Valuable functionalism as a trend of modern social cognition

Mykhailo Boychenko

Taras Shevchenko national university of Kyiv, Department of Theoretical and Practical Philosophy, Doctor of Science in Philosophy, Professor Kyiv, Ukraine

ABSTRACT

The valuable functionalism appears as a strategy of achieving the working interaction between social sciences and humanities, and thus becomes paradigmatic value: in addition to developing its own epistemological perspective it offers a methodology and philosophy which enable new institutional perspective to develop a new type of single socio-humanitarian knowledge.

Valuable functionalism is cognitive position and strategy of action, which asserts the values with help of their functional interpretation and implementation in certain behavior.

Modern humanities needs to take into account the experience of the combination of value and functional aspects of a systematic approach in social cognition, which should be considered as a philosophical reflection of paradigmatic shift processes in modern social-humanitarian knowledge.

Keywords: valuable functionalism, values, social functions, framework conditions, communicative communities, categories.

*Correspondence to Author:

Mykhailo Boychenko

Taras Shevchenko national university of Kyiv, Department of Theoretical and Practical Philosophy, Doctor of Science in Philosophy, Professor Kyiv, Ukraine

Valuable functionalism is cognitive position and strategy of action, which asserts the values with help of their functional interpretation and implementation in certain behavior. Obviously, in such role valuable functionalism concerns humanities and social sciences, rather than natural or even technical sciences. Accordingly, a social philosophy should in most proper way substantiate valuable functionalism. However, in order to assess the theoretical premises of valuable functionalism and its importance for philosophical knowledge in general we should pay attention to the historical dynamics of philosophical thought, which can be seen in the paradigm shift in philosophy.

The main idea of valuable functionalism in the social philosophy we had quite deployed analyzed in a special monograph devoted to systematic approach in social cognition (Boychenko, 2011). The comprehension to this idea gives the problem of defining paradigms in social cognition, such as substantial, functional and axiological ones. They could be traced as being historically succeeding one another, but also it should be treated as a competitive approaches to the social reality. So we can understand the problems of social structure and relations "individual-society" as issues of substantial paradigm, problems of social systems and organizational relations – as issues of functional paradigm and problems of institutional changes as related to motivation of human social activity – as issues of axiological paradigm. If we talk about the dynamics of philosophical knowledge in a broader context and restrict ourselves to the development of modern European philosophy, we could observe the historical change of base pairs of categories in philosophical thinking, which we could also consider as pairs of values.

First, as inherited from the religious philosophy of the Middle Ages, we can see the domination of ontological issues in the European philosophy of new times: even epistemological debate between rationalists and empirics revolve around a pair of metaphysics categories as categories of ontology: *substance and accidence*. Indeed, only one of two – or mind, or experience – is primary, substantial, and the other turns derivative, dependent, so – accidental. According to empiric position an experience is substantial – this was most logically consistent demonstrated by David Hume, who makes deconstruction of all traditional substances, taking them from experience. For the rationalists a mind is substantial – after all it is the mind certifies substantiality of any experience. But the latter can only illustrate, not so much to confirm the idea of substantiality but carry to many confuses of it. However, substantiality of the experience is somewhat exotic from the standpoint of classical metaphysics, because it can not be reduced to substantiality of human body, as Étienne Bonnot de Condillac tried not sufficiently to do in his project of sensationalism (Condillac, 1984). In fact it is mostly the dispute over theological character: who is real substance – God or man. For rationalists eventually it is always God, and for empirics, for all warnings and precautions, all the same human being (from Francis Bacon to Hume human remains the creator of his own world). But substance should be considered also as first approach to the notion of higher value, as well as accidence seems to be a lower one. Here we meet the opposite mode of relation between values: good and evil, truth and false, beauty and ugliness etc. Every second is the radical lack of the first one.

German classical philosophy marks the final transition from ontology to epistemology and replacement of a pair of categories of "substance-accidence" to a couple of "essence-phenomenon", where phenomenon is some kind of hidden function (not simply derivation), manifestations of essence. Latter pair could be found much earlier, but just in German classical philosophy not the ontology defines the essence as substitute for substance, so the essence as an active subject defines ontology in functional way – as a epistemic capability of

subject of cognition. Emmanuel Kant's Critiques take the transcendental subject as a set of ultimate human cognitive abilities. Especially Johann Gottlieb Fichte's Science of Knowledge clearly and consistently demonstrates this and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Science of Logic deploys such epistemological constructivist ontology. Even criticism of classical German philosophy for a long time does not go beyond this couple of basic categories and tries, unlike Hegel, interprets it from the different position that pan-logicism could offer or even more – that the philosophy of consciousness could offer. However, in our opinion, to surpass the philosophy of Hegel on the following principles were too problematic. So this paradigm could give a functional understanding of values: values are interrelated due to their functional nature – some of them are goals and some of them – means. The prominent case was given by Hegel in his dialectic of master and servant. Later this frame was transformed in many applications: capitalist and worker (Marx), Uebermensch and Untermensch (Nietzsche), elite and social mass.

Inevitably philosophy that focused on the dominance of cognitive strategies suffers crushing blows from pragmatic oriented philosophy of fundamentally non-metaphysical art. The first of such attempts we can meet in the project of the philosophy of positivism, and the most influential representatives of this functionalist trends in philosophy develop different versions of general theories for the special science or knowledge areas. As a striking example can serve so-called "social theories" from Karl Marx to Talcott Parsons (Parsons, 2007). Their credo is straightforward functionalism, which takes a pragmatic justification. Obviously, not for every science, but in any case for each branch of knowledge functionalism received proper justification, in which the function is one of the essential paired categories (as subordinated to one of the several others). The relation of subordination is

characteristic to the linear axiology. Thus, in social theory begins to dominate a couple of categories "value-function", although this rule has so a large number of variations of its implementation, that its installation requires certain hermeneutic effort. For Karl Marx such dominant pair of categories is "material social production - social structures", for Emile Durkheim – "social solidarity - social institutions", for Georg Simmel – "social content - social form", for Max Weber – "material rationality - formal rationality", for George Herbert Mead "I – me", for Talcott Parsons "system – subsystem". In any case, it is clearly not the substance and accidence, not so much like essence and its manifestations, but the functional relationships between categories within each pair. However, as critics find these social theories, each of which defines the basic category based on value rather than functional reasons.

Thus, Marx understood material production ultimately as evolution of human self, and this determines the self-evolution through overcoming alienation – apparently value category. Durkheim's social solidarity has normative-values character, which does not require any specific explanation. Simmel's social content as something that encourages social interaction, includes not only values, but also a much wider range of motivational factors, they are all so far as to be understandable, have their value expression. Weber's material rationality is not just content, but it is rational values as opposed to the intellectual calculated formal rationality. Mead's "I" as an actor-subject appears creator or at least creatively transformative principle for changes of "me" as actor-object that provides value-motivational significance of social roles. Finally Parsons' system is absolute purpose and value to their subsystems, although in this case Parsons' appraisement of a system as an action (or rather - "action as a system") distant away values from the real actors. That made Parsons to special come back to this themes ("Social

structure and personality" (Parsons, 2007)), and it is indicating extremely importance, for his theoretical position, of personal understanding and inclusion of actor in functioning of social systems.

First Martin Heidegger reaches clear conscience of the illusory nature of all such attempts to explain values through functions in his fundamental study "Nietzsche" (Heidegger, 1997). On the contrary Heidegger discover nonlinear nature of the values – every value has it significance (Geltung) because of it symbolic, inexhaustible sense capacity – we should every time try to discover the truth of being all over again. So values appears to be some self-efficient reality and functions looks like not appropriate means to catch their infinite meaning.

So a couple of categories "value-function" could be barely analyzed on the basis of a conceptual scheme "purpose-means" that convincingly demonstrated in Niklas Luhmann's doctor paper (Luhmann, 1999). However, in the next his papers he outlines the transition to the next paradigm of socio-philosophical knowledge – systemic. The pair of categories of "purpose - means", which has clearly an anthropological nature, is replaced in "Social systems" by a new pair of categories of "complexity – simplicity" (Luhmann, 1984). We should closer explore its values basis, since there is no doubt in saturation of social systems theory by social functional problems, because this theory in social cognition occurs primarily on the basis of the methodology of structural functionalism.

Indeed, every social system, according to Luhmann, is the most orderly and rational in linear manner, also transparent to the human mind – in the sense of Weber's formal rationality and Max Horkheimer's instrumental reason. There is clearly dominant functional principle that first captured Luhmann too much, and later begun to bother him and he looks deeper basis for such functionalism – first in theory of autopoiesis, and then addressing to the theme of self-observing special thanks to the inclusion of communication participants' consciousness. The latter, in our opinion, creates the very basis for understanding the values foundations of society as the construction of social systems. However, as Luhmann could not even suggest the possibility of the presence of some common values for the whole society, he appeals to the values of the scientist who researches these systems – in fact his self-observing is the most consistent expression of society self-observing. However, Luhmann tries to save communicative basis of any observations as any action within social systems. But, in our opinion, this communicative basis looks here more as an open possibility, which still needs its theoretical explication. In our view, communicative communities research opens the explicative possibility for this. After all, the very scientist that observes society as a system of systems does that not as self-sufficient individual, but as a representative of the communicative community of scientists.

One should pay a particular attention to the ratio of value and functional characteristics in a pair of "values-functions" as a landmark for the modern social theories. For a long time these properties were investigated not only from the objective position, but also at a certain evaluation point of view, which is especially clearly manifested in attempts to carry out systematic philosophical analysis of society. In applying of the systemic approach is not always considered as valuable so functional aspects of this application: a long time certain "technocratic" tendencies were apparent in contradiction with the liberal-humanist tendencies. These first gave sufficient reasons for accusations in excessive functionalism with little consideration of values issues, and the second – for an utopian complaints, insufficient scientific character, Romanticism, nearly myth-making. Criticism of "technocracy" primarily was carried out by Frankfurt School for Social Researches (Max Horkheimer's critique of instrumental reason, Theodor Adorno's and

Juergen Habermas' critique of repressive rationality etc.), existentialist philosophy and was close to humanistic psychology, while criticism of pseudo-humanism was launched by Martin Heidegger and developed by the so-called conservative trend in social studies, post-positivists (Karl Popper), representatives of social systems theory (Niklas Luhmann) and the theory of elites. Somewhat arbitrarily and incorrectly humanistic trend began to appeal mainly to the interpretive methods of study and technocratic – mainly to explanatory: in fact, most superficial researchers on this basis tend to oppose same methodology of humanities and social sciences. At first glance, it seems paradoxical, but every trend both in positive and in a critical part of their research was largely one that reflects real social processes, and therefore had a valid claim to truth. Another thing is that each of these theoretical tendencies did focus on its own vision of the future without taking into account different perspective, and sought to enhance the differences, not common origins and common opportunities for development.

For the analysis of our problem this means partial, and therefore not philosophical, but rather a party, a political approach to the subject – as values so functional. As one so an another was developed as a result not only incomplete, but in fact inadequate, ie not disclosed the true nature of values or functions. Our position is that analyzing the development of society one should take values with their functional influences, and take in account that the most socially significant functions acquire such significance not only because of their indispensability and inevitability, but rather because of a certain understanding of the indispensability and inevitability from certain value positions.

The question is whether we are talking here about classical Stoic epistemology of relation between freedom and necessity, which Seneca vividly described by offering an analogy with a dog tied to a cart - freedom, they say, is only in order to run along a cart, and lack of freedom expects only those stubborn that try to ignore the cart path, ie fate. In such a case, the real social study would be natural cognition, and social sciences and humanities were engaged in a sort of meditation and psycho-pedagogical consultations, the essence of which would have differed little from the philosophy of Camus: if the world does not obey our whims, so it were absurd and deserves only on resistance – albeit resistance is doomed to failure (Camus, 2000). In our view, such a position as other variation of epistemological nihilism in socio-humanitarian knowledge does not have its logical justification. If humanity just followed around the natural need, then it would have evolved not far away from the rest of social beings in the nature. Another thing is that in its development the humanity occasionally suffers periods of slowing its evolution, caused by the decline of certain cultures and even civilizations. These periods can be catastrophic for these civilizations mentioned, but for humanity as a whole is only a short-lived state of decadence, of a partial disruption as a symptom of new social and organizational forms. Decadence has its aesthetic justification and even magic, but it does not indicate any prospects of social development. However, if we consider the natural laws only as external framework conditions of social development, which are not relevant to its essence (Boychenko, 2012), then following these laws loses semantic connection with the problem of freedom, as with any other social values. Feedback is possible - ie social values may grant conditional, additional meaning to laws of nature, without specifying their nature, but specifying the range of their perceptions in society. However, this addition to the natural laws does not add anything to their nature, and especially not change it.

True freedom that really motivates social development and is a powerful motivator of human behavior has its own social and personal determination that is possible to

understand on the ways in which one can explore social values, including the value of freedom (Boychenko, 2015). How the latter depends mutually from the other values – defined for each society, each community and each person, even in a special way, although there are certain internal determinations to society and to the individual. Such own social and personal determinations, in our opinion, are possible to track by identifying their specific social and functional manifestations – in the functioning of social systems, social institutions, social organizations. This is the essence of valuable functionalism.

Obviously, this approach is still not dominant in social cognition, although in social and philosophical knowledge one can meet it more and more often. In the social sciences is still dominated technocratism with its emphasis on the study of functional relationships as self-sufficient without explained appeal to social values, but vice versa - with explaination of its value as an epiphenomenon. In humanities values do not take proper consideration: here one could meet almost miraculously combined technical functionalism when considering some empirical problems with the overall romanticism as value background for such consideration – in determining of substantive and methodological principles of research, devoid of any functional specificity. Thus, the valuable functionalism appears as a strategy of achieving the working interaction between social sciences and humanities, and thus becomes paradigmatic value: in addition to developing its own epistemological perspective it offers a methodology and philosophy which enable new institutional perspective to develop a new type of single socio-humanitarian knowledge.

This perspective means among other things also and reconciliation of the theory of social action and the theory of social communication (for example, creating a new version of the theory of social systems (Skyttner, 2008)) – though their mutual limitations. Social action takes values from the perspective of social communication and social communication becomes functionally justified if the definition of framework conditions for realization of social action moves to determine the functional feasibility of specific types of behavior. In our studies, we tried to identify the perspective of the mutual understanding of the institutional balance of social action and social communication. This perspective opens due to the coordination between functions and values in institutional behavior, namely coordination between the values of sustainable communicative communities and communication functions defined by the social systems. This option of the valuable functionalism obviously can and must be supplemented by others, including those that will better clarified the relationship between the problems of value identity and self-organization system of the individual, between institutional structure of societies and their symbolic systems, between social structure as a whole and a plurality of communicative communities that are always partly coincide with it, between the so-called social culture and cultural identity. One can continue the list of subjects that should be developed as a special for social philosophy and social sciences – certainly seems to us it is only need to take into account the experience of the combination of value and functional aspects of a systematic approach in social cognition, which was proposed by us as a philosophical reflection of paradigmatic shift processes in modern social-humanitarian knowledge.

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