

## **Does the virus have cultish aspects?**

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At a time when we feel we are emerging from the pandemic, the question of whether the virus has cultish aspects is perhaps not as absurd as one might think.

In any case, the virus should allow us to reflect on the various ways in which it has impacted our lives, on the interpretations that have arisen from it and on the ways in which it has been treated.

The long months we have just gone through under the continuous threat of Covid 19 have left us in a state that may help to understand, in part, the state of stress, loss of bearings, and isolation that a cult follower experiences. This will be the subject of the following developments in two parts:

- first of all the development of two opposite worlds
- and then the paradigm shift that accompanies the construction of the inner world of purity.

It seems essential to me, in addition to the usual approach to the control of cults through an exclusively psychological prism, to present the cult succinctly from the point of view of its structure and its mode of operation.

This insight into the cultish system provides the keys to understanding how the closed world of cults, which is built by imitating the state form that they pervert, is set up.

From this point of view of the state dimension, the cult is first of all a territory, whether it is real, i.e., cadastral, or more often virtual, i.e., perceived by the followers as an energetic or “vibratory” reality.



### **The territory and its consequences:**

This territory is the first component of the state aspect of the grouping of a cultish nature,

The territory allows the creation of an inside (always pure) and an outside (impure)

- The inside protects
- The outside threatens
- The inside encloses

The cult always presents itself as a place of purity and we can see how the future follower, or the follower in the making, identifies with a place that represents a warm cocoon that nourishes an ideal of purity in which a mission will be inscribed. The territory of the cult often takes the form of a castle, an unconscious reference to a regal order. The examples would be innumerable and culminate, in a similar field, with the attraction that the announcement of a caliphate may have represented!

Building a territory and protecting it has always been the reflex of any group and it is enough to remember the founding murder committed by Romulus on his brother for transgressing the prohibition to cross the furrow by which the limits of Rome were symbolised to understand the importance of the virtual in the construction of any group.

At the moment of killing Remus, it is believed that his brother said the following words: “So perish whoever else shall overleap my battlements” (“*Sic deinde, quicumque alias transiliet mœnia mia.*”).

The border is seen as protective, but it also serves to filter exchange and limit the freedom to come and go.

It is thanks to this “inside-out” opposition that interpretative theories of the conspiracy type can flourish without the critical spirit being able to temper the most delirious theories, such as the one according to which the virus was created in the project to establish a new world order, sometimes evil, sometimes beneficial. Theory stemming from esoteric conceptions according to which an occult government would make the politicians its puppets.

This opposition of inside and outside largely explains the refusal to accept the inoculation of a vaccine that would be the vector of an electronic marking or a genetic mutation.

The withdrawal into oneself and into a protected territory, on the occasion of a pandemic, is not new.

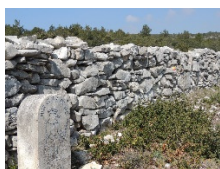
**Un exemple ancien d'agression virale**

**La peste et la puce en 1720  
De la purification à l'enfermement**

**Le Covid 19 représente pour la plupart d'entre nous aujourd'hui encore l'extérieur hostile**



Let's compare the treatment of the plague that struck the South of France between 1720 and 1722 with the treatment of the current pandemic and the many interpretations that follow. We will perceive some telling similarities.



In Provence, we can still see the “plague wall” erected to contain the progression of the virus propagated by a flea.

For a long time it was believed that the flea came from a rat brought by the ship “Saint-Antoine” to the port of Marseilles from the Levant, which represented the hostile outside world. (The Levant corresponded to the surroundings of Palestine; there was no talk yet of a Chinese origin of the virus).

Recent work carried out by the Max-Planck Institute on the dental pulp of Provençal victims shows that the plague of 1720 was in fact a resurgence of the first plague pandemic that had overwhelmed Europe in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the germ of the Black Death having remained dormant in Europe before resurfacing 4 centuries later.

Ignorance of what the plague virus was helped it spread. Some of the measures taken were ineffective, such as the construction of the wall, which the flea could cross in a few jumps or on the back of humans. Other measures were based on superstitious practices that are still being peddled today as they were in the past.

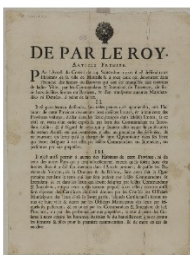


The medical profession protected itself with herbs contained in a mask and confined the sick in lazarettes where bloodletting was practised.

The rattle prefigured the computerised “tracing” of the contaminated. The use of wine, as well as flavoured vinegar, an ancient form of hydroalcoholic solution, was recommended, as well as theriac, as the “Vicks VapoRub” had not yet been invented.



In desperation, the relics of local saints, Saint-Siffrein and Saint-Cloud, were called to the rescue...



Other administrative measures were circumvented, even when it was a decree issued by the King's Council on 14 September 1720 putting Provence in quarantine and causing protests.

In order to enforce these measures, the authorities went so far as to order the army to shoot without warning at the unfortunate fugitives who sought their salvation outside the sanitary border, which made them captives of the infested territory.

Special travel permits were provided, old forms of the QR code and the “health pass”.

On 21 September 1721, the health office of Carpentras stipulated:

*“That those inhabitants who would like to go to work on the grape harvest outside the area could only go to Carpentras or other places closer to it; that on their return they would bring a certificate from the people they had worked for and the number of days they had worked with each person, failing which they would not be permitted in the place. »*

That was in 1720!

Starting from the observation that the cult is a place of power management for gathering a group on a territory that is subject to a leader who enacts rules, applies them in the various aspects of everyday life and sanctions any deviation from them, I would simply like to take the opportunity to recall the measures taken to draw attention to the processes of psychological isolation that are encountered in our societies as well as among the members of contemporary cults.

I do so in the hope that awareness of what each person experiences in isolation will enable the greatest number to understand the process of isolation at work in the hold of a cult.

In other words, experiencing isolation should be an opportunity for each of us to feel the isolation of a cult and better understand what the followers are experiencing without being aware of it.

## A protective social body

A schematic presentation of the functioning of the cult allows us to understand the role of the territory and the management of power in the cult.

In the two cases of isolation in a cult and health-related confinement, we have already noted that, beyond the management of the individual, there is first of all a need to defend a territory against an external attack.



In both cases, the discourse ends up presenting the territory as a shared territory of purity from which all those who represent the impure outside must be excluded.

This discourse is that of the besieged fortress and goes hand in hand with the erection of a frontier that can only be crossed by means of authorisations linked to various protections posed by the discourse of authority. The “preventative measure” provides protection from the outside as much as it protects the outside.

The notion of territory is central to the logic of the hold of a cult because it is at this level that the break with the outside world perceived as impure is articulated. For the cult, the “territory” constitutes the first anchoring of magical group thinking.

The follower switches from the open to the closed.

The only opening for the closed world is offered by the “social networks” which, through the use of algorithms, only bring together those who share the same analysis, thus reinforcing beliefs and delusional interpretations, as the current survivalist movement can often illustrate.

The irrational demonisation of the outside world by cults makes it possible to put in place protective measures, all of which are purifying practices of a magical nature and almost always part of a repetitive ritual directly linked to forms of interpretative delusions or persecution referring to a conspiracy view.

### **Image firm OTS**

Thus, the Order of the Solar Temple, an extreme but far from unique example, made its followers live in “survival farms” and asked them to purify their food so as not to let any alleged negative vibratory influences enter them.

The teaching of homeopathic physician guru Luc Jouret enrolled his followers in the logic of the naturopathy he professed. The “purified” person could then continue to transit towards Sirius by transmuting the carbon making up the cells of the body... via the passage through fire releasing the energy needed for the soul’s journey.

This cultish vision is often part of an apocalyptic description of the outside world from which only a few chosen ones will be saved to rebuild the perfect world.

Each one of us will be able to make the connection with the measures taken three centuries ago with regard to curbing the current pandemic and will find in the interpretations stemming from “New Age” conceptions unfair analyses, with the tendency for limitations of some of our freedoms to be found in them .

But that is not my point and I do not intend to add my voice to the numerous criticisms of the management of the present crisis.

In the first part, I have simply tried to show the role that the territory plays, without us knowing it, in the protection of the group that inhabits it, both in the cult and in the pandemics.

I would now like to address the irrational dimension of some illusory therapeutic proposals, usually described as “complementary”, “alternative”, “soft”, “traditional”, “natural”, “holistic”, “energetic”, “vitalist”, “quantum”, etc., from another of the state dimensions, that of the cultish/sectarian executive in the health sphere.

It is a question of underlining what the New-Age Pope, Marilyn Ferguson, qualified as a “paradigm shift” in her best-seller published in 1980 “Children of Aquarius” calling everyone, according to the terminology used by Ferguson, to become “conspiracy theorists” towards what the basis of each of the spheres of the state executive is (economy, information, education, health, etc.)

The paradigm shift, to which New Age calls and which joins the irrationality of religious cults in that magical thinking underlies them both, intends to defeat the modern paradigm of reason and science.

### **Establishment of the guru's power on the basis of his own paradigms**

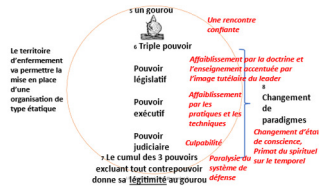
Due to lack of time, I will leave aside the pathological dimension which is that of any guru as well as the demonstration of what founds the legitimacy of the guru in the eyes of his followers in a

paradoxical way, i.e., the exclusive accumulation in his hands of normative, executive, and judicial powers.

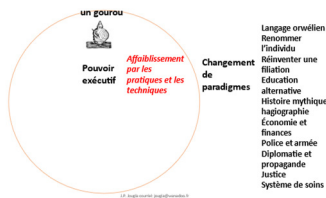
A schematic presentation of the functioning of the cult makes it easy to understand the management of power by the guru on cult territory.

We have seen that the cult system makes the “grouping” function on a territory of identification.

A real executive system based on “new” paradigms can be grafted onto this territory.



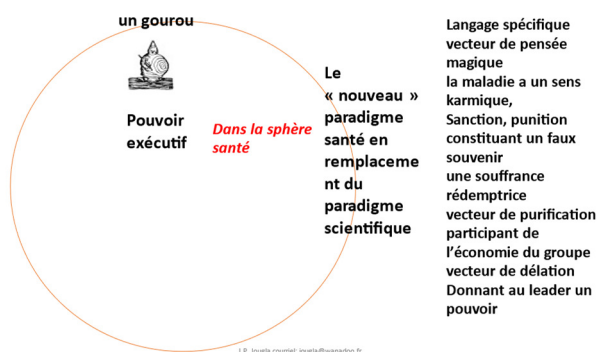
In this schematic presentation, I isolate the only declination of the various forms of the sectarian executive by recalling that each sector will be based on a new paradigm:



I will narrow the focus and only keep the one declination of health management and the paradigm shift that underlies it.

### Focus on one dimension of the sectarian executive: the “health” approach

The cult's approach to health illustrates the “practices and techniques” used to subjugate and make vulnerable



## **Can the management of the virus allow us to understand cult withdrawal and paradigm shift?**

The light provided by science allows us to understand today that the virus is an external infectious agent which, in order to multiply, must penetrate the host cell, the replication functions of which will be paralysed.

It must first of all be kept at a distance.

It could be said that we are at war!

The instructions ranged from the understandable washing of hands to the wearing of masks, which refers to the isolation of anonymity, to the deprivation of contact, with latex gloves and physical distancing or the establishment of "gauges".

Other instructions included a travel perimeter with curfews or quarantine periods. These instructions went as far as banning the provision of company for dying people as well as prohibiting visits to elderly relatives in nursing homes. All of this was accompanied by instructions that varied over time, sometimes contradicting each other, and often verging on conflicting directives generating stress that could lead to situations of psycho-traumatic shock, depression or stupefaction, and even open rebellion that a guilt-tripping media did not hesitate to comment on.

This isolation is reinforced by the sometimes-contradictory statements made by scientists who have been jostling each other in the media and have often led us to think, certainly wrongly, that as Erasmus said in *The Praise of Folly*: "they know absolutely nothing and they boast of knowing everything". Relativism, the first step towards a paradigm shift, has been able to undermine scientific analysis, which is presented as contingent and sometimes simply at the service of the pharmaceutical industry, which is motivated only by profit.

We understand the validity of these measures and the impression of trial and error linked to the unexpectedness of the situation.

These and other instructions may have given the impression that they were accompanied by surveillance that was sometimes reinforced by what could be interpreted as stigmatisation and could sometimes be interpreted as denunciation. In any case, they were described as such by those who wanted to oppose them, crying out that their freedom was being infringed upon, even imagining that the vaccine was either a poison or the vector of a chip to allow tracking.

This phenomenon of physical withdrawal has given rise to a feeling of powerlessness in some people, that of not having a grip on reality.

In our experience of the crisis, we have all experienced this feeling of being dispossessed of the world and sometimes of witnessing a process of decomposition that makes us beings without a destiny.

Former followers often recount this type of cult experience.

This feeling of dispossession and powerlessness, this feeling of no longer having a grip on reality, is indeed one of the main drivers of adherence to irrational beliefs in which a world fantasised by a few is presented as the true reality.

The cult follower lives this experience of isolation in a place that protects him/her from the outside world, as we have seen.

I insist on this aspect because it is another essential component of the cult process. The cult leads to a paradigm shift by replacing the scientific knowledge inherited from reason with a “New Age” or pseudo-mystical vision, in which individual intuition revealed must guide the group on the one hand, while at the same time building a replacement culture that silences intellectual analysis.

Specific language giving the certainty of access to knowledge, both occupying the follower's reflection and making them believe that they are accessing an elitist dimension

The “new” paradigm is a vehicle for magical thinking through the therapeutic use of sound, stones, colours, stars, and the theory of “correspondences” according to which “everything is in everything...”, serving as the basis for the doctrine of “signatures” inherited from Paracelsus.

The disease has a meaning that can go from karmic belief, to sanction, to punishment

It is also the illustration of an attack coming from the “outside world” which could even make people believe that allopathic care would constitute an aggression and, with this in mind, the vaccine would aim to modify the genome.

And sometimes found the theory of false memories

Illness can have a dimension of redemptive suffering

The disease is a vector of purification which explains the recourse to fasting, cupping, exorcisms, punishment practices, etc.

This is also the perspective of “spiritual healing” and the abomination of “conversion therapies”

Health management contributes to the financing and economy of the group

It is also a vector of denunciation

Finally, the management of health gives the leader a power comparable to that of a king who, in France, could alone cure those who were afflicted with scrofula.

The science of the doctor is no match for the healing power of the guru or the person who practices a method that claims to be therapeutic without any proven dimension.

The description of the 2019 coronavirus disease as endowed with a power of rapid mutation, evolving, from variant to variant, from the Chinese virus to the English virus, passing by the African or the Indian one and to other forms, gives a particular sense to the New-Age conception of change, of impermanence, which give rise to a feeling of insecurity but especially provoke a dehumanisation by annihilation of any individual project, with politics/politicians struggling to unite citizens around a project aimed at creating the social contract necessary for people to live together as a community.

We have here a pale outline of what can happen in the psyche of the adept.

The follower often loses his/her job, abandons his/her studies, and breaks with his/her old references in their desire to cut himself/herself off from the outside world. Let us compare this



process of desocialisation with the situations of economic precariousness that the management of the coronavirus has often provoked.

I repeat, my aim is not to reduce the management of the pandemic by most European countries to a policy of cultish control but, on the contrary, to enable people who are not familiar with the mechanics of subjection by a cult to understand, from their current feelings, what the isolation experienced by the follower within the cult membership group is and how the follower can replace the modern scientific paradigm with concepts from another age.

If this comparison of the two situations, in and out of the cult, could be done calmly and dispassionately, then the consequences of this form of isolation and weakening linked to the period we are going through could be better dealt with. Just as in the relationship of subjection by a cult, our contemporaries can indeed experience what can be described as "derealisation" through an alteration in the perception or experience of the external world (including in young children who are often deprived of the mimics of those who care for them), an external world perceived as strange, unreal, and non-inclusive.

Former followers often retain a feeling of strangeness about their psychological integrity from their period of membership in the group, which can be accompanied by a feeling of inner emptiness and a lack of recognition.

The feeling of isolation, loneliness or abandonment experienced by everyone can be compared to the feeling of dereliction and sometimes even to an abandonment neurosis.

Under the appearance of novelty, the changes in health paradigms refer to archaisms that we might have thought modernity had consigned to the attics of history.

Whether it is the practice of cupping and scarification prized by "prophetic medicine" in search of purification, innumerable energy practices, shamanic, Ayurvedic, Taoist or spagyric resurgences, to name but a few, the paradigmatic foundation calls into question the experimentation on which modern medicine is based each time.

But each of the proponents of these methods from another age is blind to their effectiveness and when the follower opens their eyes to reality, one of the most difficult steps to take consists in abandoning the illusory knowledge in which they had taken refuge to protect himself/herself from the outside world, which they perceive as being full of danger.

It must be noted that the treatment of the pathologies induced by these beliefs remains inadequate today, both when the follower leaves the cult and in situations of collapse linked to Covid.

Our practices with former followers should be able to help us to escape the consequences caused by the health situation, the end of which is still hard to see.