

# UNIVERSALISM VS PARTICULARISM AND THE QUESTION OF AUTHENTICITY

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## Abstract

The rise of localism as the response to the challenges of globalism is considered in the article. Exploiting the notion of «selective response» it argues that localism is the false alternative to globalism as it is based on the same practical and theoretical dispositions. With the help of social critical theory and psychoanalysis article explicates the inner mechanisms of the localistic selective response and their relations to the production of subjectivity in Modernity. At the end of the article there are the outlines of the possible alternative to the globalism/localism strategies.

**Keywords:** fundamentalism, universalism, Modernity, subjectivity, authenticity selective response, singular universality.

## Intro: when the extremes meet

Roland Robertson once noticed that «the relationship between the universal and the particular must be central at this time to our comprehension of the globalization process and its ramifications»<sup>2</sup>. Obviously, this is where the interests of social theory coincide with the common sense's issues more closely than ever: to put it roughly the contest is about whether universal systems (economic or cultural or whatever) eliminate local entities or provide further prospects for their development. The instances of such problematic are manifold: from the European migration politics to the EU integration, from NATO's interventions in the Middle East to the UN global concerns and so forth. It's easy to see how these facts relate to the daily existence of people, communities and societies as well as to the modes of this existence. It's no wonder then that the two alternative ways of grasping the correlation between the universal and the particular tend to form the antagonism between conservative fundamentalism («How dare one betray his/her roots in favor of profits from universalism?») and liberal cosmopolitanism («How can he/she persist in the ridiculous traditions rejecting the wide range of possibilities in globalizing world?»).

What social theory and philosophy can contribute here is the consistent dismantling of these alternatives as the false opposi-

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<sup>2</sup> Robertson R. *Globalization: social theory and global culture*. SAGE, 2000. P. 97.

tion – we cannot choose between them, because they are genuinely the same. Though one should resist the temptation to reduce this note to its meaningless level when there's no any difference between the two standpoints at all, still not only in their extremes, which are not rare to find today, but in their most common modes, these quasi-alternatives provide the very same *disposition* to the social world and the human prospects in it. They are not true alternatives, but only two modes of the very one strategy, mixing global and local for its own sake. The real contest today is not about whether to pledge allegiance either for the universal or particular, but about the direction of their interweaving.

The elaboration of this view has its own long tradition comparable to the globalization studies themselves, and not for them solely. One can take Immanuel Wallerstein's inquiry to the contemporary form of nationalism as the possible example here:

«The nationalisms of the modern world are not the triumphant civilizations of yore. They are ambiguous expression of the demand both for participation in the system, assimilation into the universal, the elimination of all that is unequal and indeed different, and *simultaneously* for opting out of the system, adhering to the particular, the reinvention of differences. Indeed, it is universalism through particularism, and particularism through universalism».<sup>3</sup>

But what has gained less attention than it deserved is the specific mode of the universal/particular interweaving, which is called by Robertson «selective response». The grain of this idea is rather simple – all particular identities throughout their history have faced the challenges from the «significant others» as well as the necessity to respond to these challenges. The notion of selective response describes the multiplicity of «the ways in which such entities ... have at one and same time attempted to learn from others and sustain a sense of identity – or, alternatively, isolate themselves from the pressure of contact»<sup>4</sup>. Sharing Robertson's persuasion in the remarkable importance of this notion for the endeavors to comprehend the main trends of «global culture», this article seeks to develop it and to apply to the crucial social process of our times – the rise of fundamentalism and localism.

This goal presupposes the structure of the article: to begin with, I'm going to compare the notions of fundamentalism, particularism and localism – can we use them as synonyms and if yes than in what sense and what analytical benefits will it bring? Then I dwell on how this phenomenon should be understood in the terms of the «selective response». In order not to get lost in the abstract reasoning I turn to the social situation in Belarus and show in what way the selective response of fundamentalism has been fleshed out not only by those in power, but also by the cultural counter forces. To conclude, I attempt to provide the outlines of what can be the true alternative to the growing popularity of localism.

<sup>3</sup> Wallerstein I. *The Politics of the World-Economy. The States, the Movements and the Civilizations*. Cambridge University Press. P. 166–167.

<sup>4</sup> Robertson, op. cit., p. 113.

In general, these speculations are grounded on the social critical theory, especially in its post-Marxist mode, i.e. without paying much attention to the question of private property; it mixes instead the dismantling of the dominant mode of contemporary ideology with a psychoanalytic approach along with a due respect to Derrida's deconstruction.

### **Against modernity for the sake of authenticity?**

Considering the possible connections between fundamentalism, particularism and localism is a steep task not only for the extensive facts and theories one should pay attention to, but also for the reason that these notions belong to the very heart of the contemporary social processes and who might know what unpredictable outcomes they would bring and, in fact, do bring now. But even the brief reasoning is sufficient here to grasp what they hold in common and why this is important if we want to understand the reality we live in. Perhaps, we would be set upon the right path while understanding the common nature of these notions in terms of the rebellion against the oppressive character of western Modernity? It seems to be correct, but with some important caveats – in all these cases the oppression is understood in different ways. Obviously, the rise of religious fundamentalism can be seen as the postcolonial reaction to the repressive universalism of the Western civilization (if we speak about Muslim countries, for example) or the omnipresent moral corruption of Modernity on the whole, in case of the conservative Protestants' struggle against Christian liberalism.<sup>5</sup> But these fundamentalist demands cannot be identified with the defense of particularity: for instance – there's no and can't be solidarity between protestant fundamentalist and a member of a sexual minority group, though the latter also revolts in favor of private freedom against the ubiquitous disciplinary oppression of the sexuality, intrinsic to Modernity. Cultural particularism, on the one hand, and the fundamentalism, on the other, cannot be identified, though their counter-Modern character moves us closer to the proper understanding of these phenomena.

One should admit then that the authors of *Strong religion* have the good reasons to insist: fundamentalism must be referred to the religious movements exceptionally – otherwise, its meaning becomes too blur, mixed with the almost contradictory phenomena. But being analytically justified this firm connection with religious agenda binds and blinds us when we come to the question of the meaning of fundamentalism for the contemporary social processes, as in this phenomenon one can and should discern some much more important and significant

<sup>5</sup> For the excessive account for the history of protestant fundamentalism as well as the other forms of fundamentalism see: Almond G.A., Appleby R.S., Sivan E. *Strong religion: the rise of fundamentalisms around the world*. University of Chicago Press, 2003 (for example, p. 106). In general, this book can be recommended as the outstanding approach to the problem of fundamentalism in the contemporary societies, especially in the question of «selective response» (p. 94–95).

features than just the conservative revival. To be short, both fundamentalism and (social, national, cultural) particularism add to their counter-Modernism the appeal to personalistic values of the self-realization and motif of the coming back to one's roots; they have learned the *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit*, to put it in Adorno's words. The common ground for these phenomena is the firm assertion that the universalism of Modernity brought the self to the arms of devastation, alienating it from any personal meaning and turning it into a cog in the machine. Hence, the urge towards the personal authenticity against all odds of the Modernity is peculiar both to fundamentalism and particularism and nowadays is represented in a specific kind of what Anthony Giddens calls «life politics». It is exactly this structural opposition between inner particular authenticity and outer alienation of Modernity that binds fundamentalism and particularism together, and it is exactly this feature that predetermines most of the crucial events and processes in the world today.

In order to represent this similarity of the phenomena, apparently strictly distinct from each other, I prefer to use the term «localism» – as the allegiance one pledges to his/her locality – instead of the particularism and fundamentalism. This preference can be grounded in several ways: first of all, it helps us to grasp the structural similarity without being captured or even deceived by its «material» embodiment – whether the mentioned locality is represented in religious, social, political or cultural terms. Secondly, such withdrawal of «essence» from its «accidents» is not just the result of the serene contemplation but bears the vital significance for the world we live in – it helps us to realize that fundamentalism and particularism, often represented by the opposition between essentialism and relativism, are not the contradictory powers but just the competing rivals with the same disposition though with the different strategies. It is important to see that the anti-Muslim rhetoric of the American fundamentalism, the extremist rejection of the «West» in the Islamic movements, the hatred to the migrants in the EU, the recent separatist movements in Flanders and Catalonia and so on and so forth shares one thing in common – the assurance of the hostility of the «outer» world, from which there's the only way to escape, to wit, the safety of local authenticity.

We should claim once again – one can't dismiss the particular form of these localisms as unimportant: the similarity of structure doesn't make these phenomena alike. At best they are ignorant and indifferent to each other, at their worst – they are at the blood competition to each other. But to analyse them in terms of the selective response to the challenges of the globalizing world which mixes both universal and particular features, is to debunk localism as the misleading strategy which outcomes structurally contradict to its heralded goals and which, therefore, conceals the real alternatives to the alienating powers of the contemporary world. It renders this problematic its political significance with which we should continue.

## The cunning reason of the localistic ideology

The fear of the outer world as the dangerous site of the alien powers and urge toward the local closure are rather natural for the humans. But one can be sure that the urge for safe locality is not represented by localism, but is deliberately exploited by local authorities as *the tool for their guaranteed success in the competition for the global financial flows*.

On the whole, we have to admit that in the modern world the idea of political representation, once peculiar to a nation state, faces the enormous difficulties, threatening its very existence:

«...it can no longer be a question of expression or representation, but only of the simulation of an ever inexpressible and unexpressed social. This is the meaning of their silence. But this silence is paradoxical – it isn't a silence which does not speak, it is a silence that *refuses to be spoken for in its name*. And in this sense, far from being a form of alienation, it is an absolute weapon».<sup>6</sup>

If traditionally it is supposed that one seeks power in order to administer certain politics, the decline of the representation mechanism leads to the subversion of this formula when one explicitly administers the certain politics in order to obtain power. There are growing numbers of examples showing how contemporary politicians become legitimate not because they represent these or those values or interests but only because they have the greater chances – who knows why – to be elected. And nowadays one of the most important tasks for local authorities and their ideology is to persuade all those around that it really represents something or somebody – entities, groups, local values and so on.

Nation state, governed by such authorities, would procure the measures for defence of their privileged occupation from the threats, both outer (e. g. the overseas investments which are out of authorities' control) and inner (the other political powers, trying to contest the right for the privileged occupation, or the movements, insisting on the redistribution of the incoming profits) ones.

One could easily point out the nationalism as one of the most effective measure here. But would it be so, the problem would be solved in the very beginning, as the critics of the ambiguity of the nationalistic ideology, e. g. in the Third Reich, has the long history and is strong enough to unravel the complexity of its contemporary forms. It is an opportunity to claim in favour of the notion of localism once again, as it represents the fact that in the contemporary world it is possible to establish the closed entities on the different kinds of values, not only on the nationalistic ones. So, nationalism today turns out to be a particular example of the localism – to wit, in Germany of the 30's you could hardly place your Bavarian roots or professional community over the national identity or at least to level them with it. But today one can easily put

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<sup>6</sup> Baudrillard J. In the shadow of the silent majorities // *Semiotext(e)*. 2007. P. 49.

away her/his Spanish nationality, for example, in favour of the Basque ethnic group or European identity.

The explanation of such shift is that today the individuals have the abilities to draw the borders of their locality and local community in the way they like it – wider or narrower than traditional nationalistic, political, cultural, social and other localities. Modern subjectivity – though spread not only in Europe, but still coming from the lap of the European modernity – has been constituted as the one aiming to get the total authority of its action and correlative notions, i.e. to be the only author of its own life and history. To become such a sovereign subject have to deconstruct all the transcendent instances – the instances, which can determine the subject from without, from the outside realms. The most important examples of such instances are the God, Nature and Social Reality – for Modernity, all of them must be deconstructed and substituted by the immanent orders, i. e. which are capable for the subject to handle.<sup>7</sup>

Such deconstruction stipulates the transformation of the nature of the differences, with which the subject meets in its practices. It means that if the differences refer to their transcendent origin (as if they were constituted by the God or derived from the Natural orders), the subject, being determined by them, will face the restrictions in its actions, posed by these transcendent orders. For example, if it is said that women can't vote due to their natural (or divine) destination – to be wives, housekeepers or mothers – it means that the subject (which is not equal to human being, of course, in this particular example the subject *shouldn't* have gender) acknowledge the competence of the transcendent authority (Nature) to guide its notions and actions and predetermine its activity (not to let the women vote). The difference between genders – in order to correspond to the roots of modern subjectivity – hence, should become penetrable. This penetrability means that the notions and determinations of the genders can subjectively be transferred and attached from the one to another.<sup>8</sup> For example, penetrable gender differences allow to consider the right of voting – traditionally, the male one – as also belonging to women; the same goes with the ability to drive a car (or a cab), to serve in the army and so on. On the contrary, isn't it an example of the stated penetrability when a minister of interior comes to summit meeting with its babe in arms?<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> «In the present epoch, the domination of material relations over individuals, and the suppression of individuality by fortuitous circumstances, has assumed its sharpest and most universal form, thereby setting existing individuals a very definite task. It has set them the task of replacing the domination of circumstances and of chance over individuals by the domination of individuals over chance and circumstances» (Marx K., Engels F. *The German ideology*. Progressive Publishers, 1968. P. 464).

<sup>8</sup> I elaborate these ideas in the recent article *To end the history: what the leftists' experience can tell us about the contemporary world*, forthcoming in Echinox Journal (ISSN 1582-960X).

<sup>9</sup> See example in *Swedish minister brings baby to the EU family of nations* [Electronic resource] Mode of access: <http://www.eubusiness.com/news->

The subjects' ability to re-describe themselves in the political, social, cultural terms put the question of the role of national identities and nationalism on the whole in the contemporary societies. Ostensibly, leading to the dismantling of the nation states, this shift has indeed eliminated the political institution of the representation, *leaving the borders of the nation state intact and even strengthening it as the one of the most powerful resources of localism*. In general, we can admit that the counter-Modernity of the localism is deceptive, as it aims at strengthening of the institution of Modernity through their further development.

### **Strategies of the Belarusian authorities as the examples of the selective response**

Belarus here is the unique example – really, its national history has been consistently re-written here by the official ideology to the detriment of the ethnic roots. If we would comprehend this uncanny erasure in the commonly accepted way, we would make a conclusion that this disregard or even hostility to cultural locality is the result of the headlong urge towards homogenous world society, provided by the free market system and restricted by the conservative and traditional ideologies. And that would be wrong.

Belarusian authorities have succeeded in the building of the local closure without any reference to the ethnic mythologies or the civil society institutions, but on the mere opposition between the state and the outside world, between the safe locality and hostile outer reality. It is the very formula for the guaranteed political *status quo* – to persuade the people that the outside powers seek to destroy them and only wise and perspicacious local authorities find the way to manage them and to secure locality intact. Depending on the situation, the images of the dangerous outer powers are re-invented, but despite the momentary contents the very structure remains.

But one would be wrong again, thinking that this opposition is the version of the dyad «global risk/local safety». As I have stated above, the local authorities seek not to represent the fears of the people and protect them, they rather operate these fears in order to secure their leading position in the skimming the cream off the financial flows. *Hence, localism doesn't withdraw the country from the global competition or the dangers of the global market, but just determines, who is to lead and who is to be lead during these ventures*. For example, in Belarus of the 90's both to assume its national past and to construct institutions of the civil societies meant to provide the European prospects for the country, and this, obviously, would put the former Soviet elites – both Russian or Belarusian, it doesn't matter here – out of the game. In order to eliminate «European

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eu/sweden-family.1pw/view; or *Will we ever see this at Westminster? Working mother cradles her baby in sling as she casts her vote at EU Parliament* [Electronic resource] Mode of access: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1314283/Licia-Ronzulli-brings-baby-EU-Parliament.html>.

threat» (i. e. to stay on the top) and to prevent the return of the planning economy (i. e. to gain the greater profit from the market system) new way to close locality had to be invented by the political and economical elites, and they succeeded in this invention.<sup>10</sup>

It is easy to dismiss the utter significance of this conclusion, as there is much more than first meets the eye. For example, one could argue that this is a common political strategy, which may be found even in the states of the solid democracy, and it hardly can be represented as the example of how contemporary global and local trends interweave. But I aim to prove that the shift from nationalism to localism, to the mere opposition, pure structure «inner/outer» calls for the new type of closure, never experienced before – namely, «operational», which goes hand in hand with Robertson's notion of the «selective response».

If previously the conservative authorities had to establish their efforts on the really existing entities, now, on the contrary, localities are delineated in any of the ways appropriate to secure existing *status quo*. When it is needed for the political elites in power the borders of cultural or social locality can be drawn narrower or wider, and moreover, these elites deliberately decide when these borders are closed and when they are opened, what can permeate through them (for example, investments flows) and what cannot (for instance, international educational projects, cultural initiatives and so on). Hence, the closure of such localities is under the control, it is operated. It's not like to be conservative in order to be at the top in one's country solely, but rather to be at the top in one's locality in order to be successful in global competition for the cash flows, re-defining this locality whenever and however the wish for success in the competition demands.

The second dismissing account on this problematic is just to blame this operational closure as the example of unfair play, in which this or that country has appeared to be involved due to greedy elites, laying their hands on the profits from the country's competition on the free global markets. There's no anything to learn from the cases of Belarus and the countries alike, one would continue to argue, as it's just their bad luck to have the elites like that, and the only hope here is the wider and deeper spread of the global market, intolerant to any kind of restrictions, including cunning localism.

But what is missed in this argumentation is the fact that financial flows evade only those borders and restrictions which threaten their capitalization.<sup>11</sup> But it's not the case of localism at all! Really, the goal of the local authorities is the very same – to gain profit from the global market as much as it is possible. Their local «beliefs» are developed against the global financial flows, as one may be deceived by their rhetoric, but only against the rivals in this play. Hence, neither local powers, nor the global

<sup>10</sup> The examples can be found in: Gapova E. On Nation, Gender and Class Formation in Belarus... and Elsewhere in the Post-Soviet World // *Nationalities Papers*. 2002. Vol. 30. P. 4.

<sup>11</sup> See excessive account on this issue in: Deleuze G., Guattari F. *Anti-Oedipus*. University of Minnesota Press, 1983. P. 224.



market system have been limited by the politics of localism. And it's time to raise a question – wouldn't such politics gradually become something more preferable for the market systems as it offer a certain degree of stability without damaging the growth of profits?

As luck would have it, it's not the commonly accepted practice, but one must pay heed to its growing popularity, especially after financial meltdown in the USA in 2008 and a financial crisis in the EU in 2010. Though many political leaders in these cases appeared to be the counter to the financial elites, the undertaken measures, surprisingly, lead not toward the defence of the possibilities of the individuals and communities but rather to promotion of the localism.<sup>12</sup>

So, the main lesson here is that the latter doesn't threaten either political stability in the local spaces or the spread of the global market system. The only losing side here is the supporters of the universal human perspective – from the «human rights» notion to the questions of global solidarity. Really, we are caught up in the dilemma – it is to choose between the universality of the global market and the partiality of the locality. In other words, if you seek to escape the social irresponsibility of the global finances, you are blamed as the fundamentalist or communist, if you reject the restraints of the locality you're accused of the venality towards your «roots» in favour of the cosmopolitan preferences.

But obviously, this dilemma is misleading – in fact, we can't choose between these opportunities because in the contemporary situation, again, they are the same. If we recall the notion of «open society» provided by Karl Popper as the one which is aware of the imperfection of its own institutions and urges toward its permanent proving, it is easy to see that *both market fundamentalism<sup>13</sup> and localism are based on the conviction that they can reach the point of the ultimate perfection and final completeness*. The difference between them in the description of this completeness is erased by the same kind of disposition in thoughts or practice, so that their interweaving is rather possible and rather real, despite the fact that they are not surely the identical dispositions.

### **Fetishism of locality: the desire to be seduced**

Such criticism towards the localism as the interweaving of the universal and the particular under the sway of selective response, or operational closure, can be easily identified as the quasi-Marxist strategy, adjusted to the contemporary situation by shifting its focus from national

<sup>12</sup> For example: «What if the “vicious combination of the Asian knout and the European stock market” proves itself to be economically more efficient than liberal capitalism? What if it signals that democracy, as we understand it, is no longer a condition and motive force of economic development, but rather an obstacle?» (Žižek S. *First as tragedy than as farce*. Verso, 2009. P. 132).

<sup>13</sup> Though the notion of market fundamentalism is not identical to that of the universalism, in this context they are interchangeable. For the elaboration of this notion see: Soros J. *The crisis of global capitalism*. Public affairs, 1998. P. *pxx*.

ideology to the politics of identity. But along with its productive sides, the failures of such strategy are also reproduced.

It is a well-known story of the disappointment which most of the leftists experienced through the I World War – they were upset how easily the workers from different countries had dismissed their proletarian solidarity and taken up arms against each other in favour of national values. For Marxists and other leftists such fidelity to Nation was undoubtedly the perverse form of bourgeois ideology, which was supposed to be the completely opposite to the interests of workers. What was the real problem for the left radicals then it was the willingness of proletarians to act against their interests.

The same goes with the analysis, presented in the previous chapters of this article. Really, it appears that the local authorities turn to be a kind of wizards, blinding the masses and capitalizing on their fears, while the commons should be understood as intrinsically aimed at the global solidarity but deceived by the local powers and their omnipresent ideological apparatus in the opposite.

Perhaps, only die-hard leftists or populists would insist that such almost mystical scene can be true. And it is here where the classical criticism towards ideology must be accompanied with the psychoanalytic standpoints, as we can see, for example, in the oeuvre of Slavoj Žižek. One of his recent analyses presented in *First as tragedy, than as farce* of the fundamentalism and populism, as well as the liberal cynicism, is of the great importance here.

Žižek discerns two kinds of ideology – the previous mode of ideology can be called symptomal, while today, in the “post-ideological” era we face with the fetishistic mode. To explicate the discrepancy between them one should turn to the psychoanalytic ideas on symptom and fetish. Symptom occurs when the unpleasant and inappropriate content of one’s Psyche breaks its way on the surface of the psychic life, which is ostensibly free from any kind of such contents. The system, then, which exploits the symptomal mode of ideology, tries to represent itself as the perfect one, without any dysfunctions and failures, the embodiment of the ultimate Truth. In other words, it tries to hide its own imperfection from itself, tries to reject the symptoms as the symptoms, claiming that they are not the burst of any hidden, inconvenient Truth of this system, but just as the mere accidents.

Fetish, on the contrary, should be psychoanalytically understood not in the terms of Truth, but as the manifestation of Lie. One is completely aware that her/his fetish is not the true Thing, but still let oneself be seduced by the Lie, embodied in fetish. As Žižek explains it,

«In symptomal mode, the ideological lie which structures our perception of reality is threatened by symptoms qua “returns of the repressed” – cracks in the fabric of the ideological lie – while the fetish is effectively a kind of envers of the symptom. That is to say, the symptom is the exception which disturbs the surface of the false appearance, the point at which

the repressed Other Scene erupts, while the fetish is the embodiment of the Lie which enables us to sustain the unbearable truth».<sup>14</sup>

Fetishist mode of ideology is completely adopted by the localistic powers – there can be raised thousand of objections to all versions of localism, either ethnic, or national, or cultural, or social or whatever-else, but it doesn't matter. Fetishist is fully aware of them, but the more objections are, the more powerful attractiveness of fetish becomes. The explanation of this paradox is rather simple – fetishism can't be understood in terms of the rational comprehension of the reality, but should be considered as the libidinal seduction, or, even the demand for this seduction: fetishist doesn't want or need the truth, her/she longs for the seduction by the fetish.

But from where this rush for deliberative self-deception stem? And what is this unbearable truth, against which fetishism proposes the effective measures? Today we need this political and social fetishism in order to defer the realization of the fact, of which we are already aware – that the social order and political realities of the contemporary world are unbearable and leave no hope in their ruthlessness. *We try to run away from their imperfection and disruption to be seduced by the perfection and completeness of locality* – again, either it is my ethnic roots, which somehow justifies my existence («Catalan, or Litsvin»<sup>15</sup>), or the social group («critical intellectual»), or cultural identity («football fan») and so on. Maybe, in the depth of his/her soul anti-Semite doesn't believe that the Jews are the agents of all the misfortunes and problems, but it's easier to stick at this idea, mocking at all the attempts of liberal/left ideologies to persuade anti-Semite that it's not true – the more it's false, the more it's desirable, the more objections there are, the more powerful ideological voluptuousness becomes.

Really, localism loves its own enemies, but with the strange kind of love – it's the open question, whether it wants them to prove they are not hostile or dangerous. Perhaps, be the latter true, it would be the source of the insane rage towards them, as these «enemies» by their friendly, or, at last, indifferent action, shows up that the completeness and perfection of the locality is fake, and thus dispelling the seductive aura of its fetishism. Anti-Semite, if we'd continue this example, needs the Jews and loves them, but only as the figures which embody the challenge from the outside and who by that create the surplus libidinal value for the her/his own locality (nationalistic or religious one). He/she would «really» hate the Jews if only they appeared to be different from the desire of fetishist, showing that there's no any hope or ease in the anti-Semite beliefs and bringing one to the harsh reality of the inconvenient truth from the seductive realms of the final cuts and transparent answers.

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<sup>14</sup> Zizek, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> The ethnicity, the ideas on which are elaborated by some Belarusian historians. For a similar approach one can address to a rather interesting project of the same kind «Kryuja»; see: <http://kryuja.org/>

Considering the case of Belarus, I once briefly showed that Belarusian intellectuals, opposite to the official ideology, though comprehending themselves as the alternative mode of thinking or even alternative mode of culture comparing to the official ones, exploit the very same modes of thinking and understanding of contemporary social reality. The most ridiculous thing is that «post-modernists» or traditionalists, ostensibly occupying the different, or even contrary, standpoints, nonetheless display the devotion to the idea of the closed locality and its own *fatum*, demonstrating the same seduction by the completeness and perfection of the such edifice. Seeking the alternative to devastating pace of the universalism, turning all the regions into its neo-colonies (economic and/or cultural), they have decided that the only real opposition here is adherence to one's locality. Surely, they do it sincerely and they do not share the pie of the overseas investments but their one-sided convictions help the local authorities to strengthen ideology of localism. It's easy to see how – whenever an individual, community or organization raises the critical voice saying that the local authorities are on the offensive against individual and social freedom, this criticism is re-interpreted by the official ideology as the endeavour of the outside powers (Western democracies, for example) to intervene into the locality, hiring these or those heralds for the justification of such attempt to establish alien rules. And the so-called alternative intellectuals can do nothing but agree with this re-interpretation as for them any kind of freedom is the rupture of the local closure, completeness and fulfilment, and this rupture exposes the locality to the cold and windy outside world – so, as we can see, these «alternatives» don't alternate anything.

This seduction is also represents the mode of selective response – really, the seduction by the locality calls not for revival of the traditions, but only for the deliberative choice of some of them, picking up those which would be adoptable for the fetishism. For example, one can claim for the revival of the glory of traditional society, but certainly wouldn't agree to occupy the social position of bond slave, which he/she would inherit unless the social system wouldn't be modernized.

Here we can see an astonishing scene – the ostensible oppositions go hand in hand, sustaining their co-existence. The bitter irony is that the need for localism exploited by the authorities, seeking the advantage in the global competition, as well as by the counter-forces, seduced by the perfectness and perfection of their localities, are no alternatives: in fact, they demonstrate the very same mode of the interweaving of the universalism and the particularism, namely, the operational closure. Are we doomed to choose between the same?

### **Outro: love for impossible**

The mix of universal and particular features in operational mode of localism is based on the powerful delusion that the individual or community can *decisively* delineate the outlines of the locality to which they belong and to which they pledge their allegiance – either in sincere or cunning manner. But if one opposes this idea, from what standpoint

such opposition stems? Or, to put it differently, what alternative does this opposition offer?

Apparently, if one opposes localism, he/she claims in the name of universalism, by that suspending all the subjects and entities in the air, without giving them any grounds and turning their existence into the spectral vegetation. Isn't such emptiness and meaningless the thing which is much worse than the deliberative self-deception by the seductive fetishism of locality, even if this locality is phantasmal? Is criticism towards this «human, all too human» phenomenon justifiable?

Well, once again we should see that this opposition of universalism and localism offers the choice between the one and the same – namely, between two modes of ghostly existence and self-deception. On the contrary, if there is a path which leads away from this unfruitful dilemma it must reject the possible lies of universalism and localism to impossible Truth of their interweaving – *when the universal becomes singular*. Žizek in his own Kantian way declares for such decision:

«...one participates in the universal dimension of the “public” sphere precisely as a singular individual extracted from, or even opposed to, one's substantial communal identification – one is truly universal only when radically singular, in the interstices of communal identities».<sup>16</sup>

But besides this uncanny character of the idea of singular universality, isn't this formula just the repetition of the localistic beliefs? For how the modes of adherence to the locality or singularity could be discerned? Are they really different?

They are indeed, and this difference lies in the fact that despite of the ostensible transparency of locality, *locus* of singularity is characterized by its unpredictability, for one never possesses locus, but the contrary is true – no one can be sure of what the coincidence of universal and singular leads to, otherwise locus turns out to be a fetishistic locality. We can follow Derrida, who, reasoning on the inventiveness, needed for justifiable globalization, points out, that «it must justify itself by producing its principle of universalization in a universally convincing way, by validating its principle through its very invention. In this way, I am formulating (and I am perfectly aware of it) a task that appears contradictory and *impossible*. ... But I maintain that only the impossible arrives and that there is no event and thus no irruptive and singular decision except where one does more than deploy the possible»<sup>17</sup>.

Hence, one should withdraw oneself from the impasses of empty universalism and suffocative localism by maintaining the idea that one can make a move only from one's singular standpoint, but, on the other hand, it happens when one moves from one's singularity towards the universal. Indeed, it seems unreal – but still, we can do nothing but agree with Derrida: something happens only when it's impossible.

<sup>16</sup> Žizek, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>17</sup> Derrida J. *Globalization, peace and cosmopolitanism // Derrida J. Negotiations: interventions and interviews*. Stanford University Press, 2002. P. 374.