buy information, the gross rudeness of television crews, exaggerated stagings of scenarios, repeated interviews with children in foreign languages, the subtle twisting of statements to support the dominant journalistic truth, the taking of photographs without consent, journalistic harassment, illustration of facts with exogenous pictures without giving their sources.

Preconceived idea No. 3:

People do what they want with information. Wrong.

Studies of media reception often wonder how information is taken on board by its recipients. Besides the epistemological difficulties of this task, a trap awaits the researchers, namely that of restoring full mental faculties to a recipient who -- having been considered a brainless catatonic -- becomes an intelligent manager of information flows. The ethnographic inquiry carried out at Salvan shows that the reception of media information remains eminently linked to the postures of the social actors in the field.

Three attitudes, or kinds of language -- strongly related to social class -- emerge from the interviews. First of all, there is a counter-topical attitude, the prerogative of the upper middle social class. This informed attitude to the "show" society, alive to different possibilities, allows its holders to envision -- for example -- an alternative media treatment to the one imposed by the media ("why not bring in a bit of history?"), to relativize the dominant condemnation of sects ("they're not all mental deviants!"), to think in terms of a broad information strategy to avoid depending on a single source ("I've read the Herald Tribune and seen it on CNN"), on occasion to offer their services as a source of information for the journalists ("we have a duty to help these newsmen!").

Then there is a conflictual attitude associated primarily with professional positions particularly when confronted with the pugnacity of journalists. Examples are the businesswoman who saw herself quoted in *La Stampa* as being the owner of the torched chalets, when she had never met a journalist or given any interviews -- in addition to which, the information was wrong. Or the real-estate lady who was offered money by Canadian journalists for her list of tenants. Or the pretty local-government employee harassed because she had access to important information. Or the priest whose sermon was misrepresented by the media. Or the first-lieutenant of the militia fire service whose men came across in the media as in need of psychotherapy after their experience. And so on.

Finally, there is a contractual attitude embodied by the middle working class. Most of the interviews failed to produce a really structured critique of the media circus they were nevertheless censuring. This is a subtle and at the same time naïve attitude of complicity but one that carries a limited critique. While they possess the elements and examples to move on to a radical reflection on journalistic practises, most of those interviewed expressed themselves in tautological terms ("It's their job, that's how they work. It's OK... sure, they exaggerated a bit. But they did good work").

These three attitudes should be understood as the limits of the recipients' leeway: relevant research has shown that those on the receiving end can recuperate events that have undergone media treatment by a variety of means. The ethnographic research undertaken at Salvan underscores the reality of a class reading that hardly lets the working-class fringe acquire a considered view of this media drama. We therefore cannot go along, as is perhaps the fashion in contemporary reception studies, with those champions of emancipation of the people by the media: media reception varies among the social classes. For some, the media soup is the only dish on the menu; they can't imagine any other recipes. We are therefore not free in the face of information.

Preconceived idea No. 4: The media do not affect our lives. Wrong.

Some currents of contemporary media sociology downplay the matter of effects. We think -- while sharing this point of view -- that it is illusory to imagine that the domination of society by the media has no effect on our daily lives. To be sure, as we saw in the previous paragraph, it is not the manipulation of minds we want to stress. It is more a matter of pinning down just how an event treated by the media as just another news item can change a village like Salvan, which saw itself projected onto TV screens in homes all over the world. Without going into detail, we can distinguish four main areas of change: in politics, media usages and practises, self-representation, and value attitudes.

Politics. The crisis -- induced by the presence of the media and the very nature of the events -- stimulated the public sphere by generating intense discussions and interpersonal exchanges. What's more, as information was a rare commodity this configuration played a part in provisionally redrawing social relations according to the yardstick of information obtained, while those in a position of authority responsible for formulating official attitudes saw their legitimacy temporarily eclipsed. On media usages and practises. Mediaization, and the extraordinary nature of the events that were the focus of the media, play a part in modifying media consumption practises relative to the actors in the field. Self-representation. Mediaization of the events played a part in the feeling of guilt and stigmatization phenomena in the heart of the village. Value attitudes. We have shown that an extraordinary and extraordinarily mediaized event like that of the Order of the Solar Temple plays a part in establishing those who were on the receiving end of the media treatment as a collective unit in a spirit of "group togetherness" built on the tactics of resistance to the Other and by that very reason providing justification for the collective: at bottom, these highly sensational events confirmed the village in its view of the world, its conventions, its codes, its usages, the rules by which it operates. Thus, the drama provided confirmation, validation and justification of the social values of the village with respect to sects, religion, local identity, the rest of the world, the concept of homeland and regionalism. The village stood up to the Other, that sudden intrusion of journalists and neo-Templar spiritual values. And the media played a part in this resistance, because the quantitative inquiry showed that 90% of the inhabitants of Salvan did not go the site of the drama to watch the events on the spot: they followed it all in the media. Above all, the drama therefore has a virtual texture to it. This resistance mechanism is permanently accompanied by an affirmation of group identity and mobilizes an attitude to values destined to confirm the culture of the community: and if Salvan is a consumer society as far as media images are concerned, it is above all a society that conserves the image of the village.

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¹Pillard Daniel, « Les leçons d'un massacre » in L'Illustré, Rubrique L'Edito, 27 septembre 1995, p. 3.

²Que lit-on six mois après les événements: "Le premier mensonge dans cette affaire a été de parler de suicide et de secte. Or je savais très bien que l'Ordre du Temple solaire n'est pas une secte. Il s'agit d'un ordre." Entretien avec Chaumeil Jean-Luc, spécialiste des mouvements néo-templiers in Magnin Manuella, "Massacre du Temple solaire: la thèse du complot d'extrême droite" in Le Nouveau Quotidien, Rubrique Pistes, 26 avril 1995, p. 3.

³On constate (...) combien une certaine façon de décrire l'événement peut peser sur sa réception par autrui et orienter la définition du contexte susceptible de l'accueillir." in Barthélémy Michel, "Événement et espace public: l'affaire Carpentras" in Quaderni no 18, 1992, p. 130. Pour exemple relatif au terme du "suicide", le journal Le Monde surtitre le 7 octobre 1994: "L'enquête sur le suicide collectif des adeptes de l'Ordre du temple solaire", alors que le 11 octobre 1994, il modifie le surtitre et imprime "L'enquête sur la mort des cinquante-trois adeptes de l'Ordre du Temple solaire".

⁴Leblanc Gérard, "Du modèle judiciaire aux procès médiatiques" in Médiaspouvoirs, no 33, p. 125 et plus généralement Le monde en suspens, treize heures/vingt heures, Editions Hitzroth, 1987, p. 151.

⁵Nous remercions Fabien Dunand pour ses éclaircissements sur ce point.

⁶Lire par exemple Felley Eric, "La bouteille à l'encre rouge. Trafic d'armes, blanchiment d'argent pour un meurtre collectif sur fond de secte" in Nouvelliste et Feuille d'Avis du Valais, 11 octobre 1994. Cette dérive a été relevée par des journalistes: "Et la presse de s'engager dans la brèche ainsi ouverte, celle du blanchiment d'argent, des transactions bancaires et du train de vie des dirigeants de l'ordre, Di Mambro le « grand maître » et Jouret le « gourou »" in Broussard Philippe, "L'énigme des «templiers», L'enquête sur la mort des cinquante-trois adeptes de l'Ordre du Temple solaire" in Le Monde, 11 octobre 1994.

⁷Selon toute vraisemblance, les victimes ont d'abord avalé un breuvage contenant de l'Hypnovel. Ce médicament vendu à l'étranger est un benzodiazépine (son équivalent suisse s'appelle Dormicum). Il s'agit de midazolam. Un puissant somnifère dont les taux retrouvés dans le sang des cadavres indique qu'il a été utilisé comme un hypnotique. En fait, ce médicament exalte l'aptitude à être influencé par une idée. Une fois le midazolam ingurgité, le cerveau accepte n'importe quelle proposition et la réalise. Pas étonnant dès lors que les membres de l'OTs se soient laissé injecter des produits mortels. Condition sine qua non pour « préparer le grand départ vers Sirius » annoncé par Luc Jouret et Jo Di Mambro, les deux chefs présumés de la secte." in Luque Jean-A., "A Salvan, un «cocktail mortel» a tué les 25 membres de la secte à Jouret" in 24 Heures, 6 juin 1995, p. 11.

⁸Au lendemain de la tuerie du Temple solaire, toute la presse se mit à traquer un homme insaisissable. Thierry Huguenin, ex-membre de la secte, était le dernier à avoir vu Jo Di Mambro à Salvan, juste avant le massacre auquel il avait échappé. Embarqué dans cette enquête, je me souviens avoir tenté de le rencontrer chez lui, dans le HLM lugubre qu'il habitait à Genève." in Lassueur Yves, "Comment on devient un gogo" in L'Illustré, no 21, 24 au 30 mai 1995, p. 3.

⁹Derogy Jacques, Pontaut Jean-Marie, Investigation, passion, Enquête sur trente ans d'affaires, Editions Fayard, 1993, 570 p.

¹⁰Citons le commentaire d'un journaliste: "Impossible de savoir qui a préparé les breuvages qui ont endormi les victimes. Encore moins qui a pratiqué les injections et les perfusions. (...) Certes, le meurtre (ou l'euthanasie) par médicament semble porter la signatures de Luc Jouret, médecin homéopathe de profession. Mais pour pratiquer 25 injections ou perfusions, il a dû bénéficier de l'aide d'un ou de plusieurs complices. Sont-ils tous morts dans les chalets de Salvan? Il n'est pas exclu que

les minuteriers et les systèmes de mise à feu se soient déclenchés tout seuls. Mais les enquêteurs travaillent actuellement sur une autre hypothèse: un rescapé aurait pu déclencher les incendies et s'enfuir. On le constate: le mystère reste entier." in Luque Jean-A., "A Salvan, un « cocktail mortel » a tué les 25 membres de la secte à Jouret" in 24 Heures, 6 juin 1995, p. 11.

¹¹Se référer, par exemple, à Marc David, Chabbey Patrick, "Ceux qui tissaient la toile" in L'Illustré, no 41, 12 octobre 1994, p. 23. Ou encore à la première page du *Matin*, 11 octobre 1994.

¹²Maupetit Philippe, "Le fait divers" in *Le photojournalisme, Informer en écrivant des photos*, Editions CFPJ, 1990, p. 131.

¹³Sur le flou photographique, lire Boltanski Luc, "La rhétorique de la figure" in *Un art moyen, essai sur les usages sociaux de la photographie* (sous la direction de Bourdieu Pierre), Editions de Minuit, 1965, p. 193.

¹⁴Lire Phéline Christian, *L'image accusatrice*, Editions Les Cahiers de la Photographie, ACCP, no 17, 1985, 169 p. La première page de l'Hebdo no 41 est exemplaire. Pour un témoignage journalistique, lire Lhote Gilles, *Voleurs d'images, Les dessous des scoops*, Editions Lafon Michel, 1995, 262 p.

¹⁵Cette analyse se base sur une observation de la couverture de l'Illustré no 42, 10 octobre 1994, construite avec un montage de six photographies de format identique lardée d'un bandeau rouge intitulé (en noir): victimes et bourreaux. Quant à la seconde photographie de Di Mambro, se référer, dans le même magazine, à la page 17.

¹⁶In Barthes Roland, *L'empire des signes*, Editions D'Art Albert Skira, Champs Flammarion, 1970, p. 120.

¹⁷Briançon Pierre, "La couverture que Time regrette" in *Libération*, Rubrique Communication, 29 juin 1994, p. 10.

¹⁸In Girard René, *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde*, Editions Grasset et Fasquelle, 1978, p. 353.

¹⁹In Lambert Frédéric, *Mythographie, La photo de presse et ses légendes*, Editions Edilig, 1986, p. 22.

²⁰Silverstone Roger, "Télévision, mythe et culture" in *Réseaux* 44-45, CNET, 1990, p. 205.

²¹Mauriac Nicolas, *Le mal entendu, le Sida et les médias*, Plon, Paris, 178 p.

²²Fabrizio Sabelli, Rist Gilbert, Perrot Marie-Dominique, *La mythologie programmée, l'économie des croyances dans la société moderne*, Editions PUF, 1992. Lire spécialement l'introduction. Citons également Maffesoli Michel: "Non plus l'histoire que je construis contractuellement associé avec d'autres individus rationnels, mais un mythe auquel je participe. Des héros, des saints, des figures emblématiques peuvent exister, mais ce sont en quelques sortes des idéal-types, des vides, des matrices qui permettent à tout un chacun de se reconnaître et de communier avec d'autres. Dionysos, Don Giovanni, le saint chrétien ou le héros grec, on pourrait égrener à l'infini les figures mythiques, les types sociaux qui permettent une « esthétique » commune, qui servent de réceptacle à l'expression du « nous » " in Maffesoli Michel, *Le temps des Tribus, Le déclin de l'individualisme dans les sociétés de masse*, Editions Le Livre de poche, 1991, p. 21.

²³Que nous propose la couverture de l'Hebdo no 41? Un visage de Luc Jouret en noir et blanc, fortement agrandi et provenant certainement d'une image de télévision, un fond noir et quelques accessoires révélateurs: un calice, une rose rouge, un pistolet, une liasse de cent francs suisses, quelques dollars canadiens, le tout posé sur une étoffe blanche brodée d'une croix. Les références au roman noir sont flagrantes.

²⁴Crûment elle résumait ainsi l'Ordre: argent, sexe et jouissance." in L'Hebdo, 13 octobre 1994, p. 12. Lire également Leleu Christophe, *La secte du Temple solaire*, Editions Claire Vigne, p. 101-102.

L'examen des sources que le journaliste Leleu mobilise pour écrire ce chapitre intitulé "Un gourou polygame" nous renseigne sur les logiques médiatiques: Leleu cite certains passages du journal canadien *Photo-Police* du 21 octobre 1994. Or *Photo-Police* est un journal qui exploite systématiquement le fait divers dans ses dimensions les plus scabreuses. Le sexe est un des thèmes fréquemment mobilisé par la rédaction (citons pour exemple quelques titres "Défendu d'avoir une érection ou de reluquer une fille!", "Toutes les kékettes, en position de repos!", "Gais et lesbiennes refusés.", "Une vie de monastère à poil". Journaliste: Marc Pigeon in *Photo Police*, 30 juillet au 6 août 1993, p. 2 à 4) Quant aux méthodes journalistiques de récoltes d'informations, elles frisent l'infraction aux codes déontologiques. En effet, pour obtenir une photographie, destinée à illustrer une enquête, les journalistes de *Photo-Police* n'hésitent pas à exploiter toutes les ressources d'une législation laxiste: "La photographie que vous voyez en première page est assez simple : le gars qui est sur la photo n'a pas su ce qui se passait. On sonne à la porte, la porte s'ouvre, le photographe est posté, l'homme sort sur le perron et on le photographie, le photographe étant l'autre côté de la rue, ou sur le trottoir. Dans le cas de la prostituée de Drummondville, c'est la même chose. Je sais qu'en France la loi est différente, mais ici vous pouvez publier toutes les photos présent à l'extérieur. Tu as le droit de photographier une maison, si la porte s'ouvre en même temps, tu n'est quand même pas responsable de ça...". Nous nous référons à un entretien de l'auteur avec le rédacteur en chef de

Photo-Police, Durand Jacques, à Montréal, le 5 août 1993. Relevons enfin que le Testament de l'OTs insiste sur la fausseté des témoignages de Rose-Marie Klaus de Sainte-Anne de la Pérade. Il contient également de nombreuses critiques à l'égard de la couverture médiatique de l'Ordre en général. Se référer à l'annexe no 1, intitulée "Le testament de l'OTs" in Leleu Christophe, La secte du Temple solaire, Editions Claire Vigne, p. 163-182.

²⁵Avec une dimension planétaire: Australie, Canada, Genève: lire Myles Brian, "Di Mambro soupçonné d'avoir blanchi 92 millions de francs" in 24 Heures, Rubrique Point fort, 8-9 octobre 1994, p. 5. Lire également AP, "Fortune en Australie" in 24 Heures, Rubrique Suisse, 13 octobre 1994, p. 13.

²⁶Avec une dimension sacrilège et masochiste: mort d'enfants, substances soporifiques, etc. Les médias sont nécrophages comme le rappelle Ramonet Ignacio. Entretien avec l'auteur, Valence, 3 avril 1993.

²⁷"Cheiry: Les victimes étaient droguées" in Le Nouvelliste et Feuille d'Avis du Valais, non daté, coupure remise par l'Office du tourisme.

²⁸"Leur point commun: ils s'affirment dépositaires d'une connaissance totale sur le mystère de l'Etre qui leur a été transmise par une tradition secrète." in Habel Robert, "Faux héritiers des Templiers" in L'Illustré, 12 octobre 1994, p. 24. Lire également De Changy Florence qui évoque l'existence de "messagers" dont la mission aurait été de recueillir le "secret des secrets" détenu à Ayers Rock, au centre du désert australien. In "La piste australienne, L'enquête sur les morts de l'Ordre du Temple solaire" in Le Monde, Rubrique Société, 12 octobre 1994, p. 12. Lire enfin Broussard Philippe, "L'énigme des , L'enquête sur la mort des cinquante-trois adeptes de l'Ordre du Temple solaire" in Le Monde, 11 octobre 1994.

²⁹Se référer à Breton Philippe, L'utopie de la communication, Editions La Découverte, Collection Essais, 1992, 149 p. "...la communication s'est installée comme , alternative supposée à la barbarie, au racisme et à la société de l'exclusion." p. 7.

³⁰Barthélémy Michel, "Evénement et espace public: l'affaire Carpentras" in Quaderni no 18, 1992, p. 129. Sur la méthodologie suivie par cet auteur, se référer à Quéré Louis, Barthélémy Michel, La mesure des événements publics, Structure des événements et formation de la conscience publique, non édité mais référencé au Centre d'Etude des Mouvements Sociaux, EHESS, mai 1991, 84 p. Remis par l'auteur.

³¹Quéré Louis, Des miroirs équivoques, Aux origines de la communication moderne, Aubier, 1982, p. 172.

³²In "La réception des travaux sur la réception", Morley David, Hermes 11-12, 1993, CNRS, p. 34.

³³In Weber Max, Le savant et le politique, Editions Plon, 1959, p. 130.