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THE WIZARDS OF THE VIOLET FLAME.
A MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR OF ROMANIAN POLITICS

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Abstract: This study presents the manifestations of irrational practices in recent Romanian politics. Providing a short history of the mystical and the occult in Romanian politics, this research uses as a case study the alleged use of the occult “violet flame” in the presidential campaign of 2009. By showing how public religiousness and the daily mystical practices are changing, the author is describing the transformations of the national political communication under the pressure of the news media, which are becoming more and more pervasive to the occult discourses and the magical thinking. The author describes these transformations as part of the general transformations of the political imaginary in Romania. The Romanian public psyche belongs more and more to the culture of infotainment, a culture based on cultivating superficiality, where mystical and simplistic thinking have replaced the traditional processes of public exchange of reasonable ideas. Thus a main trait of this video-pathology in which the Romanian media is engulfed, is the substitution of the rational discourses with the superficial understanding of the world and supernatural explanations about the universe. One of the conclusions is that the manifestations and functions of the irrational in the Romanian political sphere have become more innocuously connected with a deep mysticism already in place, and are profoundly changing the society as a whole.

Key Words: Political campaign, deliberative democracy, political communication, news media, irrationality in politics, occult practices, mysticism in politics, the violet flame, magic rituals, superstitions, wizardry

The irrational and the rational in politics

The links between mystical thinking and politics can be traced in the earliest forms of human society. Most of the politicians of the ancient world used astrologers and divinatory to forecast their role in history and asked oracles and fortunetellers before making important decisions for their communities¹. During the Middle Ages magic was considered to be an acceptable tool in political practices and the Renaissance provided an important outlet for the occult at all the European royal courts², where alchemists, Kabbalists and astrologers mingled with philosophers and decision makers. It was only later, when the British political rationalism, based on the writings of Hume, Locke and Bacon, claimed the right of every citizen to use their reason and freedom to make political choices, which the democratic revolutions of rationality and the liberal democracy took shape³. Reason “civilized” society and religion was excluded from the public sphere, limited to the private space, while the Church was gradually eliminated from the institutional decision making. *Laicity* (from the French *laïcité*, which was made into law in 1905) has become the foundation of a new political society, based on a necessary separation between the Church and the State.

While this meant that there were no more institutional connections between the spiritual and the social life, rational democracy was soon to undergo strong criticisms, many of which attacked the very core of liberalism, mostly as being excessively dependent on a certain mythology of the Reason. The first line of criticism was the Marxist analysis of capitalism, as being expression of the exploiting classes which are using irrationality to manipulate the masses, the only solution being a truly “scientific society”⁴, a communist ideal state.

The other powerful enemy of the liberal democracy proved to be the Nazi ideology. Cultivation irrationality as a motivation for political behavior, the development of Fascism and Nazism must be linked to the general evolution of the mystical political movements in modern Europe. Fascism and Nazism reached their strongest point as political movements when, using their strong links with the irrationality of the masses, they overthrew liberal democracy as being inefficient. To reach their purpose, the leaders of Nazi Germany were notoriously returning to the mysticism and mythology of pre-Christian times. Alfred Rosenberg, the most important propagandist of the Hitler regime, turned to Meister Eckhardt⁵ and other figures of the occult to create a new way of making politics, an ideology based on mysticism. From Eduard Saby⁶ to Peter Levenda⁷ there were many authors interested to map the links between Nazi leaders like Hitler, Hess or Himmler and the occult, showing how the mélange of Eastern mysticism and Nordic paganism, together with the extensive use of magic rituals in the public sphere, with the use of The Thule society,

Ariosofism, and other organizations to create a political culture founded in a spirituality opposed to rationality. One thing is clear, the fascist ideology used the irrational fears of its citizens as a mechanism of controlling the society.

Another line of criticism comes from the radical capitalist thinkers, as Bryan Caplan extensively discusses⁸ these contradictions, a “paradox of democracy”; there are other fundamental failures of the functioning of rational democracy, which are due to the “rational ignorance”, the public misconceptions of the voters. Showing how emotions and ignorance, overcome the reason and common sense, which are traditionally the principles of collective decision making, Caplan claims that superstition (the old enemy of the British rationalists) is part of the political mechanism of democracy⁹. Not only are the voters irrational in their social behavior, but the politicians are selected on an error based principle.

This error in decision making comes from a deep connection in the functioning of our brain, one which Michael Shermer described as the “believing brain”¹⁰. Our mind is set create meaning out of the reality of the world to by the explanation-belief dichotomy, which is turning our brain into a “belief engine”. The statistical facts indicate that more people believe in demons than in the theory of evolution, and, in order to explain this Shermer uses the concept of *paternity*. Our brain makes a constant effort to find patterns of meaning, which will help us to make sense out of the constant noise of the world.

Looking for explanations in the post-911 society makes the question of the functioning of liberal democracy more complex. Can a reasonable society work properly if irrationality becomes a part of its internal mechanisms, especially when the “democratic project” is confronted with an irrational enemy, one that influences the “socio-symbolic world order”¹¹ and changes the nature of our political unconscious?

Short history of the mystical and the occult in Romanian politics

In the short lived history of Romanian democratic culture, the political changes taking place during the 1930s represented a radical turning point, a moment when the irrational and religious mysticism reached a peak. Although the mystical trend was part of the European wide rejection of the politics of reason and liberal democracy, the Romanian fascism provided some local traits. One of the key ideological figures of the time, the future historian of religions Mircea Eliade, was among the most vocal enemies of democratic rationality, and a proponent of a mystical alternative. Eliade acknowledged himself that there was an public attraction for the mystical rhetoric, claiming that this allure of irrationalism was a good tool against the “primacy of rationalism”¹². More so, the interest for religious thinking, Gnosticism and other “spiritual values” provided a foundation for the “criticism of reason” and, for that

matter, of all “positivist ideas”. What Eliade calls “the necessity of mysticism”¹³ was soon to become, for the “young generation” he belonged to, a political tool. Eliade claimed that “mysticism is a reality”¹⁴, a way of life made possible by the only authentic form of spirituality, the Orthodox Christianity. Thus his “itinerary”, which led to the only “true Romanian identity”, one based on mystical experience, meant the fusion of occultism and religious thinking. This mystical experience was soon to be manifested politically in the apparition of the Legion of the Archangel Michael, also known as Legiunea, the Romanian fascist movement (this is why the Romanian fascists were called legionnaires - *legionari*). Using a mixture of Christian Orthodox principles and a mysticism of death and fire, the Legion violently took power in Romania, which was followed by and ended up in racial ritual killings and political terror¹⁵.

The Communist regime that followed was supposedly following the principles of “scientific dialectics”, where the occult had no place. Yet, under the leadership of Nicolae Ceaușescu, Romanian politics did not abandon the practices of the occult. The trend continued when the Romanian political management, under the supervision of General Ilie Ceaușescu one of the earliest manifestations being the so called “Zero Division” of the Romanian Secret Police (*Securitatea*)¹⁶. As some authors claim¹⁷, the Ceaușescu controlled Communist Secret Police was authorized to develop a specialized department where experimental parapsychological techniques were used and a “psychological war” between global secret services. One of the professionals who supposedly worked for this division, Vasile Rudan, self-proclaimed “specialist in extra sensorial perception”, was interviewed and offered some information about the unit. Rudan, a specialist in “bioenergetic corpuscular unidirectional emissions atypical in the structure of human bio-field” says that there were extra sensorial experiments on children, telepathic communication and extrasensory detection of “strategic targets”¹⁸.

Some witnesses, close to the Ceaușescu family, as is the case of Camil Roguski, even claims that Elena Ceaușescu was using witchcraft practices to keep her husband from cheating on her, while they were keeping Christian Orthodox icon in their home¹⁹. Whether religious or not, the Ceaușescu couple was killed on December 24th 1989 and many considered the execution a form of ritual killing. The death of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu was overviewed by another strange figure of the political occult, Gelu Voican-Voiculescu, a self declared practitioner of the arts of the paranormal. Voican-Voiculescu, who later occupied the positions of vice-prime minister, senator and ambassador, published a series of “studies” called “What is the esoteric?”²⁰. Yet the historical and theoretical preoccupations of Gelu Voican Voiculescu for the occult were also practical, reports indicate that the coffin of Ceaușescu was inscribed with an esoteric sign (the sign of Mars) by Voican Voiculescu and the body of the deceased dictator was sexually desecrated²¹.

This apprehension for the black magic continued in post-communist Romanian politics. Adrian Năstase, the social-democrat candidate at the presidential elections, prime minister at the time, claimed that he lost the elections in 2004 due to “an attack with negative energy”. The “attackers” of Năstase were part of a spiritual movement called MISA (The Movement of Spiritual Integration into the Absolute) who were organizing séances named “The disappearance from the political life of A.N.”. The yoga practitioners were using elements of tantric magic, determined to destroy the prime minister who started a juridic inquiry about their activities. These 24 hours meditations, using the photography of Năstase as mystical tool, were meant to drain the energy of the politician. The former prime minister believed that he lost the presidential elections and his position within the social-democrat party due to these black magic rituals²².

Even one of the counselors of Ion Iliescu, Corina Crețu, speaker of the Romanian Presidency and the Head of Public Communication Department of the Presidency, wrote on her blog that Năstase was the victim of hatred and black magic. Crețu, a member of the European Parliament wrote: “I believe that a man can be attacked by dark thoughts... can you imagine what a force have hundreds of people concentrating to hurt you? How much hatred, how much evilness, maybe even black magic²³.”

President Bănescu was also “attacked” by black magic, in order to be removed from power, some “white witches” publicly claimed to have protected him from the evil influences of other politician. Relevantly enough, in 2012, during the suspension of the President, a news story surfaced in the national media; “sources” from Traian Bănescu’s the campaign staff claimed that he was attacked energetically²⁴, the symptoms of the President being fatigue and headaches. This fear of malefic attacks and the constant interest for paranormal activities has become a constant in the public agenda.

The growing influence on the public sphere of Oriental practices and the long tradition of mystical practices and religious bigotry are also visible in the importance of astrology, occultism, and magical practices in everyday life. Looking for the manifestations and functions of the irrational in the political sphere it becomes obvious that there is a strong connection between a deep public mysticism (where even the leaders of the Left are publicly showing their religiousness – as is the case of Ion Iliescu, who famously affirmed his free thinking, and who is often seen in Church services) and a certain level of occult (with the frequencies of practices which include clairvoyants, parapsychologists and even wizardry).

Gradually various forms of mysticism and the occult have replaced the traditional relationship between politics and reason, while more and more manifestations of the magical thinking and the irrational behavior are pervading the public and political spheres. In a society where religious predispositions are widespread, the public debate accepts various

expressions of irrational thinking. As part of the general transformations of our political imaginary, the impact of mystical thinking must be seen as a part of a larger process where the Romanian public psyche enters the realm of infotainment, a culture based on superficial glamor, mindless spectacles and the marketing of charisma²⁵.

Mysticism and the Romanian public sphere

When asked, the majority of the Romanian citizens affirm to be religious, that is Christian (more than 94%) and only a small number claim to be atheist or non-religious. The latest official census indicated that out of 19.043.767 inhabitants, 16.367.267 declared to be Christian Orthodox, while only 23.918 were “without religion”, with another 21.196 self declared as atheists²⁶. In this general religiousness, the politicians were among the first to quickly put to use this spiritual predisposition of the Romanians. In the many of the public discourses the political leaders end their messages with the expression “so help us God”, and invoking the belief in God has become political tool in public communication. Starting with the famous case when, during the presidential debates of 1994, live on the public television, Emil Constantinescu asked the incumbent president, Ion Iliescu: “Mr. Iliescu, do you believe in God?” and ending with the case of George Becali, a political leader who compared his confinement to Jesus Christ, using faith is a common persuasion instrument. Without going deeper into this discussion, there is a strong connections between the religious opinions of the public and the use of religion in Romanian politics. This is explicit every time when a public religious event happen in Romania, such as the famous display of the relics of Saint Parascheva at Iasi cathedral, which draw millions of worshipers; this become a part of the public communication practices of the key political figures. The politicians are always present when such public displays of faith and rituals take place.

Yet the official data regarding religiousness and the daily practices must be nuanced. As indicated by some recent studies, as it was the case with a the nation wide research requested by the College of Psychologists (Colegiul Psihologilor) in Romania, elaborated by AB Research Group România, there are some indications of another trend in the spirituality of the Romanian public. A vast majority of Romanians, when asked if they used the “services” of witches, bioenergetics specialists and even witch doctors, confirmed that they rather used these magical-occult sources, than those of professional psychologists²⁷.

This predisposition for the magical-mystical can be traced in a long tradition of witchcraft in the Romanian culture. Nicu Gavriliuță in his study on religious symbolism²⁸ attributes this predisposition to the social maladies of the Romanian society, mainly caused by the changes in the spirituality of our contemporary world. Also, as Ioan Pop-Curseu

demonstrates in his well documented study on the roots of magic and witchcraft²⁹, there is an inveterate practice of accepting and requesting the involvement of “supernatural powers” in the national history of Romanians. These practices are more and more transparent in the media, where we can trace deep influences of topics like astrology and magic, modern shamanism and a predisposition for New Age spirituality, one that Gavriliuță³⁰ considered to be recuperated from the “old magic” and from many of the Eastern religiousness, and integrated in the European psyche. This was part of a process of “post-communist religious frenzy”³¹, soon to be integrated in the political propaganda in post 1989 Romanian public life. In order to understand the impact of such mutations, as Alina Mungiu-Pippidi underlined it elsewhere, there is an profound interdependency between media and politics in recent Romania society, where the two are constantly influencing each other and are re-shaping the public discourses³².

As I indicated in another study³³, the decrease of rationality in the public discourse is followed by a natural decrease of democracy. Modern democracies, which are based on the exchange of ideas between the members of society, facilitated by the media, are vulnerable to any media saturations and predisposed for irrationalism. As authors like Bogdan Ghiu³⁴ and Daniel Șandru³⁵ have indicated, the Romanian media sphere has reached a stage where objective information is scarce and there is a domination of superficiality, which created a type of *tele-reality*, where irrationality substituted the reasonable exchange of opinions which form the public discourse.

Nowadays the influence of irrationality in Romanian politics is more and more widespread. The news media are popularizing the role of witches and “paranormal specialists” in many occasions, underlining their role in the functioning of our society. As it became explicit in the case with the “news” referring to the fact that the incumbent President was supposedly in a “war with dark magic powers”³⁶. In 2007, one of the “white-magic witches”, the so-called “Mihaela from Mogoșoaia” declared in an interview that she was asked by people connected with National Liberal Party (PNL) and indirectly by its leader, Călin Popescu Tăriceanu, to place dark curses on the Traian Băsescu, the President of the Republic at the time. She was breaking off all the bad charms placed upon the President and assured him that he will destroy all his enemies. Of course, the same “good witch” claimed that many tv stars and key political figures are asking her help in solving their problems and that her powers are the only solution for these mystical attacks³⁷.

The media often uses these strange figures, as is the case of another “famous clairvoyant”, Ioana Sidonia, the only “true descendant of the authentic Queen of White Magick, Maria Cămpina” who was asked in 2011 to make several predictions about Traian Băsescu, Elena Udrea and other key political leaders. Of course, these “good witches” help all the political

leaders, both of the opposition parties and those in power, providing the necessary tools to overcome the “spells” casted on them “by the dark magic witchcraft”.

Sometimes, in a reverse movement, the same witches threaten the same politicians. This happened when the prime minister at the time, Emil Boc, announced a tax on fortunetelling. A nationwide spree of curses followed when the Government announced a 16% tax on these activities and several witches, among them a celebrity like Brăţara, threatened that her curses always worked and that, if the tax on fortunetelling will be enforced, bad things will happen to these politicians³⁸.

Sometimes these specialized “helpers” are used as political instruments for negative propaganda. Corneliu Vadim Tudor, one of the most aggressive political figures in Romania, claimed that the former Minister of Tourism, Elena Udrea, uses “a limp legged wizard in Buzău”, who is “not a gypsy”. More so, that Elena Udrea is accused of practicing church incantations and dark magic practices³⁹, like going to five monasteries and putting candles upside down. In another TV show, Hard Talk (“Vorbe grele” by Victor Ciutacu for Antena 2), Claudiu Saftoiu, one of the Heads of the Romanian Foreign Secret Service (Serviciului de Informatii Externe, SIE), suggested that “Udrea was planted next to Traian Băsescu by occult forces”.

As many specialists in anthropological studies, like Isak Niehaus⁴⁰ or Peter Geschiere⁴¹ have demonstrated while researching the practices of witchcraft in South African politics, this is a characteristic of primitive political cultures, and it is based on the manipulation of beliefs for political purposes. The extensive use of occult practices, as was the case with the ANC leaders and other African political figures, who were exploiting the witchcraft panic and the occult beliefs of the public, this has become a tool to capitalize public attention.

The “media mysticism”

In contemporary Romania more and more “witches” have their own web sites and make public apparitions on TV programs. Even one of the oldest figures of magic, like Maria Câmpina, who claims to be “the Queen of White magic” and who was, supposedly, the witch of the Ceauşescu family, has now her own Facebook account. Relevantly enough, there is a link between witches, parapsychology and popular media, since Maria Câmpina received her title of on live television, provided by Ion Țugui, a famous para-psychological expert, who broadcasted one of the first television programs dealing with the supernatural - “Lumea Misterelor” (The World of Mysteries) at Tele7abc.

Not only that witches like Vanessa, Izabela, Lorena or Brăţara are today advertising online; with sites like <http://www.elitavrajitoarelor.com> or <http://www.vrajitoare-online.com>, but news about their practices,

information and references about the practitioners of the “white arts” are entering mainstream media.

It is more and more obvious that the Romanian public sphere and communication channels are pervaded by mysticism. Popular TV shows like Oreste Teodorescu's Code (Codul lui Oreste), astrologers like Urania on B1Tv, programs like Ezoteric at Giga TV and even the creation of the first online television dedicated to the occult (Spirit TV) provide forms of mass mysticism. Today online witchcraft (<http://www.vrajitoarero.com/>), blogs of healers and shows about clairvoyants (Kanal D), even a specialized online television (Spirit TV <http://www.spirit-tv.ro/>) are part of the Romanian imaginary. Many mainstream televisions offer shows on the topic like the national television's (TVR) program Incursion into the unknown („Incursiune în necunoscut”), discussing UFOs and other strange phenomena, N24 TV with dr. Emil Străinu's show The Conspiracy of silence (Conspirația tăcerii), a program about conspiracies and the occult, and the more recently announced Beyond news stories (“Dincolo de povești” with Elena Lasconi) which are exposing the public to alien abductions, paranormal phenomena and occult practices.

The most relevant consequence of this trend is the mixture between politics and the paranormal. For instance some of the topics covered by Oreste's Code include numerological interpretations of political figures, exposing conspiracy theories about the occult involvement in Romanian society, psycho-energetic profiles of political leaders, occult practices in election campaigns, and so on (<http://codulluioreste.ro/politikon/>). Yet the political party which has gained a lot of attention due to its mediated political figure, Dan Diaconescu, was PP.DD, The Party of the People, which reached a peak of public attention with the use of a clairvoyant (Doru Pârvin). Unfortunately, the mysticism of Diaconescu's TV Party ended when he and his clairvoyant were accused by the mayor of Zărand for trying to extort him of 200.000 Euros.

Case study: The Violet Flame

The connection between the paranormal and the Romanian politics reached its international notoriety when the “violet flame” made it into the global news media feeds⁴². During the final presidential debate taking place on December 4th 2009, one of the two candidates lost with a very slim electoral margin, since about 70.000 voters decided the difference between the two⁴³. This final debate between Traian Băsescu, the incumbent president, and Mircea Geoană, the contender of the opposition alliance, which was followed by the ballot victory of Traian Băsescu, shares some similarity with the classical campaign between Nixon and Kennedy. One of the most relevant here comparisons being the image of the two candidates, as most of the studies about the Nixon- Kennedy indicate, the republican candidate seemed tired and old, while the Democrat challenger

appeared to be young and dynamic⁴⁴. Geoană looked tired and passive, while Bănescu appeared to be forceful and determined.

Yet this public debate, which was broadcasted as “The final confrontation”, which aired between 19:00 to 22:00 hours, brought up a completely new phenomenon for the Romanian political campaign. After the debate ended, there was an acknowledgement of the involvement of “paranormal experts” in Romanian political campaigning. The head of the PSD campaign, Viorel Hrebenciuc, publicly admitted that he witnessed “occult influences” during the final political debate. A key figure of the social-democrat party, Hrebenciuc declared for a private television that Traian Bănescu was helped in his electoral efforts by the use the secretive “violet flame”⁴⁵.

This involvement of the occult was soon confirmed by a former official of the Romanian military, brigade general Emil Străinu, who has a Ph. D in “non-conventional threats”, and who took the claims even further. The general, notorious for his TV programs on paranormal on N24 Plus television, asserted that, during the public debate between Traian Bănescu and Mircea Geoană, several teams meta-psychic specialists were arranged in a pentagram shape around the Palace of the Parliament. The general, who was a counselor of the Romanian Parliament and manager of the Special Center for Situations and UFO and Psychotronic Research (Centrul Special de Situații și Cercetări Ufologie și Psihotronice), suggested that some “invisible forces” were used to influence from afar the “mental clarity” of the candidates. On his own TV show on N24 Plus, Străinu explained how the art of paranormal is for a long time influencing the operations of Romanian politics and that this was a war of “electoral magi”⁴⁶, who use the “Star of Satan” in this respect. His allegations indicate that the political debates between the top candidates (on November 19, 2009 and December 4th 2009) were influenced by black magic and meditation groups (composed of 5 to 20 members) determined to change the health and mental clarity of the contenders.

Moving beyond these allegations, the debates, which were organized by a neutral organization, the Institute for Public Policies, allowed the moderator, a famous TV and radio journalist (Robert Turcescu) to have his own questions. Using his role as moderator Turcescu used one of the questions to ask the candidates to swear, with their hand on a Bible, that they are not influenced by special interest groups. Turcescu further used an actual Bible in this television program to have the incumbent president swear that he did not hit a child during another political campaign, while Mircea Geoană, his competitor, added a religious gesture after the oath⁴⁷.

In this mixture of bigotry and mysticism during the Presidential campaign, one of the best illustrations of the general atmosphere was the use of the “violet flame”. What is actually this “violet flame” (flacăra violetă) and why was it so important?

The term itself belongs to the esoteric lingo; its history began with Edgar Cayce and was later imported into the writings and lectures of Elisabeth Clare Prophet. Described as a trait of the “Ascended Master Saint Germain”, the flame is a representation of the power of the Holy Spirit, key to the powers of transmutation. Described as “universal solvent”⁴⁸, the violet flame entered the public discourse of the Romanian occult as a practical mantra⁴⁹ and was quickly transformed into an all encompassing term, which mixes Mind Control, NLP, Yoga, Qi Qong and Orthodox isihasm!

The “owner” of the flame is Teodor Vasile, proclaimed as psychologist specialized in national defense (among other titles). He registered “flacăra violetă” as trade mark and published a book where the violet flame was presented as a “holistic healing practice”⁵⁰. Relevantly enough, the language of the violet flame is used by many other “professionals”. This is the case with Elena Cociș, who, in a book co-written with Nicolae Oprică, included a description of the flame which links it to the energy of the Archangel Michael, a tool to fight negative or evil presences, attacks from PSI forces and other paranormal activities⁵¹. This connection between of the mystical re-occurrence of the Archangel Michael in the Romanian politics and the role played by the violet flame in the elections is more than relevant.

Apparently the violet flame became more than just an occult concept, it was broadly used even in making political decisions. According with the declaration of the same head of the PSD campaign, Viorel Hrebenciuc, when the staff realized that the incumbent president was being “helped” by the presence of the “violet flame”, since the President was often wearing violet sweaters and neck ties, and many of his staff-ul members were also wearing the same colors, Hrebenciuc decided to change the strategy of his party. He was quoted by the Romanian media: “Thursday Băsescu was in a maximum form because those who share an interest in the esoteric know what means the Day of the Violet Flame... I believe in these things... this is not a joke”⁵².

The culprit for the defeat of Mircea Geoană was... a parapsychologist. After the last debate transmitted live by Realitatea TV, the leaders of the opposition claimed that one of the staff members of the incumbent president, Aliodor Manolea, used his occult powers to negatively influence the counter-candidate. During the debate at Realitatea TV, Manolea moved closer to the President and was making “strange” movements. Even while sitting next to Mihaela Geoană, the wife of the counter candidate, the parapsychologist was allegedly using his occult powers. In a television interview later on, the wife of Mircea Geoană told Alessandra Stoicescu, anchor at Antena 3 TV, that her husband was “attacked energetically”

Manolea, who relevantly enough considers himself to be wizard⁵³, is a member of the Romanian Parapsychology Society, denied all involvement.

Still, he makes the distinction between para-psychologists and wizards (vrăjitori), while confirming that the Bănescu family requested his help during the 2007 campaign. Even if Manolea's books have suggestive titles: The subtle energetic of the human being ("Energetica subtilă a ființei umane"), Distal influence and distance healing ("Influența distală, teoria și practica vindecării de la distanță"), Extrasensory perceptions ("Percepții extrasenzoriale. Manual pentru dobândirea și dezvoltarea simțurilor subtile") and Handbook for decoding the energetic aura ("Aura energetică. Manual pentru detectarea și decodificarea aurei energetice a ființei umane", published by Miracol.ro editing house), he never accepted any involvement in the manipulation of the political debates, other than that of a public relations consultant. He claimed that his movements during the presidential debate were meant to draw the attention of Traian Bănescu to his non-verbal cues, which were too passive and negative. In a recent interview he even claimed that he is disappointed by the President and that he considers him as a "man who does not love his people, his family or has no respect for his own culture"⁵⁴.

This did not prevent later, in 2010, a group of three witches who attended outside the Congress of the Social-Democrat Party, to stage an event, using candles and healing plants, indicating their willingness to extort "the violet flame" out of the Party⁵⁵. These white witches suggested that only their benevolent power can stop the dark power of the violet flame, which was inside the event.

Even if there are no certain or factual information about the success of the witches, one thing is clear. The interest for the paranormal and the occult are deeply rooted in the Romanian psyche and there are no incantations designed to eliminate bigotry and superstition from the public discourse.

Notes

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