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Spells and enchantment …bullshit.
Service providers / magical-ritual body techniques and their customers[*]

      Extreme and excessive rationalization of the modern society, but a greater laicization of the church and of the most important religions (excessively interested in every day life and less interested in transcendent, as a consequence of a vast process of secularisation) led, as Max Weber believes, to a loss of magical-mythical spirit or – using a term which has made a career – to the "de-waking of the world" (Gauchet, 1995). German sociologist considers, though, as the final part of his analysis (Weber, 2003), that magic and spelling of the world are not completely lost but the masses feel the need to counteract the "de-waking of the world" orienting themselves towards pseudo-forms of the archaic, authentic magic, this meaning composite forms of religiosity, that have a strong spectacular and emotional component. From a philosophical point of view, this tends to answer to a certain need of "disorder", of imaginary, of fantastic to counteract to the archetypal structures of the mythical-magical.

      Closer to us, the sociologists of the postmodernist society have proved, through pertinent studies, that, somewhat, contemporary man does not want to live in the ideal of the clear reality and that of the modern reasoning, but he wants to experiment the unreal too (manifested visibly through religious delirium, musical effusion and sports hysteria); the desire for magic and fantastic can be felt in the fabulous world of the cinema, in the mystery of advertising, in the mixture of monstrous and strange (clothing, corporeal etc.), in Dionysian sexual excess, in the success of the New Age techniques, in the flea market (vintage), in returning to nature (neo-ecology); this environment creates the perfect premises for that new bewitch of the world that is stated by the post modernism: "the childhood, the past, the fabulous, the memory, the deep

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[*] The translation of the text from page 19. Translation by Andreia Neagu (Moreni).

roots (…) are a vector for the bewitching of the world", because "the return of all these archaisms marks everyday life" (Maffesoli, 2008: 148).

The explorations of the man of the post-modern community, marked by an acute lack of security in front of the rapid changes for the economical and socio-political environment, generates a reorientation towards what André Juillard and Dominique Camus called "today's witchcraft": "the recourse to magic (…) suggests answers to the bad state of the society, having a secure function. (…) Thus, one can understand the practices and the rituals connected to magic as so many individual spaces of the freedom of interpretation and re-interpretation of the dogmatic prescriptions of the Church or of the elitist and narrow conformism of the science..." (Julliard, 1997: 280).

In fact, despite the continuous improvement of the production means and of the lifting of the life standards, man has always lived in between two worlds: the one of normal and the one of paranormal. If the main resort of witchcraft in the remote époques was the man impossibility to explain certain phenomena (meteorological, tectonic, astral), but also of some personal illogical coincidences, in the contemporary world, magic offers solutions to exit from the impasse for those who are marked by everyday insecurity or those who are in a crisis; more, "through magic, modern man does not want to explain the inexplicable, but to overcome and dominate certain phenomenon or personal feelings, through visible and controlled means" (Sandu).

Lately, there is much talk about the phenomenon of decomposition and dissolution/ reduction known by religion in the context of globalisation, through the proliferation of parallel religiosity and configuration of a "mystical-esoteric nebula", which seems to be the base for the religiosity of the third millennium, but which is classified by the specialists as an amount of "improvisations" or "avatars" of the archetypal magic (Repciuc, 2008). While the imaginary overlaps the Christian elements over the cosmic ones, pre-Christian, the contemporary magic takes the form of some magic-therapeutic, magic-esoteric, para-scientific conglomerates. As a consequence, an important sector of the "mystical-esoteric nebula" is covered by witchcraft, so witchcraft might be invigorated and valued in the contemporary communities.

Besides, the long-term discussed crisis of the modernism involves a de-construction of the old believes in magic and their rearrangement in new forms and formulas (at the level of faith, practice, organisation); then, the great socio-ethnical-cultural conglomerates appeared in the last decade generate miscellaneous formulas of Divinity and their mixture generates new magical formulae (religiosity), that – joined with the uprooting phenomenon (villages' urbanisation, the

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migration from the rural to the urban) – lead to the appearance of a new magical system and, as a consequence, to a new perspective on the magician/wizard image.

In his studies on structural anthropology, Claude Lévi-Strauss defined the triangle of actors involved in magical rituals, naming the participants: the Magician (he is the one who has absolute power), the Patient (whose main quality is the fact that he believes, without doubt, in magical-ritual effort) and the Community (the one who, according to the common cultural code, has complete trust in the efficiency of the ritual) (Claude Lévi-Strauss, 1978); subsequently, Jeanne Favret-Saada refines the actors' scheme, speaking of the bewitched person (practically, the patient or even the client), the wizard (the one who cast the spell) the "uncaster", "wizard of the wizard", meaning the character with magical power, called by the patient to counteract the negative spell (Favret-Saada, 1977). Marcel Mauss and Henri Hubert were talking about "the magician and his client", bringing magic in the field of the management of a lucrative business (Mauss and Hubert, 1996).

Beyond labels, names or taxonomies, it is important to remark that the magic-ritual script divides the collective mental in a well-known manner; the appeal to the "magical solution" is continuously made in an "anomalous situation" (this meaning burst of misfortune, too important and too frequent, a situation that cannot be controlled by human and the end cannot be foreseen [Camus, 2003: 63]); magical practices have remained, as script, intention and ending, relatively the same, but the ingredients, the props or the communication channels have adapted to the modern realities (coal has been replaced by matches, playing cards have been replaced by cyber soft, words by media advertisement); the authority of magic comes from faith, understood both as an individual and social phenomenon and the essence of magic resides in the possibility to act at a long distance and it has as basis the similarity and the magical contagion.

Both the man of the traditional society and the modern one knew that "magic was to change the world" (Riviere, 2000: 128), so they appealed to magic when they wanted to manipulate destiny, to cause prejudice to someone out of envy or jealousy or to heal their health. Insecurity felt in the traditional society was liked to the weakening of the vital force of man, animals or of his economical subsistence means, to the persecutive conception on the evil, seen as personal misfortune, having as an effect extreme states of mind pushed to paroxysm: illness, economical bankruptcy, death, and the repetition of misfortune (without any logical reason, explanation) requires the appeal to witchcraft, (divinatory practices, erotical or therapeutical, where the greater wizard has to cancel the spell cast by a common wizard, using magical means).

The reason of the magic effort is similar for the modern patient, too, different nuances being related to the contemporary daily life: the loss of the job, repetitive misfortune, insecure future, breaking up an erotic relation, the desire to revenge, the doctor's failure in healing certain illnesses.

Witchcraft is an extremely comprehensive phenomenon; a synthesis anthropologically based defines it as "a complex of ideas" (at the level of the existence of a magical force, of a special relation between the wizard and the body of the victim, or of a very probable source for the personal misfortune), a "set of practices" (doing and undoing, bewitching and de-bewitching, rituals and counter rituals), "a complex of effects" (according to the comments of Jeanne Favret-Saada, the process of bewitching is a *witches deal* which has as a main purpose generating misfortune or illness, bankruptcy or, sometimes, even death, and the counteracting process is a dramatic conflict between the bewitched victim and the "good" wizard, the one who casts the counter-spell [Favret-Saada, 1977]), "a complex of experiences" (personal sometimes: illness, death, repeated misfortune; collective, other times). The magical act of dis-bewitching, which follows after a witch crisis is a complex experience felt both by the wizard, victim and the counter wizard; most of the time, the witch crisis has consequences that can affect the whole family, group or community (through the physical or psychical incapacity to work of the victim).

Related to the protagonist of the "witch crisis", we are reminding the researches – which have already become classical – of E. E. Evans-Pritchard at azande Indians: a differentiation is made (it remained "classical" and it is overtaken – willing or not – by the reinterpretation of magic in the context of literature and cinema which exploit the magic-fantastic vein as *Harry Potter* series, *The Lord of the Rings, Chronicles of the Narnia, Practical Magic* etc.) between *witchcraft* (wizards born as wizards, individualized through the existence of a magical substance in their bodies, so with an inborn capacity to harm, often unconscious, through their own existence) and *sorcery* (the wizard who learns the rituals and consciously and voluntarily apply them, as a result of obtaining of the magical act).

As a consequence of the same mentality, no matter the historical moment, the wizard is perceived as a moral and social authority; differences are connected to features of the character and to the profile, adapted, obviously, to the contemporary times: wizards have always had certain connection to corporations. If in the archaic society the wizards were coming from among the shepherds, blacksmiths, then in the urban context from among the barbers, tailors, doctors, now in the contemporary society most of the witches are gipsy, and most of the magicians have a

certain stage of education calling themselves "soul healers", "parapsychologist", "psychotherapist", "owners of some magical secrets".

If the traditional wizard lived at the outskirts of the society, ordering the hail or exploiting the psychotropic qualities of the mandrake, had his favourite animals around him (black cats, ants, owls) or has individualised physical features (blue eyes, melanin stains, scars or different disabilities), had the obsession of the devil to whom he had made a pact and was, especially, perceived through deviations from the rules which he allowed himself, the contemporary witch is interested in advertising, she pretends to have famous ancestors, she is rich, exhibiting her luxury, she has specialised offices, especially in the urban area or at the outskirts of the cities, she manages IT very well and uses it in the magical praxis.

Different are the ways of communication to and from the magician: a recent study (Răutu/Mihăilescu/Nicolau/Gheorghiu and Toma, 2002) shows that the media addiction is the one that modifies collective memory entirely, producing hybrid and aberrant forms, with a high risk for the individual and communitarian behaviour; vulnerability of the public space is skilfully exploited and the discourse elaborated by the representatives of the professional witchcraft uses mass media intensively, especially television and the written media. Of all this manifestations adjacent to a vulgar spirituality, witchcraft occupies an important place; the authors of the study we are referring to, notice the great number of gipsy women, mainly in the capital city and at the outskirts of the most important cities, all of them introducing themselves as representative of the white magic, endowed with a divine gift and having clearly defined ranks within an hierarchy inspired from titles of nobles: queens, princesses, all of them members of an universal community.

The active relations between the witch, the patient and the evil spirit who caused the evil become co-occurring at the same time with the establishing of strength reports between the actors. For Jeanne Favret-Saada, these strength reports can be "visualised" and schematised, so that the magical fluid transferred between the angles of the triangle to introduce a system of connections logically articulated (Favret- Saada, 1977). It becomes obvious not only the fact that a devilish magical enterprise, like the one initiated by a bad intentional person, endowed with special powers, can only be cancelled by someone with identical powers, that can only be a witch, but it is underlined also the total trust of the patient in the therapeutic ritual performed by the healing magician. On this occasion, the reports established between the actors become even clearer, the traditional therapeutical ritual being understood in between an act of cultural mediation and a "business", between a *services provider* and his *customer.*

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Marc Augé connects the concept of power, directly, with this uncertainty of the magical borders between evil/good: "the strength of the wizard and of his opposite, aggressor and defender are not considered of different essence. The limit between the so-called illegitimate powers of the wizard and the legitimate powers of the «powerful» human being is uncertain; the notion of legitimacy has a retrospective value and it is expressed judgments of values which often suggest a state of fact, some strength reports", which then influence the power reports (Augé, 1995: 99).

We found fascinating, in the context, the suggestive example offered by the same M. Augé, about the culture of some south-American Indians tribes, almost reclaiming the temptation of a generalisation: "wizard – the equivalent of the term – is made up of «man» and of an element referring to the specific power of aggression"; in different words, there is an equal quantity of magical force between the "good" magician and the "evil" one; what makes the difference between them is just a rest, an almost quantitative parameter, even mathematical, that make the wizards to be accepted as plus/minus therapists; so that , according to M. Auge, the power of the magician cannot be separated of his identity, being situated within the person, in the society and in the history (*ibidem*, 106).

This kind of analyses, focussed on the levels of an attentive reading of the magic-ritual phenomenon, focussing on its actors, suggest that the magic and its fundamental principle are being preserved, the same as the interest for magical practices; we can only speak about some visible phenomenona of acculturation, meaning influences, changes, adaptations, complex phenomenona which suppose progressive repetitive actions of replacement, combination, even cultural rejecting and, especially, adaptation to new; the result is the appearance of a new cultural expression (which sometimes can be even kitsch, but not necessarily). We must not forget that Dominique Camus made a typology of the "wizards business" or the cases of witchcraft, "humanising" them in a certain manner, in the same direction as Jeanne Favret-Saada: the motivation and the justification of the magic witchcraft effort, continually, consists of – the same as before – the revenge (connected to the economical or sentimental competition), jealousy (economical jealousy or envy and love jealousy) or, even worse, a combination between the two, jealousy/envy and revenge (Camus, 2003).

It is proved, once again, that the mental pattern of magic has been preserved, as well as the image of the wizard, who remains, constantly, one of the owners of a maximum power, be it from a transcendental source or be it inherited, be it discovered or be it stolen. The theory, ethnologically and anthropologically recognised, states the fact that "it is not considered a wizard

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whoever wants to be. For this, one needs to be recognised, to be able to indicate the origins of the powers that he pretends to have, and in the same time to prove his efficiency according to recognised criteria" (*ibidem*, 25).

So, the abilities and the strength of a wizard "most often are gained" or, sometimes, "born"; we notice the poetic license of one of the quoted wizards, as far as the authenticity of a wizard's power and the "borrowing" or the transfer of it: "it is not like a tune that can be hummed by anyone. You mustn't talk about it". Gaining of the magic power can actually be done, in two ways: "either the wizards inherit the powers, which is transmitted within the family, or they learn these powers from other wizards to whom they have no family relation". There is still a danger: "The more the number of initiates increases, the value of idea of secrecy decreases. The mysterious element, unknown, legendary of power is, suddenly, threatened" (*ibidem*, 39-40). The initiation in witchcraft "it, really, transforms a person, offering him other means of knowledge, perception, and therefore other means of action on the world. This involves the entire existence of a person: the past, the present and the future, as far as all his references will be discussed, because the search for power is performed by going ,«abnormally»" (*ibidem*, 42).

The choice of the wizard by his renown is a universally valid practice (*ibidem*, 72) but, of course, much augmented by the nowadays media. In fact, for the contemporary society, the best expression to define the magical-ritual zone and/or the witchcraft area is, really, the one of Jeanne Favret-Saada: business. Otherwise, not to forget the fact that the beneficiaries of the magic-ritual effort, are more often called "clients" and not "patients".

The management of this business has become obligatory: most of the times, the practitioner are seconded by another member of the family (wife, mother, daughter etc, who are running the business, deciding on the distribution of the capital, the investment of the income or the organisation of the work provided. For example, the witches from the outskirts of Bucharest, work together with their daughters, who are considered both disciples and accountants; in the same time, Aliodor Manolea and his wife have, in Bucharest, an office; in order to estimate the real value of their business, we should recall the recent scandal in which they were involved: a client, who was promised to be cured of cancer, paid to Aliodor Manolea 50000 € plus VAT, for a promised cure of cancer (they called it "treatment tax"), and each of the subsequent meeting was to be paid for: 300 € plus VAT. As far as the financial evidence is concerned, the tax has been paid by the client… by bank transfer, under the form of a commercial contract between the psychologists' firm and that of the client, a contract of management of human resources, respectively, because this would have been the object of activity of the parapsychologist.

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The sector of marketing is essential, though, developed according to all the business rules, based on the relation between demand and supply, on the market dynamics. Advertisement is made indirectly, through numerous reportages, investigations, news based on certain cases which are broadcasted thorough all kinds of media, through all kinds of channels, or directly through paid advertisement, especially in the local newspapers, with a certain target, mostly presenting the protagonist and by presenting successful cases, having the value of examples.

Let's make a memory exercise as far as the magic actor / the performer of the ritual act is concerned, a necessary "up-to-date", and recalling a few of his/her hypostases, in fact so many metamorphoses in historical context:

1. The "*doftoroaie*" – a woman who played the role of a doctor for a certain community; "science enlights the way to progress", stated, in the 50's, dr. Valeriu Bologa, blaming the fact that "doftoroaia" was called to heal; the explanation was linked to politics: "the bourgeoisie took care to prevent the light of the culture to enter" (Bologa, 1956: 9), and the "tingling of parables" about different old women called "doftoroaie" highlights, said the doctor, "the darkness propagated by superstition", suggesting the importance of the role played by "doftoroaie" in community in the last two centuries.

2. The *healer*; in a conference in 1912 a district doctor from Ilfov county wanting to attract the villagers' attention over the progress and benefits of the medicine, contrasting to what he called the "impostors of the village" – "the charmer, the quack or wizards, it is them who you are hastily going when one of you gets sick, and they do not do anything else but to put you on the roads and take your money" (Gâdescu, 1912: 7) – makes, involuntarily, also a list containing a multitude of illnesses (magic or real), that could be treated through magic-ritual performances, such as the disease charm, which prove the trust that, a century ago, the Romanian peasant used to have in *magical uncharming* as a therapeutical remedy. It is remarkable the part where the doctor speaks, sarcastically, about the healers' prestige: "when you are told by the healer what you should do, you do whatever it take, make money out of nothing and you set out on the way. If the doctor tells you that you have a serious disease, you need to take care of yourself a longer time, to go to the doctor regularly, but you say you don't have…" (*ibidem*, 28).

3. The "*baba descântătoare*" (*unchanting old woman*), is constantly present in our traditional culture, probably the most common figure of the healer, the protagonist of the household, domestic magic, with a qualification, most of the times, overtaken from the tradition of the community itself. In the traditional Romanian village, the *baba descântătoare* was often called for different reasons: the returning, the ritual annihilation or manipulation of the disease,

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predicting the fate, unbending the spells or increasing beauty or blessing animals. Using diverse ritual props, to which in the mental schemes symbolical roles was associated, the *baba descântătoare* was performing the script of a magic-religious ritual, combined with empirical medical adjuvants, to obtain a psycho-therapeutic effect of balancing.

4. The *soothsayer*; the study made by Cristina Gavriluță proves the fact that an important number of those surveyed (over 60%), think that "certain facts, phenomena, events can be foretold to the people in different ways" (Cristina Gavriluță, 2008: 159) and "practising or using magic or divination has, first of all, a social justification (economical, familiar, legal, professional etc.) (…) and also the human availability to allow other forms of understanding and explaining the existence, other than those offered by the modern science" (*ibidem*, 112); from the authentic traditional forms of "divining the future" (cultural inheritance), found in the traditional phase of the Romanian village, was reached, through an intermediary phase of modern divination (influenced by urbanisation, by the Internet access or by the amplification of some habits and routines encouraged by commercial opening – for example the increased consumption of coffee, necessary in divination), to a "pseudo" industry of "scientific divination" (*ibidem*, 219).

The divination business has as basis aggressive advertisement, and the result the financial profit, the tariffs being variable, "different person, different tariff", this means higher for VIPs; the quoted author notices that the protagonists indulge themselves in a pseudo-science, denoted through invented academical titles or through exotical gift; through divinatory practices following a certain script, the fortune-teller or the soothsayer build sceneries for the future, according to which the client can change his actions.

5. The *exorcist priest*; the best-known case is of Father Ioan from Poshaga, from the Apuseni Mountains, not only for his remarkable success as far as "removing the devils from man", but also for the intense publicity of the case (Troc, 1999: 128). The professional definition of the exorcist priest is a difficult one: generally, it is considered that while the licit supernatural is managed by the priest, the unlawful is managed by the witch/wizard, but in this case the functions of the two characters overlap partially, (although they are not encouraged by the church, most of these miraculous healing practices by exorcising are tolerated by the ecclesiastical institutions).

Moreover, if in the place of worship (practically the work place of the priest, the church) the priest is seen as a wizard able to order the devil to leave the patient's body, outside the church, in the parochial house, where the contact is established, where the appointments are made, and the diagnosis and the treatment schedule, he (the priest) is seen as a doctor: "The crowd waits to enter, as if in front of a consulting room" (*ibidem*, 132).

A sociological/ethnological analyse of the case indicate three sources of the evil, materialised in as many possible diagnosis indicated by the exorcist from Posaga: "life without God, magical acts, the devils' actions" but "the sufferance of the body is just a secondary manifestation of the soul's illness" (*ibidem*,134); so, read through this grid, the exorcist's therapy is situated at the confluence of the three key characters of the healing system: the priest, the one who should heal the person whose life is deprived of the presence of God, the witch/the wizard who should heal the "attacked" by the maleficent magical acts, and the psychiatrist, called to heal the mind darkened by "the action of all kinds of devils".

6. The *mentalist*; this character is able to read people's minds and can talk to death persons, using hypnosis, neuro-linguistic programming, the illusionism or other techniques, acting "with the power of mind" or "by the simple exerting of will" as Cristian Gog does (2012, "Spectacolele minții…"), suddenly became famous after winning the reality show "Romanians are talented"; after a first domestic magic-therapeutic debut (he healed his sprained ankle using traditional therapy, meaning old wife's remedy, to use his own words.), he became a mentalist this meaning "a person who is able to identify and manipulate one or more para-psycological elements of the human intelect" (as he states on his own site); modern mentalists argue that they master certain techniques of manipulation of the individual – situated at the border between normal and paranormal – due to the maximum development of his own mental techniques (telepathy, clear vision, telekinestesia, precognition, hypnosis, transcendental meditation, yoga).

7. The *parapsychologist* and, generally, the *handlers of the purple flame*; the parapsychologist offers his services – to the VIPs and politicians, especially – of "proximal or distal biotherapy", as it is the case of Aliodor Manolea, the one who used astrology and bioenergetics in Traian Băsescu's campaign in 2004 and balanced him psycho-emotionally, what facilitated electoral success for him. But remarkable is the fact that, when the media called him a "wizard", the owner of the purple flame rebelled, reclaiming the offence in front of the National Audiovisual Council, understanding this categorisation as "offensive" causing image damage…

8. The *quack*, is, most often, associated with the idea of pseudo-therapist, regardless of the era, type of magic or culture; an interesting study by Adrian Majuru, about "wizards, witches, chiromancers, astrologists, soothsayers, and a whole lot of other quacks who pretend, within the last 15 years, to have saved lives and unhappy destinies; (…) it has been noted an often recurrent insistence of the underground magic, able manipulated by weird persons, mostly illiterate, people who manipulate collective unhappiness, exorcising illusory hopes of the better" (Majuru, 2010).

It is visible the fact that a large number of magical actors or pseudo-actors are trying to isolate, to explain, to manipulate a series of individual or collective unhappiness, due to some unexpected occurrences, like divorce or unexpected illness, the loss of the job, bad luck, or of some wonderful events: winning the lottery, for example; all of these have been experienced by the eclectic world of the Romanian urban, always in search for success, fulfilment, financial gain.

Magic formulas from the authentic Romanian countryside (the traditional village) were moulded in traditional ritual forms with a beneficial and rarely maleficent finality, in a well-established mental order, where superstitions represent just a marginal section, while the same magical formulas taken in an urban made-up most of the time of forced urbanization (the colonisation of the town with peasants, brought here to work, effect of the industrialization, commuting, schooling), especially following the cohabitation with groups of gypsies from the suburbs of the cities, lead to a contamination of the magic-mythic ritual believes and practices and a syncretism of scenarios. So, we have, on one hand, the *baba descântătoare*, a character institutionalized within the frameworks of the traditional (rural) collective mental that "untie" a spell using verbalised ritual formulas as charm, in a larger cultural context of the therapeutic spell which requires specific props and proper instruments (household instruments overvalued by attributing magic properties), combined with a wide empirical therapy of the remedy (cure plants endowed with magic, ritual feature); on the other hand, we have the gypsy witch, culturally built on in a different mentality and a different tradition, including a maleficent imaginary, using exotic props (shell, playing cards, tarot cards) and often terrifying (dead hens, black hens, blood, horse hairs, human phalanx) and a specific kit, everything overtaken from the Hindi Asian space, so foreign for the European/Balkan culture, with acts having mainly a destructive goal, in an eminently lucrative performance.

Behind the pompous self built reputation – "the famous astrologist", "the renowned witch", "the greatest magician" – often hide dubious characters from the edge of the society, often to be penal incriminated for different forms of derisory occultism by which generate experiments of manipulation of the collective belief (some psychologists speak about a collective psychosis).

9. The *advertisement* witch; lately, newspapers are invaded by advertisements which make up a dubious profile of a character with a certain ancestry in quackery, defined by the same Dominique Camus: when trying to obtain social recognition,

"the wizards who used this type of ads come, generally speaking, from remote areas, they do not have any connection with the environment and they do not like meeting people. They do not have reputation, and they are striving to build, by means of media, a magic capital; (…) by means of advertisement, the quack can boast himself excessively and to praise recipes for which he did not have the right keys to make them active, but which he strives to convert into powers. (…) All the wizards describe the quack as the one who boasts himself through advertisement in order to obtain a clientele that he does not know and that will always refresh thanks to the newspapers advertisement. (…) He invents a qualification and he tries to make it recognised. The real wizard does not invent anything because he is aware of the limit of his power. The quack does not know them because he forces all his limits to gain importance. He is a professional of invention and of exaggeration in relation to his recognized powers" (Camus, 2003: 49-50).

The basic principles of the organization of witchcraft start from the public recognition of the witchcraft existence itself, this being generated by the efficiency of the magic therapeutic act; in its turn, efficiency is based on the actual duration in time of the remedy, on its exoticism and the owner eccentricity. They are resorts through which the illegitimate wizard can build his legitimacy, suggesting that he has magic powers; and the ideal vehicle for the propagation of the information about magical powers owned, essentials for forming a clientele able to bring income, is advertisement.

So, we have the "Almighty Vanessa skillsful when it comes to VIPs' love", the "Athena, the healer who facilitates marriage", the "well-known Rosa (Trandafira), the one who is successful in any kind of problems", "famous Claudia, the owner of some medicines recently brought from the Athos mountain" or "Mercedesa, the queen of white magic"; in their attempt to become legitimate magic actors and to obtain the recognition of their profession and of their remedies, all of them have arrived from somewhere abroad, where they found old remedies, so their effect is known and checked, but are new for our culture, relying their power exclusively on the exotism of a journey with a pseudo-skill value (we have remarked special preferences for India, Egypt, Asia, the Athos mountain).

There is a kind of a secondary legitimation through advertisement: when the advertisement has been successful and the clientele has been gathered there appears a legitimation of the legitimacy; the witches are invited in "approved" television shows and they build up a new reputation, based on that promotion in TV shows equally dubious…

Interesting we found the linguistic/stylistic approach: there is a "witches style" (Neamtu, 2004), with the activation of certain important feature of the discourse: the iconic level – expressive, dynamic, personal photos, using: the spindle, the cross, the candles, tarot cards, the

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crown, or other symbols of the magical powers; the lexical level – the words orbit in the paradigms of the excellence, of the extraordinary, the renowned, of the unseen, associate with proper names with a mythical or exotical resonance, creating a language excessively valued positively, which join archaisms (of the word families of the verbs to cast a spell over, to untie a spell, to cast out a spell, to charm, to cast a spell) with neologisms (epilepsy, paranormal, congress, certified, authorized,), with many superlatives, graphically marked by a series of capital letters; the syntactic-stylistic – the agglomeration of the offered services and qualities, incoherent, with a sophisticated topic, with obvious speaking mistakes (grammatical disagreements, the lack of punctuation signs and of conjunctions) (*ibidem*, 57-69).

10. The *e-witch*, is the modern, contemporary, western, globalized, trendy, digitized witch; we meet her on-line, on portals and sites, on Facebook and Instagram; "Welcome on the official portal of the witches from Romania!", the visitor/the client who enters www.vrajitoare.eu; http://vrajitoareledinromania.ro/ is said; as rich as the first one in content as well as in information and advertisement is http://vrajitoareledinromania.ro/ too; we find here different sections: a list of the witches from Romania (who seem to be all of them gipsies), interviews with the most famous witches (some of them translated into English…), an international perspective (a kind of an exchange of experience with witches from other countries, for example with "a French hereditary magician"), thanks, messages, even a window of directed rituals, including "rituals for making money", "ritual for making a man impotent", "ritual for removing wrinkles", all of these revealed, with indulgence, by famous witches (Sunita, Amalia, Vanessa, Olga, Brățara, Lucica etc.) and even the most intense rituals of black magic.

The clients of the modern gypsy witches from the outskirts of the cities are the persons marked by abnormal situations which generate a feeling of insecurity related to the "difficulty of the everyday life, sprinkled with obstacles more or less familiar", feeling which "can increase suddenly reaching a level of intolerable, unbearable. This happens when all the elements – components of a normal situation – get out of man control, and of the persons he usually appeals for help. From this moment on, the situation becomes abnormal", meaning "an eruption of the misfortune, too important and too frequent, that cannot be controlled by the man and for which he cannot foresee the ending" (Camus, 2003: 63).

11. Finally, we find out about a magic "operator", the last generation, both a kind of a magician, and "an expert of the human relations", the one who – similar to the character depicted by Ioan Petru Culianu – deals with public relations, propaganda, sociological surveys, counterintelligence, espionage, advertisement, that is the operator who practices magic as a form

of "manipulation technology": it is the climate in which the last elections where won by Klaus Iohannis, in the analysis by Nicu Gavriluță (2015: 146 *and on*);

"Essentially, SDP[1] campaign to the 2014 elections was a failed political project to manipulate the activity of a collective subject (…). The effect of the magical manipulation was the opposite (…). Both political parties counted on the help of modern magic – as would Ioan Petru Culianu say today. It is about television, facebook, social networks, internet, SMS. All these fulfil the old dream of the respectable magic: to defeat space and time, to make possible the ubiquity of the human being, to communicate to large distances, to fly through air etc." (*ibidem*, 149).

A brief inventory of the magic actors, older or newer, makes us to notice a high degree of preservation of the principles of organisation of the professional activities of magic/witchcraft/ divination and of the professionals, half-professionals and quacks in the field, just with a natural modernisation and with slight mental slides, without essential changes in the logic of the relation of the human being to the illicit sacred, obvious in the desire to manipulate the destiny and to turn it in favour of the client or in the activation of the management mechanisms of the magic power from the specialized actors.

After all, after centuries of magic, the faith in magic is recognisable in the faith in the magic powers of the actor; the two entities are interrelated each other: witchcraft exists because we believe in it, we believe in it because we believe in the power, the gift and the qualities of the wizard, who configures in this way his capital of power and all this systems of representation and legitimation of faith in spells and witchcraft, in magicians and magic, in soothsayer and predictions, recognized by the modern man who appeals to the ritual, explains the ontological basis of the magic/witchcraft with all its constitutive elements.

The environment of the magic-ritual act and the services offer of the providers adjusted to the current times: written ad or the audio-visual advertisement "sell" stories about unhappiness and failures, about danger and unfulfilment which, after the witchcraft specialist's intervention, are transformed in success stories, with happy endings, used, by propagation, in order to expend the clientele network and to increase the performer's income; this is the only way to explain why the hatred of divorce can transform itself in the happiness of marriage, the bankruptcy is turned and prosperity is reached, the single girl will find her prince (even if she finds on

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[1] Social-Democrat Party.

www.sentimente.ro), the drunk husband becomes the loving husband, and the envious enemy becomes the most faithful friend; "guaranteed result", as the ads say…

The clients who appeal to the force of the witch/wizard are almost the same as ever: "certain persons who feel powerless – for example in from of a series of major problems or of the irruption of the sudden uncommon brutal and serious something – they will look for those believed to have the mission to intervene where any kind of action done by others failed" because the witchcraft "ordinates and clarifies a situation which a series of successive failings of interpretation and action normally met in our society have been made it all the more intolerable" (Camus, 2003: 217).[**]

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[**] The text, with few amendments, is also part of the volume entitled *From spell to imposture. An anthropology of contemporaneous supernatural*, emerging soon at Editura Institutul European (European Institute Publishing Company), Iaşi, at the moment of submission of the text to the *Yearbook of Prahova County Society for General Antrhopology.*

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