

Phenomenological Sociology as a Variant of Post-non-classical Theory in Social Cognition*

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Abstract—This article examines trends in the development of modern social science: a change in the types of rationality, suggesting a departure from the Enlightenment ideals, a change of point of view on the problem of the science foundations (the principle of sociocultural conditioning of knowledge replaces the idea of a universal standard of science), and principles of building scientific theories rethinking — abandoning the natural science models of obtaining knowledge as the only legitimate. It has been demonstrated that phenomenological sociology largely corresponds to the specifics of the emerging image of social and humanitarian knowledge. The influence of E. Husserl's phenomenological project on A. Schutz's and G. Garfinkel's social theory is considered. The article also presents models of classical, non-classical and post-non-classical theories of social cognition. Phenomenological theory is stated as a post-non-classical methodology that goes beyond the framework of the opposition "positivism - anti-positivism" in social science.

Keywords—methodology of social cognition; phenomenology; types of rationality; classical; non-classical; post-non-classical social theory

I. INTRODUCTION

The trends in the development of modern social studies are inscribed in the general epistemological turn that occurred in the second half of the XX century. Among its characteristic "signs" following can be noted:

- A change in the types of rationality, suggesting a departure from the Enlightenment ideals, manifested, in particular, in the idea of the linear nature of human history development and the rational control of social processes; appeal to the human-sized experience of understanding the world;
- Meta-theoretical transformations, understood as a view change on the problem of the science foundations: the universal standard idea of science replaces the principle of sociocultural conditionality of knowledge (including science);
- A change in cognitive principles, that is, principles

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for the construction of scientific theories: the rejection of the natural science model of obtaining knowledge as the only legitimate one; realization that the social is not only an "objective reality", but also a semantic reality interpreted by man [1].

These ideological and methodological transformations necessitate the search for new ways of scientific explication of social reality, making the study of non-classical methodologies and, in particular, a phenomenological perspective, extremely relevant research tasks.

Phenomenological sociology, distancing itself from the behavioral model of an individual's behavior description and the structural-functional version of interpreting the nature of the social, largely meets the specifics of the emerging image of social and humanitarian knowledge, because it rehabilitates human subjectivity in its ontological (and not just epistemological) dimension, puts on the agenda the problem of the fundamental rootedness of the discourse of science in the structures of the "vital world", actualizing the consideration of extra-scientific development methods of sociocultural reality. In this regard, it is the phenomenological tradition that seems to be a very promising line of philosophical problematization of social and humanitarian knowledge foundations. We emphasize the fact that if a number of other areas of modern non-classical social theory (P. Bourdieu's structuralist constructivism, the J. Habermas's theory of the communicative action, and others) are sufficiently fully covered in scientific literature, the phenomenological sociology has not been largely investigated and its heuristic potential is not uncovered.

The statement of the problem itself, which is in the title of the work, is also significant in terms of modern scientific discourse needs. The fact is that the number of works devoted to the problems of the general theory and methodology of social cognition, today is significantly inferior in the number of studies that analyze the highly specialized issues of various social and humanities disciplines, their specific scientific methods and techniques. Activities to develop questions of a fundamental nature — the social reality nature, the characteristics of its knowledge — are not very popular among Russian scientists. There are reasons for this. For a long time in our country, the functions of social sciences methodology were the prerogative of historical materialism [2] [3]. The development of theories

that did not fit into the materialist understanding of history bordered on the encroachment on the inviolability of the Marxist-Leninist worldview foundations. The radical liberalization of the social sciences that followed in the 1990s led to a different extreme: the historical materialism “exposure” turned into a total criticism of social philosophy as such. Many researchers, who recently insisted on the exclusive role of philosophy for social and humanities disciplines, began to profess the positivistic principle of “science is philosophy to itself”, denying the latter the right to consider questions of specific social sciences methodology. Philosophy once and for all compromised itself in the field of social cognition by its connection with Marxism. It is guilty of excessive ideologization of science. The emancipation of the social sciences is therefore possible only on the path of eradication from their subject and method of some kind of “philosophy”.

We strongly disagree with this reading. In our opinion, the rejection of the “only legitimate” scientific research methodology should not entail the abolition of the methodological function of philosophy as such.

On the contrary, it is today, when society enters a new, informational phase of its development, the need to create a fundamental theory that adequately describes its communicative nature is most obvious. A meaningful philosophical conceptualization of global transformations taking place in the world is required, and not just an analysis of the particular issues of various social science disciplines.

Thus, the relevance of the research topic is connected, on the one hand, with the adequacy of the phenomenological sociology of a new type paradigm in the social sciences, on the other hand, with an objective lack of work on the fundamental problems of social theory [4].

II. SPECIFICS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH IN SOCIAL COGNITION

For a long time, the status of extreme “subjectivism” was firmly maintained behind social phenomenology, therefore this strategy was considered unpromising. In our country, it was actually introduced in 1978, when the book “New Directions in Sociological Theory” was translated [5]. It featured articles by M. Phillipson, P. Filmer, D. Walsh, D. Silverman. The work was dubbed the “Encyclopedia of Phenomenological Sociology,” but they did not fail to define it as a “sociological subjectivism,” a fundamentally different and opposing to Marxist theory. And although the authors of the preface said that this tradition appeals to the late Husserl, with his criticism of European rationality as a total dilution of theory and practice, the idea that only the intellectual activity of the subject verifies being. As E. Husserl himself said, “the substitution of the only real, given in the perception of the everyday life world by the world of ideal entities” is carried out. A parallel with Marx’s critique of the contemplative ideal of knowledge is appropriate here: when he says that people in no way start with “standing in a theoretical attitude to the objects of the external world ... they start by eating and drinking ... acting actively”. These words, of course, are no reason to believe that these

traditions are conceptually close. But this is partly evidence that the desire to criticize is sometimes ahead of the desire to understand.

A typical example is the position of P. Bourdieu. The paradox of the situation, however, is that, despite Bourdieu’s skepticism, the “theory of practices” with which he identifies himself has nothing to do with the phenomenologists (the idea of the “bodily nature of consciousness”, the notion of “horizontality” of experience, “background expectations”). In this regard, I will dare to assert that that “phenomenology”, which Bourdieu criticized, would not have been recognized by Alfred Schutz himself. Of course, it is difficult to suspect that such a venerable sociologist neglected the reading of primary sources, however, one should not obviously rely on his point of view (simply because of the authority of the scientist). Nor should we forget, say, that Norbert Elias has operationalized “habitus” for Bourdieu. So today, many do not know or are silent about a remarkable fact — the correspondence of A. Schutz and T. Parsons, that Harold Garfinkel, another key figure in social phenomenology, was at one time a student of the latter and experienced its strong influence.

Thus, in the case of phenomenological sociology, everything is far from being so obvious, there is something to deal with. And to study the phenomenology in relation to social knowledge is necessary, because it has not been investigated properly.

In this case, our intention involves a wider plan. The task is to outline the range of modern methodology problems of social cognition. To this end, it is necessary to present a kind of “coordinate system” of social sciences — based on the level of knowledge, its nature, as well as the disciplines responsible for the development of relevant knowledge types.

It is necessary to indicate the place of meta-theoretical, theoretical and empirical social knowledge, which corresponds to the methodology as a study of the paradigmatic science foundations, the theory of the method and “technology”, and in the context of disciplinary applications — social philosophy, theoretical sociology and specific social sciences [6].

So, social philosophy, from our point of view, should be considered as a metatheory and from these positions it is necessary to isolate the main strategies for constructing a social theory. A further task is to analyze those methodological as well as substantive foundations that are laid and implemented in each of the three models of social cognition. The classical model can be represented by positivistic and cognitive strategies, non-classical — by the transition from naturalism to cultural centrism, and post-non-classical — by phenomenological sociology [7]. Key areas within the framework of the latter are: “constitutive phenomenology of natural attitudes” by A. Schutz, social constructivism by P. Berger and T. Lukman, ethnomethodological project by G. Garfinkel.

Thus, the appeal to the category of “post-non-classical” in relation to sociology is due to the desire to go beyond the

dichotomy of “positivism - anti-positivism”, to demonstrate that modern versions of social theory are different not only from Kont’s sociology, but also from “nominalism” of neo-Kantianism.

III. MODELS OF CLASSICAL, NON-CLASSICAL AND POST- NON-CLASSICAL SOCIAL THEORY

In the framework of "classical" sociology, universal structures reproduce themselves, the social agent only needs to assimilate this predestined order; “non-classics”, on the contrary, declares that “there is no society”, there are only individuals who are independent in their existence. In this regard, the first key thesis of our work is that modern social theory rejects this logic in terms of "or-or", developing resources to take into account both perspectives — both "society" and "subject" — their correlation. In this situation, the task is to demonstrate at the same time both the objectivity of the structures that determine the social agent and the historical genesis of these structures at the expense of the activity “intervention” of individuals. Such are to a large extent the concept of “fiction” by N. Elias, “structuralist constructivism” by P. Bourdieu, the concept of “duality of structure” by E. Giddens, and a number of others. Such is the phenomenological sociology. But it is still “in the shadow” perhaps because it is more philosophical. However, for us this is just the main interest.

We develop the theme from the standpoint of philosophy: for us, not only the transfer of the sociological constructions of A. Schutz and others is important, but the E. Husserl’s phenomenological project itself is no less important. We believe that it substantially transforms the face of classical metaphysics and therefore makes possible a different philosophy of the social (and not so much creates a specific sociology). Thus, for us, this “link” of philosophy and social theory proper is fundamental. In this regard, the task is to analyze consciousness in phenomenology, its most important characteristics: intentionality, temporality and intersubjectivity. In particular, it should be pointed out that from the perspective of the “I” as an absolute, phenomenology proceeds to the idea of the initial co-existence of being. Thus, the prospect of the “life world” is predestined to our isolated being: We do not add up from our, on the contrary, we derive the self from our common perspective. Co-being, — M. Heidegger will say later, — is a condition for the “loneliness” possibility.

Thus, we believe, phenomenology makes possible a different formulation of the problem of the “social”: understanding it not as a public space, institutions, etc., but as the actualization of the original co-existence of a person’s being. Not “being of community” but “community of being,” as the modern philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy would say [8]. Thus, we argue that social issues are not a particular discovery of Husserl’s theory, a certain “by-product”, but in a certain sense its core. This is the second key thesis of our work.

The third fundamental consideration is that social phenomenology breaks with the tradition of the extraordinary characteristic of classical humanities. We have

in mind, in particular, the G. Rickert’s idea that “the significance is higher, the more exceptional the phenomenon”. “The sciences of culture”, in the Baden view, are aimed at outstanding, social phenomenology, on the contrary, will appeal to the everyday routine, and from this point of view — nothing remarkable.

The fact is the “culture” of neo-Kantianism is the focus of higher meanings, universal values, opposing the empirical “benefits” and everyday interests of people [9]. “Culture” in the framework of phenomenology is the “life world” as the reality of everyday life. The world of everyday “care” of man is not the subject of disinterested contemplation. “Routine” here is devoid of negative semantic connotations: this is not something from which a person needs to break out in order to find himself (the pathos of the classical “cultural sciences”); This is a standardized slice of the empirical life of a person as a world of rules, stereotypes of thinking, patterns of action. These “primary evidence”, as E. Husserl speaks about them, science obscures with ideal entities, contrasts the episteme and doxa, “meaning” begins to correlate with “correctness” [10]. This is the “crisis”, in the Husserl’s understanding. Such is the “metaphysics” as a whole, according to M. Heidegger: a person has forgotten how to see, he can only prove.

And the paradox of the situation is that the reality of the “life world”, being the “nearest” reality to us, was “viewed” and “not recognized” precisely in this capacity. In this context Heidegger’s words should be understood: “ontic trivial ontological problem” [11]. The most important aspects of things for us are hidden in their simplicity and everyday life. They are “viewed” — for it is always before your eyes.

In this connection, phenomenological sociology can be characterized as a kind of “trivial” sociology. Thus, the social, according to A. Schutz, is a typically organized order of daily life: it is the typifications of everyday thinking that define the interpretation of the social world, form the general background expectations of individuals [12].

This strategy was subsequently developed by G. Garfinkel. He was interested in that implied, not pronounced knowledge, those implicit rules and norms that, in his thoughts, support social order. They are “visible but not noticed.” In order to detect them, it is necessary to switch off from this field “known to all”, to appear as a “reasonable idiot” [13]. So, he instructed his students to answer the question “how are you?” seriously: “what do you mean when you say “how are you”? Such a reaction caused, to put it mildly, certain wariness. That is, a person has certain expectations: asking this question, we expect to get a very specific intelligible answer (well, certainly not a response request to clarify the question again and again). Garfinkel conducted a great number of such experiments. The task was to show that communication becomes almost impossible if one of its participants intentionally turned off from this “self-evident” field. Although, it would seem, the student did not behave asocially (in the traditional sense; he said quite calmly — I would be happy to answer your question, but what exactly do you mean?), But the reaction to his “innocent” behavior was often not less turbulent than if he

created an emergency on the road. At the same time, Garfinkel tried to show the full significance of this “legitimate fabric of general expectations”.

From our point of view, consideration of the social at the level of analysis of its repressed invisible background is an extremely important motive for understanding the specifics of phenomenological sociology. The focus here is not the foreground (really flowing interaction), but their background as a moving horizon of meanings. Only within the framework of this horizon does an event acquire its meaning.

In this perspective, the fourth fundamental consideration of our work can be understood: the contribution of phenomenology to overcoming the extremes of mentalism and behaviorism in explaining human actions. The critique of mentalism here is a critique of identifying the “meaning” of action with a subjective motive. While the preceding Weberian tradition explained social action primarily on the basis of intent, A. Schutz tried to explain the formation of the design itself, showing that it necessarily refers to previous actions that are similar to the intended and included in the agreed context of experience at the time of the design. In this regard, along with the “motive-for” (“meaning” from the point of view of the current one), Schutz singles out “motive-because-that” (causal explanation); priority is given to the latter.

At the same time, Schutz’s mainstreaming of the “causal” component should not be interpreted in the spirit of behaviorism. Let’s give an example. Stumbling in a public place, we react accordingly, not because this is a “natural physical reaction”, but because we are demonstrating to those around us that we ourselves also share a social convention regarding the awkwardness of the situation. That is, the reaction prescribes not biology, but society.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we emphasize once again: the stated subject matter seems relevant in regard to the continuing problem in the scientific community of developing a methodological apparatus for studying and analyzing social reality, subject to its increasing complexity and multidimensionality. The principal at the moment also remains the task of further elaboration of the issue of changing key paradigm attitudes of social knowledge in connection with the transition from the classical to the non-classical and further to the post-non-classical era [14].

In this context, the practical significance of the work consists in clarification and elaboration of discussions on the acquisition of the sociological knowledge methodological basis. As directly applied implementation of the work can serve the possibility of using its provisions in the development and reading of courses on general issues of socio-philosophical methodology and phenomenological sociology. In addition, the formulated theoretical and methodological considerations have a heuristic potential: they can either directly become the basis for conducting analysis within the framework of phenomenological sociology itself, or be used to formulate certain hypotheses

when conducting research within other methodological approaches.

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