



PHILOSOPHY AS RADICAL SOCIAL CRITIC: SUPPORTING COMMON PEOPLE AGAINST STRONG INSTITUTIONALISM AND SYSTEMIC POLITICS

Filosofía como crítica social radical: ayudando la gente común a hacer frente al institucionalismo fuerte y a la política sistémica

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Abstract: I argue in this paper that the main task of contemporary philosophy as radical social critic is to face all institutional and systemic powers that monopolize social evolution and institutional legitimation, denying not only an inclusive democracy to common people, but also a democratization of all fields of society. Therefore, philosophy as social critic and political *praxis* must overcome both the separation between theory and practice and the affirmation of a strong institutionalism as well as the systemic explanation of institutions as the central core for the legitimation and fulfilment of social evolution.

Keywords: Philosophy. Social Critic. Political *Praxis*. Spontaneity. Institutionalism.

Resumen: Sostengo en este artículo que el objetivo principal de la filosofía contemporánea como crítica social es la contraposición y la contención de todos los poderes institucionales y sistémicos que monopolizan la evolución social y la legitimación institucional, socavando una democracia popular inclusiva, así como la democratización de todos los campos constitutivos de la sociedad. La filosofía como crítica social y *práxis* política debe superar tanto la separación

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entre teoría y práctica como la afirmación y la hegemonía de un institucionalismo fuerte y de la explicación sistémica de las instituciones como la base central para la legitimación y la realización de la evolución social.

Palavras Chave: Filosofia. Crítica Social. *Práxis* Política. Espontaneidade. Institucionalismo.

Introduction

If there is a special thing we can learn with the history of philosophy and especially with the developments of contemporary political theory is that philosophy is effectively a radical critic of the social. Indeed, Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies are directly practical or political philosophies, in the sense that they intend to problematize and orientate social evolution, i.e. the social structuration and institutional legitimation (as Socrates – master of both – also did in many ways). In first place, therefore, their philosophies have the social as basis of the theoretical-political activity. They want, as I am saying, to criticize and politicize social evolution and institutional legitimation as a fundamental concern of human life (a fundamental concern of human life both individually and socially). All theoretical constructions they did is the way to the political *praxis* – or at least political *praxis* is the basic point of inspiration and action to the theoretical developments, and it is also the returning point to the theory: theory returns always and always to the political *praxis* – it only has validity in returning to the *praxis*.

In a general sense, we can say the same about the history of philosophy after Plato and Aristotle: the daily life – social evolution, cultural constitution, and political institutions – is the main question, the central problem of theory (in this case, the central problem to all philosophical theories). Of course, we cannot forget what I call of *syndrome of the strong universalism* as the basic characteristic of all systematic philosophies (such as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Kant, and Hegel etc.), what signifies that philosophers (think that they) have a special capacity to see and find (according to them) theoretical absolute, contrarily to common people. Finding theoretical absolute is necessary to the foundation of the epistemological-moral objectivity, and objectivity is a *condition sine qua non* to the plurality, to the heterogeneity, to the relativism and individualism, so to face off skepticism – the universal or the theoretical absolute is not always something that common people understand, in fact, but philosophers do understand it. And it is the condition of discourse and action, to the meaningless plurality and relativism. That put philosophy and philosophers in a degree or level more high in relation to common people, which was always a problem, especially if the universal is located

and raised beyond common sense and daily life (then only philosophers – and by philosophy – can access it).

But the fact is that political *praxis* – as basis of all these philosophies (including systematic philosophies) – is not a technical question; the philosophy is a spontaneous *praxis*, in which philosophers must go to public sphere and discuss their theories, listening counter-arguments and suffering public critics or even boasting. So philosophy must justify itself not just from philosophical arguments, procedures and technics, but by very simple public discourse. It is by talking and talking *among different people* that philosophers can publicize and improve their theories, i.e. philosophy is made by permanent daily dialogue. There is not an epistemological-political truth beyond public, spontaneous and common dialogue, what means that it can just legitimize in last instance philosophical contents. So, there is not an individual philosophy or a pure individual philosophical development, as the same way there is no pure philosophy, a pure scientism: philosophy and philosophers, as social product and beings, are compromised with the common sense, with the common people, depending of them – they emerge from common sense, and common sense is made and constituted by common people.

This is an amazing thing, politically speaking: different of classical religious tradition (Catholic Church) and modern natural science, and even classical sociology, philosophy maintains a very profound rooting with – to utilize a Habermasian term – lifeworld, so from the philosophical perspective, politics and foundational activity of knowledge, politics and culture are not just an institutionalized matter, nor have only an institutional dynamics, but they are in a very important manner *spontaneous action, correlatively to* institutional arena, procedures and actors. Now from a philosophical perspective, *praxis* is the central question and concern, in the sense that politics is made by a dialectics between spontaneity and institutionalization, common people and institutions (and their legal procedures and actors). Why is this philosophical movement different of institutionalized religions, modern natural science, and classical sociology? Because institutionalized religions, modern natural science and classical sociology have as central basis the fact that politics and science are institutionalized matters and fields, having institutionalized actors as main subjects of political and scientific *praxis*, as well as the study of society – according to classical sociology, particularly in Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and Max Weber – must have *a scientific form* and *scientific* legitimized actors, beyond and super-posed in relation to spontaneity of the social. The theory is an institutionalized *praxis* (not a popular *praxis* and matter) and it offers the light – it is the head – to common people and social evolution.

There is a deep imbrication between religious institutions, modern natural science and classical sociology with institutionalism, but no linking, or

just a weak linking, with social spontaneity, i.e. there is a strong connection between institutional knowledge and institutional politics, from a separation between common sense and scientific-theological thought. In effect, modern science, theology and sociology admit as their basis methodological instruments of research, legitimized actors of research, and so the centrality of the scientific-theological institution (with its internal procedures, rules, codes, and actors) concerning the validity of knowledge or religious creed, with no – or weak – admittance of common people and political subjects from lifeworld in the active construction of scientific theory or creed. Therefore, modern science, theology and sociology become strongly institutionalized and technical or systemic, very dependent of internal institutional dynamics, contrarily to philosophy. All scientific, theological and sociological legitimation is monopolized by scientific and clerical elites, located beyond common people.

How can we argue against – or with – science and theology? Just scientifically and theologically, i.e. we only can argue scientifically or theologically if *we are in* scientific and theological institutions, if we are part of scientific and theological elite. How can we argue against a philosophical theory? From a subjective or a common sense perspective and answer, i.e. even if we are out of philosophy, if we have no philosophical argumentation, if we are not philosophers. We don't need to be philosophers to discuss daily questions and problems, and even to act socially, culturally, politically. Now, here emerges the political rooting of philosophy, because philosophical *praxis* has self-consciousness about the fact that social justification is not a question of a closed bureau, nor a monopoly of a bureaucratic staff, and even it is not made from a bureaucratic proceduralism. Of course, philosophers discuss with other philosophers and academically, but the very sense of philosophical *praxis* is to be a reflection of daily life itself, what means that common people, as Antonio Gramsci said, are also philosophers, i.e. subjects that act and legitimate rules and practices (however, they are not philosophers, as also Antonio Gramsci said, in an initial stage of knowledge, but very philosophers, because they are part of a complete lifeworld, knowing all what is necessary to understand and legitimize their lifeworld). So, in this double sense – philosophy as political *praxis* raised in the social, and common people as real philosophers – philosophy is a radical social critic and an inclusive and participative politics.

I will argue in this paper that philosophy is a radical social critic and, then, a political *praxis* which starts of two normative presuppositions: first, there is no possibility of separation between theory and practice, what means that philosophy is not pure normativism and pure scientism, nor a strictly academic work, in that philosophy is in first place socially and politically rooted and linked; second, the moment there is no separation between theory and practice (therefore: the moment that philosophy is not pure normativism, scientism and academicism), common people become

the real social, political and cultural subjects of foundation and *praxis*, in that philosophy can signify effectively a deliberative conversation and action concerning social evolution and institutional legitimation, overcoming the tendency of a strong philosophical scientism. In a very important way, philosophy is a political *praxis* based on an inclusive popular participation, which is spontaneous and equal. Philosophy is a spontaneous political *praxis* – i.e. non-institutional, non-elitist and non-bureaucratic exercise of power – that overthrows both strong institutionalism and systemic explanation of social evolution and institutional legitimation (the major tendency of our contemporary *Realpolitik* and political theory). Current philosophical importance and future consists in becoming a popular matter, in retaking the social and political linking, against strong institutionalism and systemic social dynamics that undermine democracy and inclusion in favor of autonomous and self-referential market system, political parties, and even strong scientism.

Beyond scientific-philosophical strong scientism

There are two problematic characteristics of contemporary science and philosophy which may harm imbrication between theory and practice, theory and politics, scientific-philosophical knowledge and common sense, scientists/philosophers and common people: deep separation of science and philosophy in disciplines; as for me, here, the philosophical location inside scientific field, logic and dynamics, i.e. the fact that philosophy not only works inside scientific field and from scientific contributions (the very science itself as object of philosophy), but also it utilizes methods, languages and a self-referential dynamics that centralize the major developments of philosophy (and in philosophy), as I'm saying, inside philosophical field, *restricted* mainly to academic philosophers, with a very specialized language (scientific methods and languages as the very strict way to philosophical expression and conceptualization). What could this mean? Both aspects of contemporary philosophy represent a loss of link with the social-political *praxis* and, as consequence, they generate directly or indirectly a philosophical legitimation of a strong institutionalism and a systemic logic that characterize institutional constitution and social evolution, against an inclusive and spontaneous democratic politics, and beyond the political participation of common people – this imbrication among philosophical scientism and strong institutionalism and systemic logics, as I'm arguing in this paper, is a direct way originated from the deep specialization and scientism in contemporary philosophy, that leads to the rejection of philosophy's political linking with common sense and *as common sense* – this refuse of a philosophical political linking is based on the argument of an autonomous, independent and self-referential work

in relation to common sense and political *praxis*, as science does (science as normative, epistemological, and political model).

Let me reflect on these two points and their challenges to contemporary philosophy. The separation in disciplines and, particularly, the great and deep division in disciplines inside philosophy is a characteristic of contemporary times. With Plato and Aristotle in particular and with classical philosophy in general, philosophy's constitutive areas were linked in the goal of founding politics, reconstructing social categories of daily life. If we remember also of Socrates, we can see that the preoccupation with the good life (both individually and socially), with the virtue, with the politics, is the main goal not just for current life, for any individual and society, *but for the philosophy and philosophers too*. Current life – and there is a strong imbrication between individual and social life, a fantastic dependence and correlation among them – is the basis of all we can think and do, because of the obvious fact that we just live our current life (to live our present lives is our only possibility – to live it the best we can is the only special goal). Well, is there a more special thing than our current life? Of course not! So all what help us to live better individually and socially are welcome *as instrument* (not as end) to this goal. It is in this sense that classical philosophy is conceived correlatively as an art of life, and as a political *praxis*: the vital *praxis* – i.e. ethics and politics, individuals and society – is just what matters to philosophy, to philosophers, to the philosophical, ethical and political reflection of any person and society (see Foucault, 1997, 2003; 2010).

And here emerges the understanding of the philosophy as an instrument of current life, of social-political *praxis*: it is not an end in itself, but the way to an enlightened individual and social life, to a more effective political *praxis*. Of course classical philosophy is not a perfect model of complete theoretical linking with political *praxis*, common sense, common people, and current life. Classical philosophy has too much of theoretical absolutism and aristocratic self-comprehension in relation to all what is common (common sense, common people, common life). But Socratic intuition of the centrality of life – and as consequence the linking between theory and practice (intuition which is appropriated by Plato and Aristotle) – can serve for us to understand the course of the contemporary philosophy's scientific transformation. In any case, my normative basis is this Greek intuition that everyday life is the basis of all, so live the life in the best way we can is the major goal (the vital goal is the best of ourselves by ourselves), as well as our current lives is all we have, then we must live it the best we can. This intuition, as I'm arguing in this paper, leads to a deep imbrication of theory and practice, and therefore to a very profound linking between philosophy, social self-constitution and political *praxis*, in favor of common people, of common sense – as I will show further, it is the only goal that remains to contemporary philosophy, and it means a radical contraposition to strong institutionalism and systemic logic. Well,

according to this intuition, philosophy is not an end in itself, but a theoretic and practical instrument for current life and political *praxis* – theory as dependent of social *praxis*, theory as part of current individual and social life, theory as political *praxis*, and theory as everyday life (see Foucault, 2002, 2004; RORTY, 2010a).

Deep specialization and scientism in philosophy impair greatly this imbrication between theory and practice, as well as the philosophy's political linking with *praxis*, with common sense and with common people. Both presuppositions of scientism in philosophy – philosophy as a scientific practice, philosophy as located inside scientific field, methods and logic; philosophers as a closed community and priority as a scientific community, with an unstoppable necessity for specialization – make philosophy a scientific discipline, like physics or mathematics, i.e. a closed field in relation to everyday life, as if philosophers develop a knowledge that only is accessible to those inside of the philosophical field. So, scientism in philosophy conducts, in first place, to the very usual philosophical confusion that philosophy is a scientific field with scientific methods, and with a scientific language, having a theoretical content which is different or which is beyond common life and common people. Scientism leads, in second place, to contraposition between a very ideological and overvalued notion of philosophical (and scientific) knowledge and common sense (common sense as non-knowledge, as non-philosophy) – in this case, the difference and contraposition between philosophers/scientists and common people is dramatically expressed in the fact that philosophers difficultly can explain their theories to common people (which is the problem to philosophers, not to common people). In third place, scientism in philosophy, in the moment it is based on deep specialization and on the necessity of organization and separation in scientific-philosophical disciplines, loses not just the nexus among these disciplines, but the social-political linking with everyday life and common people, becoming institutionalized and dependent of the systemic logic of the institutions, which is internal, autonomous and self-referential in relation to everyday life and common people (see Alves, 1981; Habermas, 1989).

The philosopher as a specialist of a specific area of philosophy has a very clear meaning: the fact that remains an aristocratic notion of philosophical knowledge that must be maintained and developed inside philosophical office by a philosophical community too closed, with too strict and difficult contents and conceptual languages. Besides, the idea of the philosopher as a specialist in a specific philosophical field implies that only the initiated and illuminated people – who do an arduous, time-consuming and methodical overrun movement of the common sense towards scientific world and scientific life – can access philosophy, i. e. people can discuss philosophical contents only becoming philosophers, as people can discuss science only becoming scientists. In this sense, philosophy is in first place

a scientific field with all presuppositions of scientism: closed field, strict disciplines, rationalized methods, logic languages, authorized community, and so a special knowledge. In other terms: scientism in philosophy leads directly to a strong institutionalism, so that philosophical *praxis* is associated to a pure science without any commitment with common sense, without any political linking with *praxis* (the only linking possible to philosophical scientism is the messianic mission to bring enlightenment to common sense and common people, saving them from the cave where they are now – then, it is always a philosophical scientism).

Well, let me clarify more my affirmation that scientism in philosophy leads directly to a prejudicial strong institutionalism and systemic logics, which denies an inclusive and spontaneous concept of political *praxis* and a philosophical location inside common sense and common people. What is strong institutionalism? It is the affirmation of the closed procedure of institution, beyond common sense and common people, as the condition to legitimation of any field of human life. So, for example, economy is a quest for economists from a systemic market, which cannot be accessed by laymen; law is a quest for lawyers and courts, which cannot be understood by laymen; science is a quest for scientists, which cannot be comprehended by laymen, and so on. Strong institutionalism, therefore, is the affirmation that only an institution can legitimate and realize the evolution of its area of expertise – according to my examples, only market can legitimate and realize evolution of economy; only courts can legitimate and realize evolution of law; only scientists can legitimate and realize evolution of science; and, of course, only political parties can legitimate and realize political institutional evolution. Institution is the basis of the evolution and legitimation of all fields it monopolizes; common sense and common people are not important, or have not a great importance – all that matters is the very institutions, their internal dynamics, methods, languages, and authorized community and actors.

Then, what is systemic logic? It is the presupposition that each institution monopolizes a specific field of human life, transforming itself in this very own field – economy is the very own market; courts and lawyers are the very own law; scientists and philosophers are the very own science and philosophy; political parties are the very own political subjects, and so on. The institution *is its own field of human life*, so the field is the institution, and vice-versa. Well, as consequence, systemic logic consists in the fact that each institution has an internal, autonomous, self-subsisting, and self-referential logic, both in relation to others social systems or institutions, and common sense and common people. In other words, each social system is absolutely closed to other social systems and common sense; it cannot be intervened from out, or with other instruments than its very own instruments; its evolution and legitimation is absolutely internal. Here emerges the sense of the institutional monopolization of evolution of its own field:

just the institution is the dynamics of the field; only it comprehends the internal logic of social system *which it is*; and only by means of internal institutional logic, the field, centralized and monopolized by institution, evolves with no problems. Strong institutionalism and systemic logic are too linked and dependent, and they have as consequence the fact that legitimation and evolution are always an internal matter and property of institutions and their internal logic, procedures, methods, and authorized community and legal actors. Institutional evolution is not a political evolution, but a technical evolution; its rules are not political, but technical; their evolution process is not political, but systemic. Inside institution or social system, there is no politics and democracy, but just systemic logic and technocracy. Institutions, from a systemic perspective, are opposite of an inclusive and participative democracy (see Habermas, 1970, 1989).

Separation in disciplines and philosophical scientism lead to a non-political and institutionalist philosophical posture, because philosophy (and science) adopts and reproduces strong institutionalism (i.e. monopolization and centralization of legitimation and evolution inside institution) and systemic logics (i.e. the affirmation of an internal, autonomous, self-subsisting, and self-referential dynamics of evolution and legitimation, which is mainly both internal to institutions and a quest for specialists, and in a technical way). In fact, contemporary political theory (for example: Friedrich Hayek; Robert Nozick, John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas, and Anthony Giddens etc.) has a systemic comprehension of social evolution and, then, it leads to the affirmation of a strong institutionalism as the normative-political basis to the understanding, programming and conduction of social evolution. Well, for them, in general, Western modernization (or the democracy itself and its economic, cultural and political institutions) is characterized by a process of systemic self-differentiation and self-referentiality, so that, in modernity, arise different and closed social systems which are in a reciprocal dispute for hegemony. Thinking politically, as consequence, signifies to understand the functioning of social systems' mechanisms, including political institutions (let's remember: institutions are the same as social systems). As consequence, politics is not only based on a systemic comprehension of social evolution and institutional structuration, but also it is very limited by systemic logic (self-referentiality, autonomy, self-subsistence in relation to common sense and common people). Politics cannot violate self-referential and internal logic of social systems and institutions, in that institutions are the center and the political subjects *par excellence* of legitimation and evolution (Hayek, 1987; Habermas, 1984; 1985, 1998; Nozick, 1991; Giddens, 2000, 2001; RAWLS, 2000).

As I'm saying, there is a very intrinsic linking between philosophical scientism and strong institutionalism and systemic logic. This very intrinsic linking consists in the fact that the core of legitimation and evolution is internal to institutions, and institutions have always and internal systemic

dynamics which is autonomous of everyday life and common people. So institutional systemic dynamics is not spontaneous, nor dependent of common sense and common people as content and authorized subjects of institutional rules and movements. Institutional systemic dynamics is procedural, legal and dependent of a consensus of an authorized community, i.e. legitimation is internal to institutions. Therefore, institutional legitimation and evolution of its field of research is technical, methodical (non-spontaneous), and that is the reason why common sense and common people cannot participate of the process of legitimation and evolution. This is the condition for science and philosophy to guide common sense and common people: to admit and defend a strong institutionalism and a systemic logic, what means the centralization and monopolization by institutions of all kind of legitimation and evolution, as well as the affirmation that institutional structuration is autonomous, self-subsisting, and self-referential in relation to everyday life and common people (everyday life as non-systemic, non-scientific, and spontaneous life; common people as non-institutionalized people, and non-authorized community concerning legitimation).

I won't reconstruct these philosophical theories mentioned above, but I can say that all of them (beyond their very profound differences) have this theoretical-political point in common, which is the affirmation of a scientism in philosophy, in a double sense: their comprehension of philosophy from a scientific dynamics (philosophy founded in science, its methods, systemic logic, procedures, and authorized community, that monopolize substantially the legitimation of knowledge); and their consequent affirmation of a strong institutionalism and a systemic logic as basis to the understanding and programming of evolution in all fields of human life. The central point is the *philosophy's necessity of a scientific dynamics, procedures, and authorized community*. In other terms: the need to think about the legitimacy in a very strict and philosophical way, what reinforces separation between theory and practice, philosophy and common sense, institutions and civil political subjects etc. This comprehension depoliticizes both philosophical scientism and philosophical contents and approaches, enabling philosophical autonomy and self-referentiality in relation to everyday life and common people. So philosophy legitimizes directly or indirectly institutional centralization and legitimation of knowledge and evolution, as well as systemic logic as basis of institutional structuration, political *praxis*, and scientific-philosophical comprehension and action. Well, in the same way that very specialized contemporary science is greatly dominated by market's systemic logic and political strong institutionalism, losing their political linking and sensibility to everyday life and to an inclusive democratic politics, philosophical separation in disciplines and subordination to contemporary scientism make philosophy non-political and institutionalist knowledge – a knowledge that is unable to influence social changings and even to become political *praxis* for common people, with common people.

Philosophy is not pure normativism, but it has a very historical-sociological linking, i.e. philosophical developments cannot be comprehended if we separate them of their practical content. A very common – the most common, indeed – philosophy's tendency consists on conceiving pure concepts by refusing their historical-sociological location in time and space. In this sense, philosophical objectivity is a question for people who are beyond common sense and common people. Indeed, philosophical objectivity, the moment it is conceived as purely conceptual thing, becomes an exclusive matter of the philosophical community in a double sense: objectivity must be reflected, rationalized, and common sense cannot think unity in plurality, it cannot overcome the contradictions of the plurality of beliefs (as if pluralism's contradictions were bad to think and to live) – common sense is just beliefs and more beliefs; and philosophical objectivity is more than a summation of beliefs, what implies that philosophical community has the capacity to legitimize this objectivity and then to shape common sense. Philosophy in general has worked on objective methods and contents; philosophy in general has understood objectivity as universality, which signifies to submit the validity of common sense to institutional *criteria* and institutional judges of a self-authorized community. Well, institutional *criteria*, in the context of general philosophical history, comprehends itself as the very proper universal. And so philosophy grounds the universal as located beyond common sense and common people, i.e. the universal or objectivity as located beyond a historical-sociological context.

Concepts as *essence*, *being*, *god*, *pure reason* or *communicative action* have always the same dynamics and direction: to offer a conceptual basis to ground plurality from a universal epistemological-moral paradigm, avoiding the victory of the particular contexts and contents – what would mean the end not of philosophy as an art of life and a public discursive *praxis*, but of the philosophical community as an authorized community of philosophy – an authorized community which says from the internal dynamics of institution what is and what is not philosophical. The same comprehension of grounding and legitimation appears in each one of these philosophical concepts mentioned above: philosophical objectivity can offer a *normative umbrella* to organize and to orientate all particular contexts, to give an identity to the plurality, and to offer a correct sense for the contradictions of the particular opinions. Objectivity avoids the common sense's loss of conceptual clarity and foundation, as well as it avoids the impossibility of a pure (because universal) critic of each particular context. Philosophical objectivity – as scientific objectivity – is the way to shape particular contexts, so that only a universalist epistemological-moral paradigm (which is not compromised with a – nor dependent or based on – particular contents and contexts) can guarantee an impartial, neutral,

and, then, objective critic and evaluation of all norms and practices in any place we can imagine. This is the sense of my concept of philosophical objectivity or universalism as *normative umbrella*, which was and is always the basis of action and thinking of the Western philosophical history, i.e. it signifies the fact that Western philosophy has tried to define an absolute or formalist starting point and a strong normative ground to organize and guide common sense and common people, to organize and guide all contexts and their particular contents (see Habermas & Ratzinger, 2006).

In fact, to think and to act, according to this philosophical intuition, signify always to legitimize what we think and do, justify current life from a rational, logic, non-contradictory, and then objective normative point. This was and is the condition for philosophical legitimation. Reason (as mind, as communicative action) assumes the major centrality to define and conduct human life, individually and socially, and reason makes us singular as individual (rational self-consciousness furnishes us a personality, an identity as individual); it also gives us communitarian identity beyond our *apparent* religious-cultural differences, and it finally enables a cosmopolitan integrative project (and even a cosmopolitan culture) beyond all particular cultural contexts. Reason is the point in common we have as human beings, as human race. It is the very pure point in common from which we can think, act and legitimize norms and practices in an objective way. Well, what is to *think and act rationally*, in this sense? It is to think and act logically (in Aristotelian sense), to have rational self-consciousness (in Kantian sense), and to justify norms and practices according to intersubjective rational discourse (in Habermasian sense). This means that we must justify ourselves as individuals and community independently of ours own contexts; to utilize a concept of reason which is pure in respect to common sense and particular affections; and finally to act according to intersubjective epistemological-moral point of view that is not intersubjective (because intersubjectivity is a complex totally heterogeneous of values, practices and ways of foundation), but just *neutral, impartial*, as if the objectivity were given to us just by the transcendence of historical-sociological contexts (this transcendence would be neutral, impartial, objective and universal). And even European modernity (insistently Habermas defends it as rational) cannot think and act in a pure way! (see Habermas, 1984).

This kind of philosophical objectivity or universalism (impartiality, neutrality; normative point of view as *normative umbrella* for particular contexts) is purely normative, but in a very bad sense: it is an abstract normativism, with no particular practical content, with no historical-sociological linking, beyond everyday values and practices. It is in essence a complete academician invention, a direct result from the philosophical strong scientism and contempt for common sense and common people. There is not that model of pure reason, nor an idealized model of universal intersubjectivity which can substitute common senses, common peoples, particular contexts

and their very own codes, values, practices and ways of foundations. On the contrary, it is the historical-sociological location, the cultural-social constitution of one people that is the very normative starting point for *this people* (but not to other people) *act and ground* its own practices and values. But, according to major tendency in philosophy, this is not philosophical, because a community does not justify objectively and consciously its own rules and practices as an internal societal process, dependent of tradition and communitarian interpretation. A particular community is not universal because its values and practices are justified by an internal movement, without independence from its own context. Internal organization of a cultural community is not reflexive, because individuals and groups act and legitimize their practices and values just by living them, just because their culture validates them as a totalizing process, not controlled by individuals and groups. A universal epistemological-moral paradigm, in the moment it is transcendent to all particular cultural contexts, enables a reflexive *praxis* and the control of contextual cultural evolution (see Habermas, 1984, 1989, 1990, 1998; Rorty, 2010b).

It is in this sense that I'm speaking about philosophy as pure normativism and as strong scientism. Also in this sense I'm arguing that strong scientism breaks the theoretical dependence of the context, of the common sense and common people, becoming non-political and strongly institutionalist. What is pure normativism? It is the defense of philosophy as a scientific matter, field, and practice, made by an exclusive authorized community who legitimizes their methods and contents priority as a scientific procedure. Pure normativism is preponderantly pure theory; it is the monopoly of theory by academic community and then the consolidation of a strong scientism in philosophy, what means that only the authorized philosophical community has the last word regarding to legitimation and evolution of its field of research and, in last instance, of the social evolution in general (even if philosophical community insists that its intention is to ground the method of foundation, not the content of this foundation). This specific movement of scientism is very harmful to the valorization and foment of common sense and common people, for it presupposes that evolution has as central core and dynamics, the overrun of common sense and common thought by a very strong scientism – scientism purifies common sense's loss of clarity and consistence, and common people's non-theoretical posture. And more: the legitimation of knowledge, as exclusive monopoly of an authorized scientific community (which attributes to itself this monopoly), walks in a very strict and intrinsic linking with institutional monopolization and centralization of the evolution of this field, i.e. strong scientism, strong institutionalism and systemic logics have a mutual holder and dependence. Scientism movement can just return to common sense and just talks with common people in the situation of a leader that teaches and guides a stupid student.

But why scientism has a role of leader concerning common sense and common people? Because it affirms systemic logic as basis of institutional legitimation and evolution. In the first place, as I said before, Western modernization is characterized by the consolidation of social systems or institutions (capitalist market, State, science etc.) that centralize and monopolize legitimation of their own field, so the institution becomes their very own field. Secondly, institution affirms an internal, autonomous, self-subsisting, and self-referential logic of functioning, procedures and authorized actors. As consequence, institutions based on a systemic dynamics are closed subjects, closed structures, in relation to their environment, to other systems and principally to common sense and common people. They just can be understood and streamlined from inside, *according to systemic internal rules*, and by authorized actors. In the third place, therefore, only an authorized community and actors can perform internal legitimation and evolution, for they understand institutional systemic dynamics, logic and procedures.

We can perceive here the intrinsic linking among scientism, strong institutionalism and systemic logic: the moment that knowledge is different from common sense, perhaps more precious than common sense, and in the moment that scientific authorized community is more special class than common people, the legitimation of evolution of all fields of human life is basically a scientism's or scientific's task, for the institutional knowledge becomes the normative basis of legitimation and evolution of the field. Then scientific authorized community gains a very political role, assuming both the theoretical-normative legitimation of the field, and the political role to perform the evolution of the field. I repeat that this legitimation from a scientism perspective happens according to an internal procedure and a systemic logic and dynamics. So the epistemological role and the political role are strongly assumed by institution and their authorized (self-authorized!) community, that common sense and common people loss these epistemological role and political role in relation to legitimation of norms and practices, and about legitimation of social evolution. Strong scientism substitutes common sense; authorized scientific and political communities substitute common people; and systemic logics and dynamics substitute spontaneous democratic political *praxis*. All become a subject for scientific expertise; all become technically programmable and liable to scientific analysis and validity (scientific validity as basic condition to the objectivity of knowledge and political *praxis*).

Pure normativism is a non-political state; pure normativism leads to separation between theory and practice, to the undermining of the common people, to the strong institutionalism, to the systemic logic. In fact, pure normativism in philosophy depoliticizes it, as well as strong scientism in philosophy makes philosophy institutionalist and dependent of systemic logics and dynamics. Pure normativism and strong scientism depoliticize

philosophy for they affirm directly the systemic and institutional structuration of philosophical field and disciplines, in that a self-attributed authorized community assumes a central role about the normative legitimation and political dynamics. And more: scientism in philosophy leads to a scientific comprehension of philosophy and philosophical work, so that this philosophical work – and even philosophical procedures and dynamics – must acquire a scientific structuration and principally a scientific reconstruction of current epistemological and practical legitimation. Even in post-metaphysical times, philosophy maintains stubbornly this self-attributed vocation to reconstruct universal conditions of all discourses and practices, which are placed as normative condition of plurality and particularity, of all practical contexts (see Habermas, 1990). And even in metaphysical times, philosophy insists in reconstruction of procedural way, steps, instruments and contexts to universal (i.e. neutrality, impartiality and pure objectivity) point of view of epistemological, moral and political legitimacy (see Rawls, 2003; Habermas, 1989, 1990). But how philosophical scientism can define – even in a moderated form –, from an internal institutional dynamics of the authorized community, the procedural context and instruments to everyday legitimacy? This kind of philosophical scientism and legitimation conducts again to strong institutionalism, in that scientific institutions assume the centrality in relation to epistemological reconstruction, the same way that institutions (and their procedures and authorized actors) centralize in them the political *praxis*. In this case, philosophy is not a radical social critic, but from a philosophical scientism, it is the normative legitimation of strong institutionalism – philosophical scientism, the moment it legitimizes strong institutionalism, becomes a depoliticized posture.

Philosophy as inclusive and non-institutional politics

There is a very dangerous tendency in our contemporary times, both theoretically and politically, i.e. the strong institutionalism and systemic comprehension of institutional structuration and social evolution. Strong institutionalism and systemic logic – let me explain once more – signify that institutions centralize and legitimize the constitution and the evolution of their field of action and research, closing themselves to an inclusive popular participation. As consequence, institutions adopt a systemic logic as basis of the self-comprehension, in that they have a very internal dynamics, procedures and authorized actors that validate institutional internal movements. Then any process of legitimation and institutional evolution only is legitimate if it is performed internally to institutions and by authorized community. The process of legitimation and evolution cannot be performed outside institutional proceduralism and by non-

-technical or non-authorized people, which means that common people cannot legitimate norms and practices substituting institutions themselves. How I'm saying, there is a parallel between institutional systemic logic (the centralization and monopolization of legitimacy by institutions from a systemic perspective) and scientism: how knowledge is assumed as a very closed property of very closed scientific communities, located beyond common people and common sense, the power (which is resulting from scientism) is assumed as a very proper monopoly of institutions. This nefarious dependence between scientism and institutionalism, based on a systemic logic, maintains democracy, inclusive public participation and political spontaneity out from institutions, as well as it generates closed institutions to democracy, directly and indirectly. So if democracy is possible, it is possible only out of institutions, and yet, inside them, it is the systemic logic and the authorized communities with their proceduralism that have all priority and power.

In contemporary times, systemic logic has dominated theoretical explanations and political positions based on strong institutionalism; it has even dominated the main scientific forces and groups, which subsist in power *because of* their affirmation and defense of the strong institutionalism. The argument is always the same: only inside institutions and according to procedures, dynamics and legally authorized community, it is possible to construct solid knowledge, as well as, only by political institutions, their internal rules, procedures, and legal authorized actors, it is possible to legitimate social evolution and institutional structuration. In the same way, market system – from where has emerged systemic logic –, is comprehended as a singular, autonomous, self-subsisting and self-referential institution which has a very proper dynamics, mechanisms and actors. In this sense also, democracy is not an option to market evolution – including by the fact that just economy *as objective and neutral science* can understand market's constitution and evolution (market's comprehension and dynamics is a question of technical analysis, by technical people). As conservative theoretical-political forces repeat and repeat, market system must be respected and maintained free of political democratic control. Then current social-economic crisis appears clearly as a very hard dispute about the correct meaning of the problem: it is not systemic or institutional, according to conservative forces, but very political, i.e. the economic crisis is political because it is caused by a political mistake, a political mistake that does not understand the very technical characteristic of market system. And this political mistake consists on to political-normative violation of autonomous logic of market. Well, the problem is that leftist theories (such as Rawls and Habermas), the moment they assume systemic comprehension of society and, then a strong institutionalism, don't help democracy and don't represent an alternative to conservatism, a force to fight against conservatism, because they are dependents of a systemic logic

and strong institutionalism, and systemic logic and strong institutionalism are absolutely conservative, the moment they centralize all legitimacy and evolution inside institutions, their rules, proceduralisms and legal actors, from a systemic perspective.

In other words, returning back to philosophy, the philosophical field is not centralized and based on strong institutionalism and systemic theoretical-political perspective. As consequence, philosophy cannot be systemic-institutional politics, nor can it have an institutionalized systemic logic as its basis of constitution, work and evolution; it also cannot have an authorized community that centralizes and monopolizes the legitimacy of methods, norms and practices, beyond common sense and common people. Indeed, philosophy – from the perspective of a good and spontaneous everyday life, I used in the beginning of this paper – is a spontaneous and inclusive dialogue with no foundations or with no pure rational arguments, which aims just be inclusive and equal. All people – with their religions, beliefs, cultures, or conceptions of philosophy – participate freely and equally of philosophical political *praxis*, and it is in this moment that knowledge and social legitimation can be conceived, discussed, and decided. As I said before, the very specific point of philosophy consists in the spontaneous dialogue and in an inclusive practice that are not scientific and non-institutional, i.e. non-centralized and non-monopolized by institutions, by an authorized community, and in a philosophical scientism way. Philosophy, in consequence, returns to common sense and common people, in contraposition to strong scientism, strong institutionalism and systemic logic (see Rorty, 2010a, 1981; Vattimo, 2004; Marramao, 1997).

Philosophy lives in the shadows of technical sciences. Philosophy is not a science in the sense of empirical contents and methods of validation, but philosophy does not want to become common sense and made by common people, because its scientific self-comprehension remains as its very own basis of constitution and development. But why philosophy is not a technical science? Because of the obvious fact that philosophy's object of study is the symbolic-moral life itself, which is absolutely spontaneous, unquantifiable, non-programmable, non-measurable. Everyday life is not a product of laboratories, constructed and legitimated by an authorized community of scientists and technical specialists. It is made by every singular spontaneous moments of work, love, hatred, dreams, symbols, powers which generate agreements and conflicts, norms and practices, life and death. But we don't know how they start and when they will finish, what they will generate and what they will destroy. Well, what does it mean? In the first place, it means that everyday life and its current *praxis* is the only important thing to us; in the second place, it means that philosophy, surpassing its trend to a strong scientism, must return to everyday life, as part of common sense (non-institutional field), and as a matter of common people (non-authorized community, non-institutional people),

in that philosophy assumes itself not just as part of common sense and common people, but also as the very own common sense and made by common people – philosophy as particular constitutive part of common sense and common people, not as the universal point of view we must adopt to think and act clearly and grounded.

Well, from this situation, philosophy cannot acquire a strong scientific perspective. It is very difficult to be accepted by philosophical authorized communities, because it delegitimizes the classical philosophical comprehension that understands philosophy in a scientific level inside, and in the same time beyond common sense and common people, centralized and monopolized by self-authorized communities. It delegitimizes also the *self*-comprehension of that philosophical knowledge – which is based on scientific level, acquiring a scientific form – is very superior to common sense, as well as philosophers would be superior to common sense and common people, at least because they have a thought and a practice based on scientific and rational principles. In last instance, philosophy as constitutive part of common sense and made by common people – what means a non-scientific and a non-institutional philosophical perspective – puts down the self-attributed validity and legitimacy of authorized communities concerning construction and legitimation of philosophical field, contents, and legal actors. Indeed, it is consequent that philosophers are not scientists, technicians, or theologians. In all cases, philosophes are not specialists of empirical investigation, systemic technics and interpreters of sacred texts; in these cases, philosophers don't have contents and methods that allow them to centralize and monopolize philosophical legitimation exclusively or preponderantly within authorized communities. Philosophers don't have also institutions that centralize and monopolize any field of human comprehension and evolution, because their contents are linked in the social world, in the common sense, as common people's construction. Only spontaneous dialogue and linking with *praxis* are what remain to philosophy.

There is no other way to philosophy. In fact, the moment that philosophy loses its metaphysics basis (i.e. the foundation of essentialist and naturalized contents, beyond common sense and common people, from a strong scientism based on an self-authorized community), it only left to the everyday common sense and then the politics in its pure spontaneity and uncertainty, in its pure radicalness, as the very field of work and content of reflection, but not as if philosophy were out of common sense and made by specialists, and nor as if common sense and common people were objects of reflection which philosophy shapes and conducts. It is the contrary. Philosophy as constitutive part of common sense and made by common people can promote and protect common sense and common people against the unstoppable systemic tendency, and against strong institutionalism, based on a scientism that centralizes and monopolizes the validation of knowledge and political legitimation inside institutions

and according to a systemic self-comprehension. Philosophy, rooted in the common sense, can affirm spontaneity as alternative to technical control and systemic programming; inclusive participation as alternative to exclusive centralization and monopolization of legitimation and evolution inside institutions; political democracy as alternative to institutional systemic logic; and of course, common people as alternative to institutional-technical specialists and political parties. As radical social critic and inclusive democratic political *praxis*, philosophy is a defense of common people, not of the systems, institutions, or authorized scientific communities.

Philosophy also cannot work as theory of science, i. e. legitimizing methods, contents, and practices of technical sciences, or even adopting, as I'm arguing, a scientific perspective. In fact, science – as theology – is very institutional, dependent not just of the internal systemic dynamics of scientific self-authorized communities, but also of the market and state systemic controls (in the same way that theology is completely dependent of a clerical elite, closed to the community of belief). Therefore science is strongly controlled by systemic forces and powers, as well as it is too dependent of its autonomy (in relation to common sense and common people) and its self-referential systemic logics. In consequence, scientific practices and discourses are basically formalist scientific practices and discourses, to scientists and specialists, made by scientists and specialists. Well, as I'm arguing in this paper, the very prejudicial contemporary tendency, both in science and politics, is the strong association between scientism (i.e. centralization and monopolization of the knowledge's legitimacy and political institutional action inside institutions and just by a self-authorized community, from a systemic perspective) with strong institutionalism and systemic logics, what undermines democracy and popular inclusive participation. Well, philosophy must counteract in relation to this strong scientism and then against strong institutionalism and systemic logics, in favor of common sense and common people, in favor of an inclusive participative and egalitarian democracy. Adopt a scientific form is the death of philosophy as dialogue, spontaneity and community, in the same way it signifies the undermining of common sense and common people, because scientism leads directly to strong institutionalism and systemic logics.

The end of metaphysics, i.e. the end of essentialist and naturalized foundations, as well as the end of scientism in philosophy, i.e. the centralization and monopolization of the institution and legitimation of knowledge and institutional political action, lead to the weakening of the association between scientism, strong institutionalism and systemic logics. Then, there is not a direct association and way between institutional knowledge and institutional power, in the same way there is not a direct linking between science and institutions, science and social systems (in the sense that science legitimates the centrality, autonomy and self-referentiality of social systems in relation to common sense and common people). Therefore, also there is

no linking between science and technical orientation of social systems and institutions, that scientism and technic must orientate social systems and institutions beyond inclusive democratic participation and discussion. In other terms, the end of essentialist and naturalized foundations weakens both metaphysics and scientism, the way that institutions cannot centralize and monopolize construction and legitimation of knowledge and political *praxis*, by a closed self-authorized community (scientists, technicians, political parties etc.), and in a systemic way. Social systems and institutions are not autonomous, self-subsisting, and self-referential in relation to common sense and common people, in relation to democratic political *praxis*, in relation to democratic equality and legitimation. So only an inclusive and spontaneous democracy remains both to the construction and legitimation of knowledge, and to the performance of political *praxis*. It is a very important contemporary vocation to philosophy, when it returns to common sense and common people, assuming a posture of radical social critic and taking the form of an inclusive popular political *praxis*. And philosophical constitution and strive consist on a radical contraposition against scientism, strong institutionalism and systemic logics, in favor of an inclusive, participative and egalitarian democracy.

Conclusion: against strong institutionalism and systemic logic

So for what serves academic philosophy? The very special vocation of academic philosophy in particular and philosophy in general is to remember the institutions of their social linking, attacking strong institutionalism; yet, the very special philosophical vocation consists on facing systemic powers, combating contemporary institutional tendency which undermines democracy and popular participation and deliberation in favor of institutional systemic logic, authorized institutional communities and technical specialists; at last, the very special vocation of philosophy is to walk together with common people, which have no place in a society dominated more and more by systemic powers and closed institutions. In other words, philosophical present and future are to promote an inclusive and participative popular democracy; the philosophical present and future is to defend and promote everyday life, common sense and common people, who are the real places and political subjects of social evolution, of political *praxis* and legitimation of knowledge. Philosophy must contribute to replace politics in the streets, as a popular *praxis*; including it must contribute to put the social evolution and the institutional structuration in the popular field, as popular business (taking social evolution and institutional legitimation from closed, autonomous, self-subsisting and self-referential institutions).

To recognize that strong scientism in philosophy leads directly to legitimation of a strong institutionalism and a systemic logic, as well as to the delegitimation of common sense and common people, it is the very first step to a philosophical renewal. To recognize that philosophy is not a science of an institutional monopolization and centralization of normative foundation and epistemological-moral legitimation, by a self-authorized community, it is the absolutely important starting point to eradicate both the strong scientism in philosophy, and the classical idea that knowledge and technical specialist (or scientist, or philosopher) are more important subjects than common sense and common people. In the same way, to be aware of scientism danger (in all fields we can imagine it) is very important to the defense of an inclusive popular democracy, as well as to the combat against strong institutionalism and systemic institutional comprehension of social evolution and institutional legitimation as centralized and monopolized by institutions, as a question for specialists and authorized communities, from closed procedures. Knowledge, politics and institutional systemic evolution must be a democratic inclusive *praxis*, made by common people from everyday life, from common sense. There are no special reasons to close institutions to inclusive democratic participation of common people; and it is a mistake with very harmful political consequences to close all institutions or social systems to democratization and public participation. Then philosophical scientism depoliticizes philosophy, and correlatively, scientism makes philosophy institutionalist and systemic, i.e. depoliticized philosophy becomes a legitimation of institutional systemic closure to an inclusive democracy, to common sense, and to common people. Well, the philosophical refuse of scientism has as consequence, the refuse both of the strong institutionalism, and the systemic institutional logic, what means, on the other hand, as I said above, the foment of a radical social critic and an inclusive democratic political *praxis* as the normative-political basis to construction of knowledge, politics and institutional structuration.

How could philosophy start to perform this renewal? By the permanent denounce of the very intrinsic linking among scientism, strong institutionalism and systemic logics; by the refuse of the institutional centralization and monopolization of the knowledge, political and systemic construction and structuration; by the refuse of the centralization and monopolization of institutional legitimation by a self-authorized scientific community, located inside institutions, and beyond common sense and common people; by the refuse, at last, of a systemic logic as basis of structuration and functioning of the institutions, that institutions are not closed systems, autonomous, self-referential, and self-subsisting concerning an inclusive and participative democracy. And as the very special philosophical step, becoming a common sense's political-cultural *praxis* of dialogue, listening, participation; becoming an arena and instrument to common people talk and interact. If knowledge is not essentialist and naturalized, then epistemological-moral foundations

are not essentialist and naturalized too, in the same way there is not an institutional centralization and monopolization of all kind of legitimation or foundation, which means that it is not a monopoly of a self-authorized community, nor a matter which requires very deep scientific-philosophical specialization. The only thing that is required to philosophy is to think, talk and interact spontaneously with each other, which means and implies the overcoming of scientism, strong institutionalism and systemic logics, in the sense that knowledge and political foundations are always a constant everyday inclusive democratic *praxis* rooted in common sense.

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