

THE REMEDY AND MAGIC. AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH OF THE REMEDY ON THE ROMANIAN TERRITORY

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Abstract

This article approaches the idea of remedy within magical practices in Romania. On the Romanian territory, the remedy is considered the basic principle of magic. The traditional culture and also the performers of the magical act speak about how the remedy is the one that determines the efficiency of the magical act. Based on an ethnographic research conducted in Gorj County, we studied the concept of remedy. In the article, the information from the ethnographic research merges with the ones in the literature, the aim being to highlight the importance of remedy within the magic system. Thus, we defined the remedy concept according to our own reflections, we presented the rules of remedy transmission, while making the difference and distinction between remedy and cure and presenting the main reasons that lead to the performers' refusal to pass the remedy on. Behind the concept of remedy a whole philosophy is concealed in which sacred behaviour combines with the archetypes and myths that underlie the origin of the world. To sum up, the article demonstrates that the remedy shows a belief attitude in magical practices and the effect it generates.

Key words: remedy, magical practices, cure, sacred, mana

Introduction

Over time, magic has been studied in various ways: either by simply presenting the magical practices, or by describing the performers and the beneficiaries, or by simply highlighting the way the system functions, or by presenting more or less the elements used when practicing magic. From ethnographs (Dominique Camus, Candrea), to anthropologists (Malinowski, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Mauss and Hubert), sociologists, to doctors have tried to study magical practices in a manner closer to their field of study. The most common question found in the papers of classic anthropologists is about the mechanism/principle that generates the efficiency of magical practices and the generated effect on the social actor that as a victim calls upon magical practices.

Specialty literature talks about perspectives and various opinions about the functioning mechanism of the magical practices. On magic origin, Pliniu states that he was born through medicine (Pliniu apud. Mawell, 1995:115). Various studies (Malinowski (1993)), Claude Lévi-Strauss (1978), Hubert and Mauss (1996)) show that in primitive societies the magician was first and foremost a quack (an impostor), his main role being that of healing diseases that came from different supernatural forces (Maxwell, op.cit:115). In traditional cultures, magic has an important role, being a part of how the primitive man thinks in whose vision everything in nature is alive (animistic conception) and actions on him. Frazer (1980) considers magic some sort of “pseudoscience”, that resembles religion and science, religion being considered the factor that

breaks apart science from magic. On the other hand, Maxwell (1995) affirms that the principle which has pushed away religion from magic was the idea about the divine power. Mauss and Hubert (1996) trying to clarify the differences between religion and magic, on one hand, and between magic and science, on the other hand, considering that magic tends towards concrete where religion tends towards abstract. When talking about science, authors consider that its actions the same way medicine, alchemy, chemistry, mechanics and other technical domains do (medicine, pharmacy) would have not made it without magic (p.178). An attempt to clarify the magical domain and their characteristic traits has been made possible by Mauss and Hubert in their well-known study “Teoria generala a magiei” (“General theory of magic”). Authors talk about two characteristics of magic: the sense of confidence that it generates “as far as we are concerned, magic represents only things which are truly considered like this by the whole society, not only by a part of it” and the traditional character “magical rite and magic altogether are all traditional” (Mauss, Hubert, 1996:25). In the authors’ vision, the acts that don’t repeat themselves and that whose efficiency is not valid for everybody, cannot be magic. They say magic contains “any rite that takes part of an organized cult, any rite, private, secret, mysterious tending towards the prohibited rite” (idem: 6). Opposing with Mauss and Hubert, Maxwell considers magic “a social order phenomenon”, with a general character that “underlies a common ideas basis, spread around humanity” (Maxwell, 1995:11). The most important delimitation that Maxwell has done is referring to the active character of magic: “the magical rite is the expression of a strong will, affirmed in every detail of the rite tending towards subjugating supernatural beings or dominating natural forces that usually leaves untouched by humanity” (idem:13). Mihai Coman describing the magical system affirms that the usual definition highlight the fact that the magical system starts from the image of a controlled universe by a sun of powers, that are not to everyone’s reach, sacred powers that have a mystical statute. (Coman, 2008:69). The opposition between sacred and profane has been accentuated by Mircea Eliade who considers that the man takes into account the sacred because it manifests in “a completely different form than the profane” (Eliade, 1992:13). Sacred manifests as “an another level force than usual forces” (idem:12), and “everything that is unusual, singular, new, perfect or monstrous becomes a recipient for the magico-religious forces and according to surroundings an object of veneration or fear” (idem:32). The other reality, the one of profanity’s reality, signalled by “unusual impulses, hierophanies, manifestations of the sacred all show up as an intrusion in the common and well-known world” (p.32).

The article explores the role that the remedy has for the magical system, presenting a definition of the concept; the main rules that need to be followed when passing on the remedy, the differences between remedy and other identified words in the Romanian culture, all of these being correlated with the mechanism of functioning of magical practices. The importance of the article is mainly shown through the fact that its pages addresses an important element for the magical system, element that is usually brought up in anthropological, ethno graphical and philosophical writings, who have studied the subject, but their writings stopped at being just a simple reminder of the word, without even trying an analysis of its significations and meanings. On another page, the article is of great importance, by simply trying to explain the efficiency of magical practices, on the Romanian territory, most of the writings analysing the role that magic in the contemporary society, its functions, and also the main types of magical practices, through which they contribute to covering this lack of ideas and offering an ethno graphic description of

the concept of remedy in the magical system. Following the track of these questions that led the research process: *How is remedy defined? What is remedy's signification in the magical system? What is the remedy's job in the magical system? How does the remedy help the efficiency of magical practices? How does one explain the complexity of this phenomenon*, the article explores the magical system, rules and regulations that they follow, highlighting at the same time the myths and archetypes they rely their existence on.

Methodology

The article underlie an ethno graphic research, placed in Gorj county, in the villages on the Jaleș Valley (Arcani, Câmpofeni), Vâlcea village from Cîlnic commune and Botorogi village right on the outskirts of Târgu Jiu town. The methods used have been participative observation, direct observation, unstructured conversation with the performers of the magical act and the semi-structured interview. The research was done in the performers' houses, in the environment they perform their magical practices, and also in the places where we expect them to happen. Obtained ethno graphic data have been systematically recorded in the field notes. To this research 8 people that practice magic (witches) have participated, with an age range between 48 and 84 years old. Gorj County belongs to the south-east region of Romania, well-known to believe in superstitions regarding supernatural forces, magical practices and augural and apotropaic practices. In Gorj County we've identified witches that do magical practices authentically, underlying on traditional ways, a space where media hasn't been seen yet. On the Romanian territory, but not only we can see a tendency of modernizing magical practices, in the urban environment, as environments on the outskirts of town, it being done on the internet, on social media (facebook, whatsapp) or through a call. Also ads on social media represent another element that describes magical practices now. There are few places left where the idea of modernizing hasn't shown up yet, such as rural areas, but even there they are almost extinct. This is yet another reason to place the research in Gorj County.

Communication and the act of talking about magic in an extremely special one. It doesn't look like a normal, classical situation where two people talk and exchange information. Communicating about magical practices requires creating a special setting and it's done in a certain space and time, the beginning and ending of the conversation being an uncertain one. You don't talk about magic and don't perform rituals only if it's necessary, to be more exact only if a person has real problem and wishes a ritual to be performed. Besides the situations when the rituals are performed by certain clients, the performer talks about the activity they perform only if they feel, have the status and the detachment needed for the conversation. Dominique Camus affirms that to study witchcraft/ magical practices you need finesse and objectivity, but also mutual trust between the performer and the beneficiary. On the communication relationship between the wizard and researcher, Jeanne Favret stated that the communication situation with the one that "undoes" charms is for him (the opportunity) to try and maximize his magical power in the detriment of my own power (the ethnologist); and (the one that "undoes" charms) he would never imagine my intention is another. (Jeanne Favret Saada- *Le Malheur biologique et sa repetiton* – *Annales ESC*, year 26, no 3-4, may- august 1971 in Camus, 2003). The communication situation between the performer and the beneficiary is a very difficult one, for at least two reasons. On one hand, the secret character of magical practices and the refusal of the performers to provide information on the basis that they lose their remedy, and the practices

won't work anymore. On the other hand, because the researcher is constantly seen as an opponent, as Dominique Camus states (cit.source) „the ethnologist becomes a future opponent for the wizard (p.12). To study magical practices and keep an interest in the principle and the way of functioning means somehow becoming an apprentice on witchcraft mysteries.

Passing on the remedy. Initiation in the mysteries of magic

Magical practices cannot be performed without receiving the remedy that somehow represent being initiated in the secrets of magic. Following the ritual of initiation, those who receive the remedy, accede to a secret society and sacred behavior that imposes certain rules and behaviors, behavior that in most cases leads to creating a double life. It represents the threshold of the passage to the sacred world, once it exceeds the profane condition of the person and accedes to a sacred statute, and the person begins a mystical life, different from the one before the receiving the remedy: on one hand the social life, which he has it in the public space, in the professions he carries out. On the other hand, the sacred / mystical life to which they accede through the practices they do and the initiation into certain secrets.

In the magical system, the remedy imposes to be followed some ruled, which at the same time gives out a sacred behaviour to magical practices. Remedy is passed on through a ritual of initiation, ritual that allows initiation in the mysteries of magic and the going into a secret world *I got the remedy from my grandmother. My grandma had it from her grandma. Only when this person dies. When she gives you the remedy she tells the disenchantment of the snake. The person that knows this disenchantment can take the snake and it won't hurt them. When the person that has the remedy dies, they have to pass it on. My grandma called me over, told me some words and blew on me 3 times (B.E., 82 years ago).*

Passing the message on and the secret from the initiation ritual takes place in a mythic time, in an illo tempore. The ritual of initiation takes place in secret, when the messenger of the remedy is on its deathbed. The ritual of initiation takes place when the person to become a wizard proves that he deserves to receive the mysteries of magic. In other words, in the ritual of initiation a sacrifice is done in the sense that the person that has the remedy, or so to say the mysteries of magic, tells in secret, giving life up in exchange for the remedy. The death of a person who conveys the remedy thus a matter of choice, offering the remedy only when he decides that the apprentice is ready to go through the initiation ritual *if I tell you the remedy now, I have to die, and I don't want to die because I haven't done everything I wanted in life (B.E., 82 years ago).* The initiation ritual takes place when the predecessor proves that he received the remedy and learns all the magical practices that his mentor has practices throughout his life. The person who offers the remedy is just the transmitter of a divine message, of a known secret to those who are part of the magical system.

The initiation ritual highlights two elements: 1. the person who has the remedy, who is at the same time the messenger of the remedy; 2. the person who receives the remedy or the future wizard. Passing on the remedy takes place around the age of 30. Remedy pre-exists the initiation ritual, the person who gets past the initiation ritual is born with this remedy, and throughout life goes through a process of learning magical practices. The apprenticeship period begins around the age of 12, when adolescence blooms, the sign indicating the onset of the apprenticeship period being the menstrual cycle. One of our informers goes through the same learning process of magical practices. V. practices magic on a minimum level, but her practices

have no effect. V.'s practices will be efficient only when she will receive the remedy from her aunt, V. As an apprentice and scholar of magical practices she is the daughter of witch Sunita from Buftea.

The remedy is a family inheritance and it is passed on only on the mother side within families of wizards, females, from grandmothers to grand-granddaughters. The person who is born with the remedy has certain predispositions throughout life. Their nature can vary. On one hand, they are of physical nature and consist either in the existence of physical signs that people have on their bodies, materialized in certain spots, either consisting of different impediments in walking or talking, but also the inclination towards performing magical practices. On the other hand, the nature of these predispositions may be a spiritual one that materializes in the appearance of divine signs or revelations in the life of those who get a hold of the remedy at a fairly young age. When I was little I was walking with my grandmother with brooms, a woman woke me up from my sleep and touched my cheek. I dreamt of a woman telling me I have to heal people (V.B., 84 years old). Under the conditions set out above, it can be seen the initiation ritual involves passing on an inheritance, a tradition, a secret that is not and cannot be defined by any of the informers.

The proof of the magical powers that one person has consists in the disenchantments of the snake. The disenchantment of the snake is a secret ritual that, after performing the incantation, calms down a snake, the immobilization and impossibility to move. In many situations, it is performed under very secret circumstances, at the request of the mentor the ritual has been learned, as proof of the possession of magical powers, *the disenchantment of the snake is when you perform a disenchantment for a snake and it cannot move anymore. I know it from my grandmother. My grandmother could freeze water in her hands, that's how powerful she was* (B.E., 84 years old). Mythology could provide a response in this case. In the Scripture, but also in most legends, the serpent represents the devil's animal, the enticing animal that led to the banishment of Adam and Eve from heaven and their fall into sin. Thus the proof of magical powers is accomplished by confronting some elements/ people who are part of the evil category and when it is proved that the forces of evil can be handled. It is observed in the way the remedy is passed on the preservation of some of the old traditional beliefs derived from the archaic notions of shamanism.

Passing on the remedy on the deathbed, under great mystery, highlights some elements: the myth of sacrificing a person, the myth of femininity; the role of the word in passing on the remedy.

1. The myth of a person's death and resurrection through another person is the myth that fascinated the entire world. Frazer in his most famous paper, *Cartea de aur* (The Golden Book) describes the way in which the natives would catch the soul of the person who was about to die in a bag so that afterwards the one who claimed to have caught him was invested with power and was to lead. In many cultures the death of a person for a particular purpose is seen as a sacrifice in the fulfilment of a cause. In the case of passing on the remedy, the sacrifice takes place for the initiation and commissioning of a person. Frazer speaks of the sacrificing of the gods when they reached an older age and their replacement with another younger king. Sacrifice happened precisely for the transfer of power and the replacement of the older king with a younger one. At the same time, Eliade speaks of the sacrifices for transforming objects into sacred things (see what Eliade says). The mystery of spiritual regeneration, but also the initiation ritual, involves an archetypal

process that takes place on different levels and in multiple contexts. It takes place every time a way to go is to overcome one another, superior, or more precisely, every day when it comes to spiritual transmutation. Passing on the remedy occurs when the person who was once a teacher considers his activity in this world is done and when he considers that the person he has taught is sufficiently initiated in these practices.

2. The myth of femininity. The remedy is passed on only to females. If a female is not found within a family and there are only boys, the remedy is not passed on and the person holding the remedy dies with the secret without it being transmitted. Leaving aside the gender of magicians, the highest number of people that benefit from these practices are women. One can speak of a strictly feminized world, which has the effect because of the femininity principle. In the magical system the woman only appears as being the one who receives the remedy or being a loyal client of magical practices. It also appears in the performed disenchantments as being the main actor of the actions and the one that most often tries to save the person affected by different problems. A feminine figure appears in the disenchantments' text who help people overcome extreme situations. In the interpretation offered by Eliade, the woman is the one who creates the circumstances of a life plan, constitutes an untranslatable religious experience in terms of male experience. In most myths, but also in legends, the woman is recognized for her ability to continue the creation of human life. The psychology of the unconscious present in Jung's writings accents a series of archetypes of femininity, including the shadow archetype, the uterus archetype and also the archetype of the wild. In all myths and great legends, the woman is seen as Terra Mater, as a person who can create and can carry on the tradition, having a great quality, to give birth. The secret world people accede after receiving the remedy is a strictly feminized one. And the analysis of the secret world to which these performers accede is a paradox. History shows that most secret societies were made up by men. The question that requires finding an answer in this case is related to the existence of the secret world of women and its traits.
3. The word has an important role in passing on the remedy, especially in the magical system. From his paper (witch Europe), we find out that Pico della Mirandola studied the magical power of Hebrew words. Thus, starting from the Hebrew tradition of Kabbalah, Pico claims those Hebrew words that God Himself pronounced had a special power; for him Kabbalah representing only the effective foundation of magic. (quote). The word has a role in creating a specific framework, which is favourable to the actions performed, the induction into that *illo tempore* that Eliade speaks about and to the creation of the atmosphere of the beginning of the world. Most of the incantations begin by telling a story about how every person in a state of illness has become ill and how the evil has entered their body. Besides the incipient state of the way the patient encountered the illness, but also all the obstacles/ "evils" that he passed when getting this disease a series of actions are presented, usually Mother of God being the one who wants and manages to perform the healing process. To some extent the word induces the state in which the patient enters into in the moment of practice. On the other hand, the word plays a role of attracting some spirits, as well as trance.

The initiation ritual represents, in addition to providing some secrets about the magical system, those words that the informers talk about and inducing a belief in the performed

practices and their effect. This way the secret of practicing magic is being passed on and entering into a mental state that induces faith in these practices. In other words, what induces the effectiveness of these practices is belief in the magical system. Belief in this act moves the spirit and highlights its effect.

Definition of the remedy

Both in the magic system and in the social memory, the remedy is seen as the main element underlying magical practices and give them effectiveness. In none of the referenced systems of reference, there is a clear definition and description of the word “remedy”.

Performers of the magic act cannot give a clear definition of the word besides the rules of passing it on. The remedy has often been defined as a secret word that cannot be explained or revealed because of losing the efficiency of the magical practices *you don't talk about the remedy because you won't have any cure then. If I tell it to you I won't have any cure*. It is defined as a divine word, cannot be defined in rational ways and has no equivalent in the material world, because there is no tangible world that can represent it (definition of the profane world/ material world). Most often, performers of the magic act define remedy in terms of gift or ability to do things for example as you have a gift to do certain things where you work. You do something on your computer or you talk with people, so I have this remedy to help people Like you have a remedy to do some stuff, so I have it to perform these practices. We have to get our job done and pass it on (B.E., 84 years old). The number of papers on the remedy is too little, to a certain extent non-existent. The remedy is defined by DEX¹ as a kind of quality, appropriation, natural disposition that makes someone or something worthy of admiration, pleasant.

In French anthropologists' writings (Camus, Saada) the principle underlying the magic system is the power of the performers, which is the equivalent of the remedy on the Romanian territory. Dominique Camus talks about the whole system of magical powers that underlie magic on the French territory, as well as about the main ways of passing it on, them being inherited within the family and transmitted along generations.

The notion of power is invoked in many situations, both by performers and recipients. The word power cannot be defined by the performers. At best it is defined by the remedy or any other sort of energy, of sacred origin that people have initiated in the mysteries of magic. Power is always correlated with its intensity. When you are younger it has a higher intensity, power and energy are at a higher degree of intensity, but as you grow up the power and energy have a lower intensity, performers being less capable in solving problems and perform practices. The power in the magical act is inversely proportional to her age. This could be the argument that the performers say all the time, that as time passes, they are no longer powerful and they do not have the same energy as when they were younger, *I can't do it anymore like I did it back then, well when I was younger I would sit all night and disenchant. Can you imagine? I wouldn't sleep, wash, and eat anything. I can't do this now and I don't want to do this not even if somebody pays me billions* –quote. Of course, their power may also decrease due to their age, because the body can no longer bear the actions and practices that women do when they were younger for the main reason that the body is weakened. Similarly, of course, the situation can also be true that the powers disappear once

¹ <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/har>, accessible to 5.09.2018

people have reached the end of their lives and have to pass on the remedy. When it comes to primitive people one speaks of a supernatural power called mana. Codrington, affirms that mana is a force, an immaterial influence, in a supernatural way; but it reveals itself to us in the form of a physical force, through the powers and superiority of the man. Mana doesn't fix itself onto a particular object, but spreads over anything. The entire Melanesian religion consists of getting mana. Either for one's benefit or for the benefit of another. It is what makes it possible to produce effects beyond ordinary human powers, beyond ordinary natural processes (Codrington,2007:23). In his opinion, mana is all that transcends man's power and is beyond the power of thought.

The word remedy is not only found in the magical system, frequently being invoked by church's writings, where they talk about divine remedy. But witchcraft requires another kind of remedy and belief, different from faith in divinity and in God. Likewise, the witches remedy is different from the divine/godlike remedy presented in the Bible and within the church. The Bible speaks of a greater remedy that people have. The saying remedy after remedy represents the highest remedy that the saints and God have. In the same way we are told that divine remedy is descending upon things, coming from God. Unlike religion where there is an entity who people worship, in the magic system there is no such entity, witches and their disciples do not have an entity they worship. Their whole action consists in their belief in the deontological code of the magical system and in their belief in the performed practices. They do not have an entity to worship or idols. They believe in God, from which they believe their effectiveness in their magical practices comes from and also their own ability to practice, which is also the only faith witches have.

The remedy is a woman's attitude coming from within. It is not an outward attitude, it is an inner state by which faith is drawn to the effect of the practices they perform. The attitude and mental state in which women enter induces the belief in the effect of the magical practices. The effect of practices occurs only when the performer has the remedy. In the case where the performer hasn't got the remedy it will lead to a lack of effect of the practices and at the same time a punishment from God to women who want to have power without the remedy. The remedy allows you to control the power at the same time. The remedy brings faith both among the witches and among the clients, being a reciprocal mental scheme. The idea of faith, as well as people's trust in magical practices, is a theme that witches constantly talk about, as an important link to the effect of these practices, as well as how to achieve them. Belief in the magic system holds an important place. All performers believe in God and consider divine remedy as well as the ability to perform these practices My power comes from God. We have our powers from God. We have everything from Him. He is above us. Our faith in God gives us strength. (H. B., 79 years old). In the same way performers as beneficiaries to believe in God, while inducing the idea that without faith, magical practices do not work.

The remedy offers people the opportunity to do various actions, either in a positive or a negative way. At the moment of receiving the remedy and the initiation ritual, the performer of the magical practices is initiated in performing magic with the good and the evil. The way he performs magic remains at his discretion, being a personal choice if he practices magic with the good or if he practices magic in both directions. The informer Fetita (the little girl) not only tells several times that a true performer who has the power knows to do good and

bad, specifying that people that say they don't know how to do evil, don't have the remedy, calling upon scamming. Performing medical practices with the evil is in other ways the binder that makes the difference between witches and that validates their powers. In most cases the remedy is used to perform good actions. Every performer of magical practices recommend themselves as being the protagonist of good magical practices *True sorcerers are actually considered to perform medical practices with both Good and Evil My power comes from God. We have our powers from God. We have everything from Him. He is above us. Our faith in God gives us strength. (B. E., 82 years old) .*

Theoreticians like Strauss, Mauss and Hubert have seen trust as the main element that explain magical practices. Strauss speaks of a relationship of mutual trust that exists between the person who calls upon magic and the wizard, as between the wizard and the magical practices and the society a person belongs to. The anthropologist argues that the *efficiency of magic involves faith and magic* and thus speaks of the three types of trust he has identified that the magic system: the wizards believe in the effectiveness of his techniques; the belief of the patient he cares for or the victim he persecutes in the wizard's powers, and thirdly, the confidence and exigencies of collective opinion (Strauss, 1978:199). Strauss believes that the trust and exigencies of collective opinion *constantly form a kind of gravitational field, within which the relations between the sorcerer and those he enchants are defined and placed* (Strauss, 1978:199).

Dominique Camus talks about the primordial character that fate has in magical practices, belief in witchcraft's power is inseparable from the belief in witchcraft. They both act the same and express themselves on the same topic. Witchcraft only exists because there are witchcraft gifts and reciprocity. The recognition of the gift is the keystone of the edifice, the recognition of witchcraft. Starting from this it will be possible to establish systems of representation or legitimacy of the faith that will attend to explain its foundations.

The remedy vs the cure

In ordinary language, the remedy is seen as a sort of characteristic/capacity to accomplish certain things that any other person can usually accomplish, things and objects they are best at. In the same way remedy is defined by magicians who clearly know they are invested and have this remedy of performing these practices, cannot define and explain it concretely. The explanation they usually give to this type of remedy is one that belongs to ordinary language, it does not explain the notion of remedy concretely and the reason they have this remedy, they know they are the bearers of it and they have the divine and sacred duty to pass it on.

The great ethnographers and Romanian anthropologists have most often defined the remedy through the cure. Their idea of cure is the ability of magical practices to solve certain problems, in other words the cure is the effect to magical practices. Questions regarding the mechanism of functioning of this cure and the way it was developed remained unsolved at that time, substantial issues have not been solved and a clear definition for cure has not been given. What has happened since then? How has this cure been described and treated? What is the difference between cure and remedy and how can it be described? The remedy appears to be a more advanced development of this cure. The difference between remedy and cure lies in the fact that the cure is a consequence of certain practices, while the remedy is the one that

somehow induces the cure. It is said that in order to be effective certain practices should be stolen and not learned. Also the performers of the magical act don't always have the cure, a compatibility being necessary between the performer and the beneficiary. Compatibility between the two actors leads to a greater or lesser extent in solving problems as well as in the effectiveness of practices.

The refusal of performers to pass on the remedy

People who have the remedy that have been the subject of our research refuse to pass on the remedy. There are multiple arguments underpinning this decision, some being followed by rational explanations, others being less rational. A first argument underlying people's decision to pass on the remedy is related to the inexistence of people endowed with the capacity to practice magic. In other words people within the family and who may be potential recipients of the remedy have not been born with the remedy of practicing magic, and therefore cannot go through the ritual of initiation. The absence of people who receive the remedy because they do not have the necessary qualities is justified, from the performers' point of view, by the transformations of the society, of the magical practices and by the loss of faith in these practices. Another reason that supports and argues the refusal of people to pass on the remedy is simply connected with the existence of people who prove the reception of the remedy. Under the conditions outlined above, the owners of the remedy die without passing it on and to the same extent a large part of the secrets of magic. According to the information presented by the performers, through the research, we went through a process of learning magical practices and rituals, assisting to various performance methods and techniques, but I cannot go through the ritual of initiation because I don't have the remedy and I don't have the specific characteristics to perform magic. In other words, if I had the remedy and would have gone through the initiation ritual I could have practiced magic. In order to go through the initiation ritual your will and the fact you learned and were part of some magical rituals will not be enough. Loss of faith in magical practices is another reason why magic performers cannot pass on the remedy. Close connected to loss of strength and energy that they have, and their refusal to perform some magical practices towards the end of life. Refusing to perform practices is closely linked to lack of powers *Even if you learn the disenchantments, they won't cure because you don't have the remedy. You have to be born with the remedy.* (B.E., 82 years old).

In my opinion people's refusal to perform any other magic towards the end of their life is related to cleansing people's souls from life's sins and as a performer going through a purification ritual. The purification ritual is done by refusing to perform any kind of magic years before they feel like they are about to die, going through a period of prayers, confession and fasting *I don't disenchant anymore, I'm not strong enough to do so anymore. I am too old, can't do anything anymore.* (H.B., 89 years old). Even this purification ritual prepares the person's transition to the other side, and the appearance of death.

Conclusion

On the Romanian territory, the remedy is the one that gives the efficiency and consciousness of the whole magical act. In other countries the remedy is usually called power

or witchcraft's gift. The remedy allows access to a sacred world, different from the profane world. The remedy induces an attitude amongst holders in the effect of magical practices, and it is actually interpreted by the mental state in which the magic act performers enter the moment they practice different acts. The rules of passing on the remedy show some of the biggest human myths: femininity myth, sacrifice myth. When passing it on the word holds a very important role. The remedy is a secret notion that cannot be defined by rational words. While passing on the remedy the archaic elements blend with the sacred ones, inducing at the same time a secret behaviour amongst performers, which generates certain norms and rules of behaviour. The remedy is a family heritage that is passed on to girls and at the same time is an inborn gift.

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