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Andrey Pavlenko

Husserl, Wittgenstein, Apel:

Communicative *expectations* and communicative *reality.*

The article's first part *Communicative Expectations* analyses the main points of the "communicative program" (CP) developed by E.Husserl, L.Wittgenstein and K.-O.Apel, who set serious hopes on "communication" in epistemological justification.

The second part *Communicative Reality* offers an analytical model, aimed at examination of "validity" of notions and propositions as an inalienable presupposition of communication. With this aim a differentiation between the "factual epistemological validity-I" and the "analytical epistemological validity-II" is made. The first is justified deductively, while the second – inductively. CP is founded on the validity-I. It is shown that an attempt to justify validity in the frames of CP leads to a vicious circle.

I. Communicative *expectations*

Ludwig Wittgenstein's "*Philosophical Investigations*" and his concept of "language-games"[1] was a kind of natural response to the program of logical positivism striving to build a universal and logically strict scientific language. This logically "strict" field – the artificially constructed languages of various semantics – seemed to have lost its essential difference from the "nonrigorous" humanities and arts. Could have that really been so? Karl-Otto Apel believes it could, and Wittgenstein backed it up with sound conceptual grounds.

Wittgenstein's favourite illustration repeated throughout his "*Philosophical Investigations*" – the reasoning on "colours" – is strongly allusive of Edmond Husserl's argumentation in his "*Logische Untersuchungen*" [Husserl ,1922], as he aimed at justifying the "semantic unity of notion" and the "identity of propositions content". What propositions? Those about "colours" ("what is green, is not red") and

[1]See: Wittgenstein,1958, §7.

those about the Euclidean geometry ("the total of a triangle angles is equal to 180^0" etc). Of course, Husserl meant the *ideal* semantic unity and the *ideal* identity of content. The thing is that the truth, according to Husserl, has an ideal nature and reveals itself "as an idea grasping the essence of empirically random acts, or as the idea of absolute adequacy as such" [Husserl, 1922, S.123]. But this ideal nature itself needed justifying. What could have served for this? In Husserl's eyes, it might have been provided by the "intersubjective program" designed to bring to light the ideal nature of notions and assertions; he describes it in his work "*Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität"* [Husserl, 1973]. Yet, this ideal nature is seen only if we admit the existence of the transcendental subject (Ego), and in such a way that it could be proliferated: seen as a multitude of subjects – the "intersubject". "To reveal methodically the transcendental intersubjectivity and its turning into the transcendental community, - Husserl says, - is possible only proceeding from the concept of Ego and the system of its transcendental functions and actions" [Husserl,1973, S.189].

However, Husserl's intersubjective program itself had to face some serious difficulties. Thus, we can construct a model of "one single subject" who, as *«one – ένάς»* and as having his *«foundation – αρχή» in himself* can be differentiated as and be given the name of *Enarch*. We have already shown [Pavlenko, 2004] that, in this case, it is *not necessary* to turn to *a multitude of subjects* for justification of the ideal unity of notion or of the propositions about colours and Euclidean geometry.

Apel points out another difficulty. He proceeds from the fact that a program *based upon the "obviousness of consciousness", represented, in his opinion, by Descartes, Kant and even Husserl, has exhausted itself* and proved insufficient for "justifying the significance of 'cognition' – which is manifest, for example, in the *a priori* significance of the Euclidean geometry in a Kantian mood, or the so-called *Farbsätze* in the mood of Husserl. Why is this so? In Apel's opinion, such "phenomenological and cognitive-anthropological stating is based on the ordinary

visual obviousness of individual phenomena" [Apel,1972, S.2]. In other wording, each one, *compos mentis*, contemplates the world as *Euclidean* and as having *appropriate colours*. We can think of non-Euclidean metric, or of some principally different combinations of colours, but we cannot visualise such things!

This shortcoming of the aprioristic and phenomenological approaches should be overcome: "It is exactly because of this that the justification of the Euclidean geometry or the *Farbsätze* intersubjective significance is insufficient here" [Apel, 1972, S.2]. Such justification, Apel believes, demands that obvious visualization should go together with a kind of "language-game". This means that ordinary individual visualization should be "raised" above the individual to the transcendental level. How can this be achieved? Only in a special "communicative-semantic field" where "my personal obviousness" is combined with the "common significance for us". Thus, Apel corrects Kant and Husserl as his follower, replacing the "apperception synthesis" by the "*communicative interpretation synthesis*". This was the turning point from the "consciousness analysis" to the "communication analysis".

The thing is that, within the scope of reasoning, – however doubtful and sceptical the polemist himself might be – it is he who sets the "transcendental premises" and at the same time acknowledges them: both for epistemology and for a science *on the lines of a transcendental language-game* of an unlimited communicative society. Wittgenstein, too, speaks on the common (communicative) linguistic "behaviour" in his "*Philosophical Investigations*": «206. The common behavior of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language» [Wittgenstein, 1958].

Apel supposes that the path should be leading from Kant's "transcendental idealism" and Husserl's phenomenology – through the synthesis of later Wittgenstein's "language-games" and Charles Pierce's "indefinite community of investigators" – to his own "transcendental pragmatics". In such "transcendental communicative society", the truth is understood like this: "*any obviousness of*

consideration is stated due to the linguistic understanding of a proposition *a priori significant for us,* and may further retain its meaning in the conventional theory of truth (in Sinne Konsens-Theorie der Wahrheit) as an *a priori* bound knowledge" [Apel, 1972,S.3]. It is so because, in communication, the transcendental core of any individual *ego* coincides with the transcendental core of the *entire society of the communication participants,* both real and possible.

What does Apel need this synthesis for? He sees it as the only way to overcome, on the one hand, the centuries-old chasm between the "sciences about the spiritual matters" and "sciences about the nature", and on the other hand, to transcend the Cartesian and Kantian tradition of the "subject-object" dissection of the world when describing. He considers it possible in a special field that he calls "transcendental pragmatics". What does it actually mean? It means that in both spiritual and natural kinds of sciences we have to deal with the same absolutely unavoidable procedures – "interpreting" and "understanding" in the frames of a "transcendental communicative society". And he adds: after all claims of the "language of propositional calculus" for the role of the unique language of science have failed, that is, after there have emerged new constructive semantic systems – this "strict" field does no longer differ essentially from the "non-rigorous" spiritual sciences.

So, we can see that certain "communicative expectations" were invariably inherent in Husserl's philosophy, and in Wittgenstein's, and in Apel's. This provokes a question: is really the "communicative program of knowledge justification" so substantial?

To answer this question I am going to examine this program only in one its bearing: for example, how *validity of judgements* can be made good in its frames? It has been shown above that Husserl associates validity with the identity of a notion's semantic unity for different transcendental subjects. Wittgenstein doubts the very

status of "identity" as such, preferring to it the "comparison of equality"[2] : "254. The substitution of "identical" for "the same" (for instance) is another typical expedient in philosophy" [Wittgenstein,1958].

For Apel it is the "statements *a priori* significant for us", based, in the final analysis, upon the *conventional theory of truth.* In other words, for the CP representatives, the sign of a statement trustworthiness is its validity. Here, as I see it, communicative expectations encounter a grave difficulty.

II. Communicative *reality.*

2.1. A distinction between logical and epistemological validity.

To analyse the "intersubjectivity" reached in communication, let us introduce some designations, to help us make clear its logical and epistemological structure.

Step 1. The variables $x_1,x_2,x_3……x_n$ are introduced to designate certain classes of theoretical models.

Step 2. A set of subjects of epistemology is introduced, designated by the symbols $A_1,A_2,A_3,……A_m$.

As we presuppose that different subjects, like $A_1,A_2,A_3,……A_m$, understand propositions of theoretical models $x_1,x_2,x_3……x_n$ in an identical way, that is, that the *meanings* inherent in the objects described by propositions $x_1,x_2,x_3……x_n$ fully coincide, let us agree that

Step 3. there is a "one-to-one corresponding" (OOC) of meanings of the propositions $x_1,x_2,x_3……x_n$ for all subjects $A_1,A_2,A_3,……A_m$. Let us describe this correspondence as an equivalence, which will result in the following expression:

[I] $A_1(x_1,x_2,x_3…x_n,) \leftrightarrow A_2\ (x_1,x_2,x_3…x_n,)\ \leftrightarrow A_3(x_1,x_2,x…x_n,),\ … \leftrightarrow A_m\ (x_1,x_2,x_3…x_n)$.

where symbol «↔» means logical equivalency.

[2] «216. "A thing is identical with itself." –There is no finer example of a useless proposition, which yet is connected with a certain play of the imagination. It is as if in imagination we put a thing into its own shape and saw that it fitted». [Wittgenstein,1958]

Step 4. Satisfiability of such OOC is what we shall call the *"intersubjective justification"* of the propositions $x_1,x_2,x_3……x_n$.

In other words, when there is a OOC in understanding of the propositions meanings in all explanatory models – then we can speak of achieving the "intersubjective *justification*" for these models.

Step 5. On the grounds of our conclusions to steps 3 and 4 let us agree preliminary to call the correspondence [I] the *epistemological* definition of validity.

An important reservation should be made here: the *epistemological definition* of validity should not be mixed with its *logical definition* as a tautology (an identically true formula).

Having made all these assumptions, we still have to admit that the answer is not yet clear for a most important question: can we consider such OOC to be identical to *epistemological validity*? Most likely, we cannot! For, e.g., OOC may be applied only to the variables *already* available for the researchers $A_1,A_2,A_3,……A_m$. But there are scientific propositions not included into their scope at the discussed moment, and some more from merely theoretical sphere (e.g., mathematics) having no direct relation to natural sciences. Hence, we can conclude that it is necessary to differentiate between the two types of *epistemological validity*. Let us call them:

1) Factual epistemological validity (FEV). It takes place when validity is applied for a finite set of propositions $x_1,x_2,x_3……x_n$ and a finite quantity of subjects $A_1,A_2,A_3,……A_m$ in the sense [I].

2) Analytical epistemological validity (AEV). In this case validity is applied for any preset proposition $x_1,x_2,x_3…x_{n…..}$ and for any possible subjects of discussion $A_1,A_2,A_3,….A_m…$ Then we have an equivalence of another kind:

[II] $A_1(x_1,x_2,x_3…x_n…..)\leftrightarrow A_2\ (x_1,x_2,x_3…x_n….)\leftrightarrow A_3(x_1,x_2,x…x_n....,)…\leftrightarrow A_m\ (x_1,x_2,x_3…x_n….)\leftrightarrow….$

Let's take an example of FEV. Think of "phlogiston" as a special state of matter able to transfer heat. Its existence had validity for S.Carnot and his contemporaries in the sense [I], but then it lost its explanatory meaning. In other words, the notion "phlogiston" gets out of use in the scientific language of thermodynamics. So, it had validity for the 18th–early19th-century physicists and chemists, but does not have such for today representatives of the same branches of learning.

This means, it can never have validity in the sense [II], as being not valid for any preset researcher. Wittgenstein would have simply explained this by different "language-games". But – think of the both principles of thermodynamics, formulated by Carnot on the assumption of phlogiston existence and retaining their scientific meaning up to now, notwithstanding the linguistic unit "phlogiston" has lost it. So, the nature of validity of the thermodynamics principles is rooted somewhere else. As a matter of fact, AEV can be reached solely *by deduction*. It is simply proved analytically – a thing Carnot did with the use of "the ideal thermal machine" model.

This is why tautologies (laws, identically true formulae) from mathematics, logic, theoretical physics and other analytical spheres of knowledge also belong here.

2.2. The vicious circle in justifying FEV

Having ascertained the existence of epistemological validity of two different types, let's ask a question: *On what grounds we call a proposition justified intersubjectively (communicatively)?* The answer that follows from the above says: *On the grounds of its FEV*. Indeed, the validity of a statement – let it be a proposition from the model x_1 – is made manifest because the statement is used by all participants of the discussion, or simply by the inductive opinion examination of all participants in order to establish the fact of validity:

$$A_1(x_1) \leftrightarrow A_2(x_1) \leftrightarrow A_3(x_1) \ldots \leftrightarrow \ldots A_m(x_1)$$

Having examined opinions of all participants we give the following answer: the proposition from the model x_1 is *justified intersubjectively (communicatively) because*

it has FEV. Of course, we speak here of the enumerating induction. FEV includes the number of subjects of communication(A) as large as it is wished but finite, and the similarly finite number of models(x) (statements).

If this is really so, we can ask the following question: on what grounds we say that a statement *has FEV*?

The answer we are going to hear is: *on the grounds of the fact that the statement is justified intersubjectively* (literally – *that all participants of the discussion understand the discussed propositions* (their "meanings") *identically*, that is, an *equivalence* takes place. So, we cannot help having it this way: *epistemological validity* is proved through *intersubjectivity (communicativeness),* whereas the status of the latter is proved through *epistemological validity*.

We cannot escape a certain vicious circle in any "intersubjectivity" justification. In my opinion, this is due to the fact that, *seeking to prove the intersubjectively interpreted validity* we, actually, deal with the *inductive way of conclusion.* Its main shortcoming – the *non demonstrative character of conclusions* is extended to the *communicative justification of knowledge.*

As I see it, the problem is rooted in the fact that, within the frames of intersubjective approach, epistemological validity can never be justified because *the very process of intersubjective justifying of formal-contentual (such as physical ones) and contentual (e.g., sociological ones) theories is based on the inductive generalisation instead of deductive conclusion:* an example here may be – getting *the intersubjective proof* for a registered supernova outburst *in different observatories of the world, etc.*

If that is the way it is, AEV as including an open class of subjects and statements, cannot be inductively proved in principle. The only way to ground it properly is deduction – for example, for a certain class of formulae in propositional logic, tautological as they are, etc.

So, we have to state serious difficulties in justification of the CP. Of course, the enormous contribution to the communicative strategy development made by Husserl, Wittgenstein and Apel can hardly be overestimated. Yet, the *expectations* placed by the mentioned philosophers and their followers in *communication*, have proved to be unreasonably overestimated as compared to the *communicative reality* – where the vicious circle described here is only one in a whole number of serious flaws.

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