

**LEGITIM(IZING) RESTITUTIONS:  
REVUE ROUMAINE DE THÉORIE SOCIALE**

VIORELLA MANOLACHE\*

*A Few Introductory Notes:  
Scientific Arguments of a Productive Space*

Taking act (in a Bachelardian sense) of the *Romanian Review of Political Sciences and International Relations* review's roots in the engaging soil of its germinating matrix – the *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale / Romanian Journal of Social Theory* – the present intervention tries to determine the dynamics and decrypt the specificities of a publication which stays connected to the geo-intellectual *novelty*<sup>1</sup> benchmarks which marked the beginning of the 90's.

The (im)mediately evident observation states the triphased path of editing which is restored through fundamental evolutionary thresholds/moments; the *initial affirmative phase* was prioritizing oriented towards a schedule/endeavor interested in reducing differences between local formulations and already-established models/programs from within the Western academic/ scientific environment; *the consolidating phase* demanded investing the review with the status of *transmission system*, joining insider complementary interventions guided by an *authentics* endorsement, in the sense of an Escarpit-ian coagulation of the *team as an attitudinal nucleus*; *the validation period* was materialized through *a transposition* of the project into a program and its subsequent opening towards the outside, with the aim of propagating and valorizing its own complex idea system.

Along strictly temporal coordinates, one can note the privileges offered by reclaiming the review both on a *horizontal* (article by article) level, and on a *vertical level* (with all due intention of preserving the unity of an announced theme) starting with its first issue (no. 1/1999), through its moment of *threshold articulation*, and ending with an analysis of its profile which was undertaken at the end of 2001 and was structured along the lines of strategically chronological synchronizing with Romanian manifestations/ reactions/ arguments (with all their particular entries and exits) triggered by the *saeculum*'s challenges.

---

\* Scientific Researcher III, PhD, Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations, Romanian Academy, Bucharest; vio\_s13@yahoo.com; viorella.manolache@ispri.ro

<sup>1</sup> Here again, *new* in the sense of contextualizing attachments of transformations which happened/were unraveled in/through the theoretical and event sensitivity of the threshold-year 2000.

The notion of a *threshold* (while accepting actual reinvestments of the term) defines the ensuring perspective mode, the computable possibility (as both vision and viewpoint), and the best offering formula for solution finding. Not at all surprising, in the succession of new, directionally – oriented spaces, the architect is a *theoretizing zoon politikon*, who repositions the political in its original space and perceives the threshold as both a mediation and negotiation medium. Once the threshold has been passed, the review's accepted model will strengthen signification-significant interdependencies by exclusively positioning itself inside the structures of a counter/solutioning dynamics of certain facilities or challenges, by fine tuning of its theoretical filters through validating and/or denouncing autochthonous formulations.

The limiting, politically-sociologizing and cultural interventions inside 1999's Romanian everyday life denounced, in fact, the conglomerating Romanian political spectrum which, although quite heterogeneous, imperatively demanded certain clarifying interventions. These offered delimitation from any critically-satirical reflexes occurring against the confusion elicited by focusing competition upon persons and not upon projects, but also from an objective attitude towards a reduction in the level of competence inside state institutions – and a perpetuation of discrepancies generated by maintaining opposed-complementary feudal mentalities together with those of a *society-at-risk*.

Formulated and stated *from the first page* by Stelian Neagoe<sup>2</sup> – professor, researcher and director of the Social Theory Institute – in his introductory article, the review's objectives and particularizing properties can be viewed and divided in three compartments; the prioritizing dissemination papers/studies/articles belonging to the Institute's researchers, and, on a secondary level, the ones from external contributors; an exercise in applied multidisciplinary as an offering mode allowing the reader to find his way inside the Romanian historiography domain; an acknowledgment of its level of excellence, the review constituting a genuine instrument of evaluation for any scientific research and professional competence evaluation activity.

The review's advent is not at all aleatory, accidental or unpremeditated; on the contrary, it marks the Institute's first decade of scientific research (the Institute was established by the Romanian government through a January 1990 decree) – an interval which saw the direct, unhindered contact with patterns of authentic scientific research, achieving a final liberation from any dogmatic pressures or strictly-traced directory lines.

The new approach was in line with the Institute's *specific research objective* – social theory and politology – which implied an investigation of the shifting spaces within fundamental political mutations (inside Eastern and Central Europe, with special reference to Romanian space) after the fall of communism; and ensured optimal, equidistant conditions of objective research for the political sciences studying political occurrences/ acts/ events, far from any interferences

---

<sup>2</sup> Stelian Neagoe, "At the beginning of the Road", in *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale*, Editura Academiei Române, tome 1, no. 1, 1999.

or directions imposed (once upon a time, imperatively transmitted in a dictatorial manner) from “the center”.

The Institute’s unhindered activity, connected to the flux of scientific-intellectual research current in Western academia – with all the incumbent blocks of unfinished, truncated or occluded stages, was deployed with respect for its internal structural organization, which comprised nuclei for the following research domains: *Political Philosophy, Political Systems, Doctrines and History* – which subsumed, at the start of the 99’s, a number of 33 scientific researchers and 16 doctors addressing these areas, and taking advantage of real openings towards actual collaboration with similar European institutes, by the implementation of common research programs and projects encompassing both documentation and research work. Such a report can only confirm the fact that the soil of Romanian research was fertile, competitive and performance-oriented, able to establish contacts and work in collaboration with any Western researcher... and persuade them not fall prey to any inferiority complexes!

#### *The Affirmation Stage – Explanatory Accommodations*

Decreeing that all starter subsections we already cited were representative for the review’s profile – *Social Theory and Political Democracy; Studies and Researchers; Interpretations Essay; Present Ideas; Points of View; Notes of Reading; Annotated Bibliography and Reviews in Review* – the first issue of the *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale* articulat(ingly) offered an accommodation, clarification and definition for *the concepts of social theory/political theory, social democracy, democratic discourse, technology and society, and/or a reconciliation between transition theory and practice.*

From that time (1999) until the present day (2013-2014) the proposed themes offer their non-static propensity towards a conservation of their dynamic structure while capitalizing on the presence of accredited sources of information/documents and establishing new connections.

The first issue of the *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale* managed – far from any unfunded limiting pretension – to ensure the free association of ideas and concepts and a reevaluation of their multidisciplinary through a *compulsory habituation* with the consolidating significance of concepts, in an absolutely novatory mode.

In this sense, Ion Goian<sup>3</sup> considered that, within the canvas of reticence and theoretical convulsions, major difficulties occurring in the acceptance of *social theory* as a particular type of theory in search of its own legitimacy cannot be separated from the planned assault operated upon it by sociology, anthropology, political sciences or social psychology, in order to establish a context of creation for any theory regarding social phenomena; hence, a need to appeal to a critical

<sup>3</sup> Ion Goian, “The Current Concept of Social Theory”, in *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale*, Editura Academiei Române, tome 1, no. 1, 1999, p. 8-10.

theory of paradoxes – which states that social reality is a possible and applicable project, at least on a theoretical level.

The 1/1999 issue generously offered a series of concepts, ideas and theories to be discussed, rediscussed and clarified (today they would imply both a revision and a theoretical potentiation, through their acknowledgment as operational currents/ directions/ tendencies of themes/subjects in Western research practice); *transition as a reaction to the crisis and the effort needed to retrace social-human maps* (Ion Goian); *the effects of journalistic industry and their sliding between/inside its political/ poetical functions of language* (Henrieta Mitrea); *the technologization of the political process, the non-neutral ideological immanence of complexifying processes* (Gheorghe Lencan Stoica); *the empathic community and its communication competencies, the effect of dislocation in its instances of negotiation and reconciliation under the sign of a new Europe; or communication through the third culture* (Erich Gilder). Thematic registries also include interventions by researchers Aristide Cioabă (*Social Theory and Political Theory*), Nicolae Frigioiu (*Social Democracy – a Possible Evolution of the Political Democracy*), Mihai D. Vasile (*Finnish Philosophy*), Gabriela Tănăsescu (*Michael Oakeshott*) and Ion Tănăsescu (*Bretano School*).

This conceptual overflight was guided from within the “control tower” by the prestigious accolade of *authentics* – academicians such as Alexandru Surdu (*Certain Interpretations of Leibniz’s Philosophy*), Alexandru Boboc (*Civilization at J.J. Rousseau*) or Stelian Neagoe, professor and director of the Institute (*The Transition between Dictatorships*).

Such an endorsement was confirmed by the 2/1999 issue, which debates fundamental problems published in studies such as; “Intuitionist Elements in Aristotle’s Work” (Alexandru Surdu), “The presence of Gaston Bachelard in Classical Romanian Philosophy” (Gheorghe Vlăduțescu), “Philosophical Traditions and Trends in nowadays Romania” (Alexandru Boboc), “Culture, Freedom, Democracy” (Marin Aiftincă) – works placed under the sign of ideatic interventions already anticipated by Stelian Neagoe in his “The Romanian Academy and the National Unity”, which already noted the importance granted by Tudor Vianu to any decanting mission of extracting, from a historical construct/ philosophy, the “secret of its internal functioning”.

The second issue re-launched the special “Religion and Democracy” section, dedicated to the relationship between religion and democracy, and analyzing the state of religion in the year 2000 (Teoctist – “The Romanian Orthodox Church in 2000”), presenting the concept of social secularization as an Eastern variation upon a sociology of religion (Sandra Cristea Dungaciu, Ion Goian, Henrieta Mitrea, Mirela Hânceanu) and repositioning prestigious publications such as the *Journal of Philosophy*, *History Review*, *Totalitarian Archives* or the *Revue de Psychologie* inside a map of studied/signaled materials.

Any conclusions occurring after studying the first issues of the *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale* publication will strengthen the review’s predilection for thematic subjects and methods already used in European research, but also a

constant preoccupation with particularizing and decanting theoretical structures, thus leading towards a research trend independent from any complexes which might be maintained by deficiencies and unsynchronized ideas still persisting inside the Romanian research domain.

We also note that the review does not strain into unconditional complacencies inside the perimeter of automatizing reflexes for a new state of things, but uses competent filters, or already-established philosophical and historical nuclei.

The review does not represent a non-validated editorial experiment or a timid affirmative act (one should note the presence of Academia council board members, historians, prestigious intellectuals/philosophers inside its summary/pages) and the quality of *new publication* refers exclusively to its opening moment, and not to its assumed statute – which is already confirmed.

#### *The Consolidation Phase – Transmission System Functioning*

Preserving (in a consolidation sense) already-formed sections and adding the needed *Portrait of the Philosopher* and *Restitutios*, with introductions by Stelian Neagoe, the *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale* greeted the year 2000 with a sense of architectural restitutions towards an urgent mission of affirming and rehabilitating values, theories or ideas already present in the public conscience and noted by immediate deontology: *Rădulescu Motru, The Transcendental Conscience. A critique of the Kantian Philosophy; Time and Destiny: the Political Situation in Romania* or *I. Petrovici, The National in Philosophy*.

Scientifically sustained previsions cannot be separated from the accepted relationship (on both horizontal and axiological coordinates) between culture and civilization; stimulated by pre-existing conditions within the freedom-democracy-culture connection, it warns us that, inside such a context, *democracy and civilian societies can never become globalized*<sup>4</sup>.

Other oracular interpretations can be found in the 1 and 2/2000 issues, proving again that analytical domains were still plagued by continuities and hiatuses (Daniela Roventă Frumușani), by the stereotypes of myth and counter-myth (Daniela Ionescu), by the openings of a millennium which was (supposed to be) philosophical (Mihai D. Vasile); while pressures sustained from within myth analyses, or comments destined to unravel ideologies and mentalities (Cristiana Mitrănescu David), shyed away from any critical pressures of progressive ideology as seen from the perspective of technical sciences (Alain Gras) or any needed enlightenment of concepts such as morality, morals and ethics (Teodor Vadim).

The year 2000 offered a novatory debate of theoretizing aspects related to European space and its discourse, integration strategies and a tempering of American influences, comparative studies of the East and the South seen as suburbs from the Barcelona Process perspective and in the context of the EU's extension towards the East (Lucian Jora).

<sup>4</sup> Marin Aiftincă, *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale*, Editura Academiei Române, tome 2, no.1/2000, p. 48.

An analytical reinterpretation of philosophers such as Machiavelli, George Henrik von Wright, J.J. Rousseau, I. Kant, Georg Simmel, Jean Bodin was offered (in the sense of academic Gheorghe Vlăduțescu's interpretation of comparative philosophical studies) – including a re-evaluation of anthropological sequences (Pedro Blasco, “Science and Dialectics in a Phenomenological Anthropology”; Dan Seminescu, “Man and History – or the Sense of a Social Anthropology of Knowledge”, Alain Gras, “The Philosophical Anthropology of the Technical Sciences in France: A Critical Perspective on the Ideology of Progress”) – but also a (ponderate) over flight over postmodernist tendencies (Sandra Dungaciu and Eric Gilder) seen as launching points for some focalizing conceptual intent on identifying or rejecting the current trend (Georg Simmel) while still acknowledging any differences limiting postmodern tendencies and modern concepts, or a recourse to postmodern philosophers/platforms in order to explain concepts (such as inter-subjectivity and ideal Habermasian communication situations); a rich and challenging publishing activity assumed (once more) by academicians Alexandru Surdu, Alexandru Boboc and Gheorghe Vlăduțescu.

Beyond any achievements or failures of the reference year 2000 (a threshold-year, challenged by the occurrence of “the unavoidable recession”, marked by the echoes of the “mineriads”, economic blockage, government crises, the Kosovo war – or ecstatic about presidential OSCE promises, the start of negotiations for EU admission, the re-launching of effective collaboration with the IMF and the World Bank, or the signing of NATO partnership) the *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale* review had a resisting-flexible position within the perimeter of Romanian science, showing receptivity towards alterity while at the same time behaving responsibly towards the selection and theoretizing application of solutions and conceptual approaches.

One needs to mention the fact that establishing a contact with Western specific models was not limited to distant, laboratory-type knowledge and analysis, but implied the consolidation of open, inclusive relations and direct collaborations (see in this respect the report – Sandra Dungaciu and Dan Dungaciu, “A British Academic Experience – 5 months of scholarship as PhD candidates and researchers”, *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale*, tome 2, no. 2, 2000), which once again proved *the molding capacity* of the *threshold*, seen here in its instance of mediation and negotiation frame.

### *The Validation Phase – From Project to Program*

Tracing the route from project to program imbued the *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale* with the status of organelle and invested it with a nucleic task by tracing specialized attributes of a principal order in processing, administering, storing and synthesizing the coordination of scientific information. These can be found in the incisive, striking interventions gathered in the 1/2001 and 2/2001 issues and written by Giovanni Sartori (“Rules for a Possible Conviviality: the Cultural Crossroads”) and Georg Henrik von Wright (“Wittgenstein” and “The Myth of Progress. A Contribution to the Debate on the Modernity”, in tome III, no. 2/2001).

Totally justified, the 2001 issues validated the positioning of this review within its own research horizon, confirmed by the creation of new sections; *Great Contemporary Thinkers; The European Interferences; Society and Mass-Media; Great Thinkers of the World; The European Union; Political Theory.*

Taking into account the dry interval of theoretical political philosophy/political sciences research, the publication's issues correctly used the right proportion of particularizing works dedicated to great personalities (Mircea Eliade, Lucian Blaga, Carole Pateman, Seton Watson, Vladimir Soloviev, Winston Churchill etc.), accompanied by studies of contemporary challenges coming from within the politics/identity/ gender area, such as gender identity, feminism(s), power and oral culture, institutional art theories or European unification.

One cannot however avoid mentioning published landmarks of the 2000's (Mattei Dogan, *Sociologie politique*, Vasile Pușcaș, *The fall of Romania in the Balkans*, Constantin Aslam, *A palimpsest of Romanian identity*, Ion Calafeteanu, *Politics and exile*, Damian Hurezeanu, *Modern Romanian civilization. Premises*, Rădulescu-Motru, *Bio-bibliography or Romania and international relations in the XX<sup>th</sup> century. In Honorem – Professor Vasile Vesa at the age of 60*); or a direct connection to political occurrences /events (Ion Iliescu, *The President of Romania, Anniversary Speech given in the Auditorium of the Romanian Academy*, Wednesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2001).

The validation phase, from project to program, is depicted in papers submitted to the semestrial scientific session – *The Science of Politics. Contemporary Debates* (June 27-28, 2001) by researchers such as; Ion Goian (an inventory, placed under the sign of the versus, of antinomic pairs – sacred, good, politics – done in the style of Carl Schmitt), Henrieta Șerban (a clarification of the political power concept), Grigore Georgiu (the assault of democracy seen from the perspective of mass-media and showbiz-culture), Gabriela Tănăsescu (political sciences and interferences – Eric Weil, Julien Freund, Carl Friedrich, Pasquino – within the field of polemics between political science philosophers and theoreticians), Nicolae Frigioiu (political science and history's new challenges, taking into account the imperative of finishing projects which were left adrift, with an accent on legitimacy, organizations, power), Claudia Buruiană (man as a disputed figure of political history and political anthropology), Călin Câmpeanu (the political dimension of power concepts), Gheorghe Stoica (the evolution of political science in Italy), Stelian Neagoe (political-historical interferences).

During the session, the importance of the publication's program was repeatedly emphasized, while at the same time being subsumed to the Maiorescian imperative synthesized by Stelian Neagoe in the concept of *politics seen as present-day history*. The reverberations were easily detected in the review's policy, and included in two other crucially important sections of the 3/2001 issue; *International Relations* (with a major interest in EU problems) and *Policy and History* (a relational essay nonchalantly avoided by actual trends, hurriedly positioned towards the trend of *Historia's* death and hence towards the undisguised ambition of building an entirely new interface for political sciences).

---

*In Place of Conclusions – a Model to Follow*

The process of conceiving the *Romanian Review of Political Sciences and International Relations* inside the multi-prospect “workshops” of the *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale* explains the continuous manner of reviving “community interpretations” of political sciences and international relations which build a frame of identification for an academic-scientific environment conducive to debates, developments and hermeneutics of an inextricable relation between theory and its specialized results, recorded inside practical validating proofs of theoretical models.

By limiting our intervention to the first three years of the review’s existence we had the possibility of objectively evaluating its starting point, and certifying that, connected from the start – through its opening, themes, analyses and multilanguage frame – to the Western medium (a warning to those who see the presence of foreign contributors and the exclusive editing in a European language as main criteria for assessing the value of any publication – a recent-day imperative!) the *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale* defined its *hard architexture* by addressing in equal measure the academic-scientific community, the researcher interested in conceptual and practical realities of the saeculum, or the student/ master degree/doctoral candidate in search of guidance and perfection.

All these notes conclusively prove that the *Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale* (whose mission is continued by the *Romanian Review of Political Sciences and International Relations*) was not a meteoric editorial occurrence; on the contrary – through the intensity, competence and finality of its endeavor, it is integrated within our cultural-intellectual reality, as a *scientific act of being-in-the-world*.

(SPECIAL) BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale*, tome 1, no.1 and no. 2, Editura Academiei Române [Romanian Academy Publishing House], Bucharest, 1999;  
*Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale*, tome 2, no.1 and no. 2, Editura Academiei Române [Romanian Academy Publishing House], Bucharest, 2000;  
*Revue Roumaine de Théorie Sociale*, tome 3, no.1, no. 2 and no. 3, Editura Academiei Române [Romanian Academy Publishing House], Bucharest, 2001.