

SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

Title: The Limits of European Universalism from the Perspective of Poststructuralist Political Philosophy

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Abstract: The dissertation tries to find a philosophy for Europe that could help to rethink European identity outside unsatisfactory alternative of political universalism and particularism. In the times of the so-called “postmodern condition”, when every kind of political universalism is criticized for its hidden particularity, incompatibility for difference and arbitrary normativity, universalist politics is in retreat. It is especially clear in case of European universalism because of its latent eurocentrism and its responsibility for historical crimes and social injustices which have been done in the name of Europe and its universalizing missions. But some kind of universalism is necessary if we want to keep a promise of political emancipation alive. Such universalism is urgently needed in times of Europe’s disintegration into hostile particularities of nation, religion or race and in the context of Europe’s inhospitality towards its outside (refugees, immigrants, post-colonial world). To find a new kind of universalism which could be more inclusive towards difference, more fluid or nomadic – and a stable and convincing at the same time – it is crucial to reconcile unity with alterity. The dissertation brings poststructuralist political philosophy to fulfill this difficult theoretical task. Poststructuralist political philosophers are critical of universalist authors’ inability to get rid of crypto-particularism and of particularist rejection of any kind of universalism and naïve affirmation of differences and micro-identities to the same extent. Poststructuralism which originated in the 1960s and 1970s, mostly in France, as a reaction to the crisis of structuralism (its essentialism), and which is associated with thinkers like Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser or Roland Barthes, was developed and integrated into political philosophy thanks to many notable contemporary authors like Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Judith Butler, Slavoj Žižek, Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt, Étienne Balibar or Jacques Rancière. Their programmatic anti-essentialism or anti-foundationalism makes them important critics

of any kind of particularism – open or hidden in the form of universalism. The dissertation presents their theories and uses them in re-conceptualization of European identity which – instead of being universalist or particularist – is thought here as pluriversal. Thus if the political role of universalism is to transcend any narrow horizon of particular, then poststructuralism tries to go one step further and transcend universalism's particularity.

The dissertation is divided into three parts. In part I – called “Border” – it proposes poststructuralist theoretization of the notion of border and transgression. It is motivated, first, by the need to re-think European universalism (or pluriversalism) as the idea of transgression of transgression. Secondly, it can help to understand why it is so hard for Europe to act as an non-identity open for nomadic subjects (like refugees or immigrants) and how Europe could re-invent itself to be more hospitable and inclusive political entity. Bringing together authors working in the area of migration and border studies, who are inspired by poststructuralist thinkers (Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari, Agamben, Balibar, Rancière, Negri and Hardt), part I presents new theories of borders and transgression: biopolitics of migration (Nick Vaughan-Williams), kinopolitics (Thomas Nail) or autonomy of migration (Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson). All of them try to theorize Europe beyond universalism and particularism, inside and outside or identity and difference.

Part II – named “Europe” – exercises studies of idea of Europe to show that European identity has always been thought as universalist and transgressing ideal. But even if Europe – according to its main thinkers and ideologues, mythologies and etymologies, spatial and visual manifestations – was predestined to overthrow its internal and external borders, it was re-constituting it in a new form. Trying to overcome the dialectics of universality and particularity, the dissertation brings two poststructuralist strategies to do so. The first one – presented in the chapter I, called “To transgress transgression. From sedentary to nomadic geophilosophy of Europe” – is an attempt to treat Europe as a nomadic identity, which wanders from between non-identities and blurs its borders. Inspired mostly by Deleuze's and Guattari's nomadology, the chapter refers to contemporary philosophers like Rosi Braidotti, Denis Guénoun, Massimo Cacciari, Franco Cassano or Roberto M. Dainotto, who try to re-think European identity in order to travel beyond the inside/outside hierarchical division. The second chapter – called “From Europe of functionaries to Europe

of specters and afterimages. Hospitable universalism” – concentrates on phenomenological and post-phenomenological tradition of thinking on European universalism, starting with Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Jan Patočka. In the conclusion, chapter two shows that all ideas, with which European universalism could become pluriversal and which had already been present in these thinkers’ works, are successfully used by Derrida and his follower, Jean-Luc Nancy. Their proposal to treat Europe as non-difference with itself, which is always dependent on its alterity, shows that universal, while impossible for realization, is necessary for Europe’s survival.

Part III – called “Universalism” – is devoted to four most important debates on political universalism that have been conducted in contemporary poststructuralist political philosophy. Heirs of Lacan, Derrida, Deleuze or Foucault tried to retain universalism in the face of particularist critique, popularity of identity politics or the so-called “end of great narratives” (modernity, progress, socialism, humanity), on which universalism was heavily dependent. Part III discusses four debates – first one on contingency, hegemony and universality (among Butler, Laclau and Žižek), second one on Christian universalism of Saint Paul (Badiou, Žižek, Agamben), third one on relations between capitalism and universalism (Immanuel Wallerstein and Balibar), and fourth – and the final one – on European universalization in post-colonial world (the dispute between Vivek Chibber and Subaltern Studies group). Every debate delivers important conclusions on the possibilities for European universalism to come.

In Conclusion of the dissertation all parts are summarized and poststructuralist political philosophy is presented as a useful theoretical perspective to transgress alternative between European universalism and particularism. But it is argued that poststructuralists – contrary to common view – shouldn’t be seen as agents of affirmative, one-sided philosophy of difference, hybridity, alterity or non-identity. Although they clearly sympathize with such a perspective, at the same time they are well aware that it is far from reality and its realization brings many obstacles and countertendencies. So their philosophy is not eschatological in any way. Thanks to latest developments in poststructuralism, which are clearly political and concentrated on the social injustices and inequalities, critiques of capitalist globalization or prospects for new anti-systemic social movements, poststructuralist theories could help us to generate pluriversal Europe from the bottom up.