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POST-COLONIALISM AND UKRAINIAN HISTORY

On the contrary, inventing an absurd philosophy in the interests of pleasing natives of Bongo-Bongo, is, in reality, an insulting, offensive act of condescension. We do not lie or commit self-deception on behalf of those whom we respect.

Ernest Gellner

They pick up mud with their hands, dry it, ... use this earth as fuel...only have rainwater to drink... And these people [Germanic tribes] say that being conquered by Rome is tantamount to slavery.

Pliny the Elder

The Post-Colonial Moment

Works by literary critics are prominent among recent publications on empires and colonies. They use “post-colonial theory” to examine cultural aspects of subordination – “cultural and linguistic imperialism.”¹ They claim

¹ B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, H. Tiffin (Eds.). *The Empire Writes Back*. London, 1989; B. Ashcroft. *Post-Colonial Transformation*. London, 2001; L. Gandhi. *Postcolonial Theory. A Critical Introduction*. New York, 1998; A. Loomba. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*.

that literature from formerly “colonized” countries is a distinct unit of study, that power, which they do not distinguish from authority, is epistemological rather than material and that foreign rule – indiscriminately termed “colonialism” – was primarily a cultural-linguistic phenomenon. Assuming that domination and liberation were dependent on knowledge and culture, they focus their analysis on writers as the servants or critics of foreign rule. Practitioners assume that peoples’ central concerns are “resistance” and their national identity, and claim that because rule rests on mental attitudes rather than might, domination will continue for as long as the mental attitudes imposed by ruling foreigners persist among subject natives regardless of other circumstances. In so far as post-colonialists are anti-modernist and reduce identity to culture, they incline, like nationalists, to nativist politics and to regard cultural nationalism as the antidote for the injuries of foreign rule. By restricting imperial-colonial relationships to literary-cultural spheres, post-colonialists implicitly assign to themselves the key role in explaining domination and liberation, and offer post-colonialism as a therapeutic theory for once colonized peoples. They seem to think that bad, white European males with their technology and logic did worse things to good, non-white non-Europeans than they did to each other or that non-Europeans did to themselves.

The most outspoken claim that identities are biological and immutable; that liberation demands that these identities be reclaimed so as not to be lost – that they be reinforced rather than transcended. This coincides with the views of pre-independence separatist nationalists to produce a curious alliance of the pre-modern with the post-modern. Like nationalists and “Third World” Marxists, postcolonialists regard accounts of the past that question former rulers’ malevolence and destructiveness as apologetics that perpetuate subordination. Forgetting their pedagogic role as illuminators of primary texts, literati turned radical post colonialists in modern representative democracies imagine that, like Belinsky or Pisarev in tsarist Russia, they too must have a political function and that post-colonialism should be inculcated at universities. They reinforce their involvement in politics not as citizens but as professors of literature with the claim that reality is not some-

London, 1998; A. J. Lopez. *Posts and Pasts. A Theory of Postcolonialism*. Albany, 2001; B. Moore-Gilbert. *Postcolonial Theory. Contexts, Practices, Politics*. London, 1997; L. Tuhiwi-Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies*. London, 2001; G. Prakash. *Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography // Social Text*. 1992. Nos. 31/32. Pp. 8-19. J. Jenkins (Ed.). *The Postmodern History Reader*. London, 1997 includes some articles presenting the case against.

thing given and that art is not simply a representation of an external world, but that our understanding of the world is determined by how we represent it. In its extreme form, this hypothesis claims that how we talk and think about something determines what that thing is. Reality consists of rhetorical forms, like metaphors, whose principal medium is language, and if we change our metaphor, we will change our reality. In other words, nothing is what it seems as reality is only what we think it is and, by extension, there is no difference between fact and fiction or myth and modern historical writing. By virtue of their function as qualified persons who can interpret how we make our world through “representations,” radical literati see themselves as a vanguard of “progressive change” engaged in “constructing” new myths. These purportedly will explain to all “how they are produced as modern subjects” and how “memory is internalized in their lives” much better than mere fact-based historical writing. From this perspective, supposedly, we can change the status of former colonized natives by reinterpreting how they were “represented” in literature. No need to form guerilla armies or storm Winter Palaces. Even reading becomes a political act.

Within the field, a moderate group has clarified that they are interested in how the ruled expressed their experiences of domination in literature and not in the domination itself. “Moderates” accept the universal validity and accessibility of “western scientific knowledge” and its ability to recognize and “represent” the oppressed and “the marginal.” They accept that reality cannot be reduced to appearances and that while people sometimes do not mean what they say, it is plain wrong to create out of this a theory that argues no one ever means what they write and that nothing can be communicated explicitly and precisely. The moderate’s attitude to nationalism is ambivalent. At best, it is a necessary evil; useful when used to mobilize the oppressed, but not when it undermines other interests and identities. National identities are hybrid, multiple, and mutable. Those of ruler and ruled both change due to contact with each other, and viable post-independence identities tend to be a product of compromise between pre-independent nationalists and imperial/Creole identities. Cultural nationalists would probably agree with moderate post-colonial accounts of cultural/national issues in the pre-independence literature of formerly dominated minorities.

Critics outside the field have serious doubts about post-colonialism.² They see little novelty in its claim that we must know the past to know

² G. Huggan. *The Post-Colonial Exotic. Marketing the Margins*. London, 2001; P. Hallward. *Absolutely Postcolonial*. Manchester, 2000; D. Kennedy. *Imperial History and*

ourselves or that cultural identity is significant. Edmund Burke and Herder told us that language and culture are politically important. Rousseau claimed that they can serve as a theoretical basis of resistance to oppression. He identified the spiritual, rather than the material, as the repository of conquered peoples' national culture and associated independence with that spiritual identity in his condemnations of the French invasion of Corsica and the Russian invasion of Poland. The cultural self-assertion born of resentment and envy would guarantee the ultimate triumph of the indigenous over the foreign. Herbert Spencer observed that peoples of different backgrounds often could not understand each other's motivations or behavior. Jakob Burckhardt and Mark Bloch drew attention to the importance of culture and ritual as evidence. Louis Gottschalk, Denis Hay, and Alfred Cobban drew attention to the ambiguities of language and meaning; John Pocock and Quentin Skinner pointed out that what ideas and concepts mean changes over time. Post-colonialists, however, ignore these authorities and do not trace their intellectual origins through them. They recognize as their mentors a group of thinkers composed primarily, though not exclusively, of expatriate Algerians and Bengali Indians who, in turn, do not cite the aforementioned persons in their work. Post-colonialists interested in the Middle East do not cite Bernard Lewis, but Edward Said.

Post-colonialist writing is enveloped in obtuse postmodernist/poststructuralist theorizing and neologisms. Critics reject much of it as gibberish that tells us what we already know in language we cannot understand. There are no grounds whatsoever, they note, to dispense with the conventional combination of geographical, chronological, generic and thematic labels used to categorize literature, particularly because the literature that post-colonialists claim is a definable object of study is in reality so diverse that it is impossible to include it within a single conceptually coherent definition. Post-colonialists mistake their concepts for something real; treating "narratives" and "discourse" as if they had material existence apart from the reality they refer to. Universities, critics continue, are not places for inculcating theories, but examining them. Teachers must be aloof not be-

Post-colonial Theory // *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*. 1996. No. 3. Pp. 345-363; J. M. Mackenzie. *Orientalism. History, Theory and the Arts*. Manchester, 1995; A. Sokal, J. Bricmont. *Intellectual Impostures*. London, 1998; D. Washbrook. *Orients and Occidents: Colonial Discourse Theory and the Historiography of the British Empire* // W. R. Louis (Ed.). *The Oxford History of the British Empire*. Oxford, 1999. Pp. 596-611; K. Windschuttle. *The Killing of History*. New York, 1996; B. Lewis. *Islam and the West*. New York, 1993.

cause they should not have interests themselves, but because their position obliges them to suspend those interests to pursue dispassionate understanding. Critics charge post-colonialists with confusing cause and effect, ascribing conscious intent to diffuse unrelated activities, incorrectly using “colonialism” as a synonym for dependency of any kind, and reducing foreign rule to an ubiquitous, intentionally constructed system of servitude within which the manner how rulers understood their subjects was in itself the principal form of domination. Early post-colonialists had no idea of the intellectual history of the basic ideas they used, like imperialism and colonialism, and were ignorant of modern historical scholarship about empire and colonies. They think all “resistance” is desirable or beneficial and depict “colonial” rule as a systematic implementation of a coherent plan that excluded all influences unrelated to the imperial connection. If, as post-colonialists claim, truth is an effect of power, how to account for the belief of embattled minorities throughout the ages that truth undermines power? Perhaps we should now say *potentia facebit te liber*, instead of *veritas facebit te liber*?

Post-colonial practitioners focus on intangibles like individual identity and psyches. They attempt to identify the cultural and psychological effects of imperial rule in the works of major writers and then they generalize various claims about the forms and receptions of those works into descriptions of the historical political situation in which the work was produced. Critics discover that “discourse” only means “text” for post-colonialists, which then turns out to be restricted to “literary text,” which then shrinks to English-language writing. Sweeping generalizations are thus derived from a tiny body of evidence and the use of circular reasoning. These generalizations, in addition, transpose claims derived from psychoanalytic theory, itself a dubious body of thought, directly from individual mentality to society. Critics remind us that trauma is not transmitted through generations. Whether brutalization produces victims or torturers depends on individual decisions and circumstances, not assumed universal patterns of psychological damage.³ Where victims were “silent”, we must accept that we cannot know their intentions and not read contemporary political-intellectual agendas into past struggles. In light of their shortcomings, Ernest Gellner considered post-colonialist studies “quite entertaining but intellectually insignificant.”⁴

³ E. Gellner. *The Psychoanalytical Movement*. London, 1985; C. Merridale. *Night of Stone. Death and Memory in Russia*. London, 2000.

⁴ See in particular Ernest Gellner. *Relativism and the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, 1985; Idem. *Postmodernism Reason and Religion*. New York, 1992; Idem. *Encounters with Nationalism*. Oxford, 1994; Idem. *Anthropology and Politics*. Oxford, 1995.

Marxists point to a collusion between post-colonialism and the a-national cosmopolitan “global capitalist class” that neutralizes the potential of identity and culture to subvert domination and promote emancipation.⁵ During the 1980s, post-colonialists with jobs in the English departments of American universities and publishing houses began disseminating their views. At the same time, corporate managers with multi-national workforces and markets realized that knowing about and using local culture and language in business strategies would improve sales. Accordingly, business schools began providing a market for post-colonialist publications and hired its practitioners to teach aspiring executives about “culture” and “resistance to domination” in former colonies, so they could better manage workers and exploit/reconstruct identities in the advertising and marketing of commodities. Global corporations thereby make the poverty and exploitation they inflict via the international division of labor acceptable by treating them as “cultural differences” to respect in the name of tolerance and diversity. People who see advertisements and foreign branch-plant foremen using their language will have the illusion that they are not ruled by foreigners, will be less inclined to think themselves oppressed and to resist, and be more inclined to become foremen/manager-collaborators themselves.

Some of the above comments are unfair. In so far as post-colonialism is only a technique of literary criticism, there is no reason why it should be concerned with politics and economics nor why anyone outside the field of literature should be troubled by its dubious methods and preconceptions. In face of strong empirical criticism and public derision of this particular fad, moreover, former advocates are now abandoning ship – although whether they are jumping because they are concerned about scholarly merits or intellectual fashions remains unclear.⁶ However, when the “Soviet Bloc” bloc collapsed and academics began looking for new words to designate the land in between Ireland and Japan, and new ways to think about the countries located there, they were influenced by post-colonialism. Not only had it just established itself as one of the trendy new turn-of the century “–isms,” but practitioners began presenting this flawed literary method as a valid social theory. Historians began writing about subjects related to or

⁵ A. Ahmad. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London, 1992; A. Dirlik. *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capital*. Boulder CO, 1997; Idem (Ed.). *History After the Three Worlds*. Lanham, USA, 2000; T. Eagleton. *The Illusions of Postmodernism*. London, 1996.

⁶ G. C. Spivak. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason. Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge MA, 1999.

derived from post-colonialism while English professors compiled “historical introductions” to post-colonialism.⁷ The latter are contrived histories resembling 1920s Comintern publications, without the Marxist terminology, and their appearance might lead some to wonder why political scientists don’t begin writing about the aesthetic merits of Byron’s verse. In any case, because the ship is still afloat with passengers and crew aboard, observers should not only have a vague awareness of post-colonialism’s alleged merits, but also to know its shortcomings.

Ukraine and Europe

Most post-colonialists confine their interests to French, British, Spanish and Belgian overseas possessions after 1492. By the end of the century others, including some Ukrainian literary scholars and journalists, began looking at other countries in post-colonial terms.⁸ As “moderates” they reminded us that politicized Ukrainian and Russian literati fought national battles in their novels. They argued that Ukraine’s future will depend on its people adopting an identity that transcends nationalist/anti-colonial and imperial/colonialist divisions. They do not claim that the hybrid products of imperial cultural/biological mixing in Ukraine somehow make possible a liberation from an oppressive “Western modernity.” While nationally conscious Ukrainians probably agree with these neo-nationalist accounts of literature focused on cultural scars left by Russian “colonial rule,” some would reject the claim that a viable modern Ukrainian identity must incorporate elements that they identify as Russian and “foreign.”

By describing Ukrainian-Russian relations in post-colonialist terms these individuals make Ukrainian points of view and grievances acceptable to some who otherwise might have ignored them. But whether post-colonialism tells us something about Ukraine that we otherwise would not know and whether it can or should be applied to Ukraine is doubtful.

If the Russian and Soviet empires were European empires and part of the “Enlightenment project,” then Ukrainian issues would seem to be best

⁷ R. J. C. Young. *Postcolonialism. An Historical Introduction*. Oxford, 2001.

⁸ M. Pavlyshyn and J. E. M. Clarke (Eds.). *Ukraine in the 1990s*. Melbourne, 1992; M. Riabchuk. *Vid Malorossii do Ukrainy*. Kiev, 2000; Idem. *Culture and Cultural Politics in Ukraine: A Postcolonial Perspective* // P. D’Anieri, T. Kuzio (Eds.). *Dilemmas of State-Led Nation Building in Ukraine*. Westport Conn., 2002. Pp. 47-70; M. Shkandrij. *Russia and Ukraine. Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleon to Postcolonial Times*. Montreal, 2001.

understood in the context of European rule over non-Europeans and the model based on former overseas colonies would be a more appropriate comparative point of reference for Ukraine than continental European countries – even though few refer to territorially contiguous peripheral regions as “colonies.” However, Ukrainians disagree among themselves over whether or not tsarist and/or Soviet Ukraine constituted a colony. Most did not think about their country in terms of global imperialism and colonialism nor did major theorists on these subjects include Ukraine in their work. Those who claim that Ukraine was a colony do not pursue the anti-enlightenment / “Third World” analogy very far.⁹ Nationally conscious Ukrainians consider Russia “Asian,” Ukraine “European/western”, and want Ukraine in the EU. Nonetheless, if we accept that post-colonialism can be applied to Ukrainian subject-matter, then we might ask whether Ukraine can be simultaneously post-colonial and “European.”

Peripheral rebellion and state fragmentation are not restricted to European overseas empires. They are also characteristic of European land empires. We can identify two waves of national separatism in western Eurasia prior to 1918: one between 1749 and 1789 (Scots, Greeks, Corsicans, Dutch, and Belgians), and a second between 1799 and 1848 (Irish, Norwegians, Finns, Belgians, Italians, and Greeks). Thus, Ukraine is not an anomaly in Europe because it emerged from the breakup of an empire in the 20th century, like states in the so-called Third World. So did Poland, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Iceland, Malta, and Ireland. As of 1999, Ukraine was among the 22 of Europe’s 38 states that sprang from imperial breakup between 1905 and 1991. Like most of these states, newly independent Ukraine is an authoritarian state and culturally dependent on its former ruler. Like them, Ukraine was a poor, peasant, and peripheral country before 1900 where the native peasant and elite cultures and languages were different. After independence, the above-mentioned countries eventually shed their self-image as inferior embattled minorities slated for disappearance. They evolved distinctive modern national traditions of thought and their former cultural-linguistic insecurities became anachronisms. Within decades of independence, the educated in all these countries, except Ireland, had transformed their native cultures and languages into elite languages and cultures. There is no reason why a similar evolution cannot occur in Ukraine. Foreign rule can impart a sense of dependency or inferiority among dominated minori-

⁹ S. Velychenko. The Issue of Russian Colonialism in Ukrainian Thought // *Ab Imperio*. 2002. No. 1. Pp. 323- 366.

ties, but this represents a constraint, not a barrier, whose persistence is determined by domestic, not external forces. Like other peripheral nations of Europe, Ukraine is partially industrialized, has a partially commercialized agriculture, urbanized late, and is still dependent on a larger regional context. Its vital statistics today are closer to those of southern European countries than those of Third World countries.

Characteristics generally regarded as typical of colonized Third World countries, therefore, are not anomalous in western Eurasia and Ukraine would not be any less European if we accept that it had been a backward dependent peripheral “colony” for most of its recent history. Political incorporation, violence and a “little brother” syndrome did not make Ukraine much different from Greece, Ireland or Norway, who were burdened by similar pasts.

Central government elites in western Eurasia, however, allowed peripheral elites to integrate into the larger state. Like other European peripheral peoples, but not overseas “colonial” subjects, Ukrainians were allowed to and did assimilate. The absence of such integration in Third World colonies restricted the horizons of the educated to local borders, fostered professional grievances, and laid the basis for a nationalism stronger than Ukraine’s. Ukraine’s past, marked by integration and complicity as much as exploitation and coercion was, therefore, atypical with respect to the Third World, but typical for small western Eurasian countries. Like Irish, Czech, and Greek national leaders, Ukrainian national leaders initially sought and received imperial acceptance and later sought freedom in rather than from Europe.

Ukraine is not the only country in western Eurasia whose past might be regarded as “colonial” and arguably it could be studied from a post-colonial perspective. Logically, we could compare Ukraine with any country anywhere that had ever been dependent –practically every country in the world except Sweden, Thailand, and Japan. However, this would mean disregarding not only the differences between foreign rule in different parts of the world, but all the other differences that exist between lands and peoples, and lumping them together into one category of countries with little or nothing in common except their one-time dependency. Can a flawed literary method with no clearly defined field of study have any analytical worth when applied as social theory to a set of objects sharing only one characteristic? If “post-colonial” refers to nothing more than some kind of vague condition shared by all people everywhere and anywhere at one time or another, then does it mean anything at all?

What would characterizing China and Russia, once ruled by the Mongols; Switzerland, once ruled by Austria; the USA or Hong Kong or Uganda once ruled by Britain; France and Britain, once ruled by Rome; Korea, once ruled by Japan; the Congo, once ruled by Belgium; or Belgium, once ruled by France; as “post-colonial” tell us about them? That people there like elsewhere had once been dominated? That the new emerges from the old and identities are mutable? That the strong oppress or ignore the weak? That insecurities fade with time or authors have prejudices and perspectives? That literature reflects inequality and injustice? That politics is expressed through literature in societies where it cannot be expressed through representative institutions? That reason, progress and capitalism have undesirable consequences? These are truisms.

It is not an abstract post-colonial condition, but interests and conscious decisions that will determine where Ukraine’s trade will flow and whether or not it again becomes a “Little Russia.” When Washington terminated its financial subsidies in 1998, Ukrainian leaders faced the choice of attracting foreign corporate investment by implementing legal-economic reform, which meant destroying the basis of their personal wealth and power, or not reforming and relying on cheap Russian energy and ruble credits. They chose to do the latter because they wish to remain wealthy and in power. At the same time, Ukraine reduced its trade with Russia and is now set for membership in the World Trade Organization. Here again, it is not a post-colonial condition, but EU and US protectionism that might direct Ukrainian trade towards Third World countries.

Writing Ukrainian History

Historians accepted literature as a source of evidence and that cultural history can supplement existing knowledge before the onset of post-colonialism, just as they were already paying attention to ambivalence, ambiguity, adaptation, identities and complexity. During the last decade, post-colonialists did suggest subjects that for some historians represented new areas of research, but most of these work according to established methodology, asking if the evidence supported the argument. They avoided post colonialism’s relativist speculation, logical fallacies, jargon, and unsubstantiated presuppositions.¹⁰

¹⁰ D. Hackett-Fischer. *Historians’ Fallacies. Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*. New York, 1970. It is an excellent compendium of errors and how to avoid them. Linda Colley. *Captives. Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850*. London, 2002; C. A. Bayly.

In modern Ukrainian historiography, the detrimental consequences of various intellectual debates and political decisions on Ukrainian culture and attitudes towards Ukrainian culture in the Russian empire were established subjects of research well before post-colonialism. National-populists at the beginning of the last century assumed Russian rule was all-pervasive and anti-Ukrainian by definition, while Soviet historians restricted these characteristics to the tsarist regime. A standard popular history of national culture released in 1918, for instance, lists tsarist “anti-Ukrainian” measures ranging from Tsar Alexis’s order that Cossacks cut off their distinctive scalp locks in 1654 to a 1895 instruction prohibiting the importation of Ukrainian-language children’s books.¹¹ Today historians like Alexei Miller and Sergei Yekelchuk still draw attention to these cultural aspects of domination and their effects. But, they do not assume that either the tsarist or Soviet regimes were malevolently omnipotent, anti-Ukrainian monoliths or that an ethno-linguistic identity was peoples’ only or primary identity. They accordingly study subjects that national-populist inclined historians either overlooked or ignored, such as “Little-Russian” / Ukrainian loyalism, those who “converted” or assimilated to survive or to climb the social ladder and the hybrid products of such collaboration and adaptation.¹² By virtue of its subject matter, we could classify this scholarship as post-colonial or as cultural studies. However, it is little, if at all, influenced by post-colonial methodology or preconceptions.

Ukrainian specialists should not only be aware of post colonialism’s faults. They might also ask what a methodology that ignores economic power on the spurious grounds that it does not exist can contribute to a critical discussion of whether or not global corporations functioning unchecked in Ukraine will make Ukraine a better place for its people? How should Ukrainians react to post-colonialism’s implicit anti-European bias? “Leave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men every-

Empire and Information. Information Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1879. Cambridge UK, 1996, and S. Gruzinski. *The Mestizo Mind*. London, 2002, are three recent examples of how established rules can be applied to previously unstudied subjects suggested by post-colonialism.

¹¹ I. Ohienko. *Ukrainska kultura*. 3rd ed. Winnipeg, 1970.

¹² A. I. Miller. “Ukrainskii vopros” v politike vlastei i russkom obshchestvennom mnenii. St. Petersburg, 2000; S. Yekelchuk. *The Body and National Myth: Motifs from the Ukrainian National Revival in the Nineteenth Century // Australian Slavonic and East European Studies*. 1993. Vol. 7. No 2.; Idem. *Stalin’s Empire of Memory. Russian Ukrainian relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination*. Toronto, 2004.

where they find them,” wrote Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*. “The European game has finally ended.” How relevant is a theory claiming that rebirth requires a rejection rather than an emulation of Europe, to “westerners” east of Berlin who wanted to be “European” after 1815 and “to return to Europe” after 1989? Where would Ukraine fit if we accept that the Soviet Union was quintessentially “European” because it was an “Enlightenment” project? Given their past, can Ukrainians celebrate the hybridity, intermingling, indeterminacy, and hodgepodge transformation post-colonialists associate with post-modernity? What are former Soviet citizens to make of Fanon’s idea that the *lumpenproletariat* is the true bearer of liberty?

Historians of Ukraine might also look at how modern Irish historians created a non-nationalist version of national history without the benefit post-colonialism.¹³ After independence those interested received emotional sustenance from nationalist historians who praised Irish heroes and damned “800 years” of villainous English crimes. From the 1970s, before the appearance of post-colonialism, “revisionists” using established empirical methodology have been demonstrating that English-Irish ties were marked by discontinuities, ambiguities, inconsistencies, hybridity, complexity and ambivalence to a degree that nationalists find difficult to admit. They showed that English rule was “not so bad,” that Ireland’s past had lots of grey areas, that its heroes had blemishes and that its people were more concerned with families, feuds, jobs and prices than a free Ireland. This revisionist interpretation preceded an economic boom that made the issue of England’s rule and legacy irrelevant. By the 1990s, the population had shed any collective neurosis it may have suffered because of foreign rule and lost its victim complex. The modern Irish have a politically pro-EU attitude and are European integrationists rather than nationalists. They are concerned with the mundane problems of urban blight, unemployment and drug abuse, which they share with other modern countries, and for which they blame the government or transnational corporations – not “imperial legacies.”¹⁴ All of which illustrates George Bernard Shaw’s quip that, “A healthy nation is as unconscious of its nationality as a healthy man of his bones.” Today, only radical Republicans, left-wing artists and some literati dwell

¹³ G. Boyce, A. Day (Eds.). *The Making of Modern Irish History*. London, 1996; C. Brady (Ed.). *Interpreting Irish History*. Dublin, 1994; J. J. Lee. *Ireland 1912-1985*. Dublin, 1989.

¹⁴ S. Howe. *Ireland and Empire*. Oxford, 2000.

upon British rule in terms of post-colonialism and see the Irish as an embattled disadvantaged post-colonial people. What they write is hard to read and whether it would edify or educate non-specialists who might be able to read it is open to doubt.

Scholars should not be deterred from rigorous empirical investigation by intellectual fads like post-colonialism. There is no reason why historians of Ukraine should give it much attention and not leave it to literary scholars no longer interested in questions of genre, medium, technique, and convention. For a comparative perspective historians should not look to Third World countries, but to newly independent European countries that have overcome legacies of dependency over the last century. Studies by Oskar Halecki on the Kalmar and Lublin Unions, by Andreas Kappeler on Ukrainian and Lithuanian national movements, and by Velychenko on Scotland and Ukraine are examples of such an approach.¹⁵ Linda Colley's brilliant recent book, meanwhile, is a superb example of how to study the relationship between literary and artistic representations, on the one hand, and coercive power and colonial intent, on the other, using established methodological rules.¹⁶

A. J. P Taylor urged us to be skeptical about Marxists because they claimed universal validity for generalizations derived from isolated examples – textile workers in Lancashire cotton mills and Paris in 1789. Similarly, post colonialists make universal generalizations from events in nineteenth-century French Algeria and British Bengal. Like Marxism post-colonialism is seriously flawed. Post colonialists have identified some subjects that for some historians represent new fields for research. Some of them have become experts in the manipulators of erudite jargon and, like Marshall Sahlins, publish books on the cultural aspects of domination that totally ignore basic rules of evidence.¹⁷ However, such “texts” are bound to go the way of augury and Stalin's *Short Course*. There is no reason for historians interested in cultural aspects of domination to abandon rules of

¹⁵ O. Halecki. *Unia Polski z Litwą a Unia Kalmarska // Studia historyczne ku czci Stanisława Kutrzeby*. Kraków, 1936; A. Kappeler. *Die ukrainische und litauische Nationalbewegung: ein Vergleich // Ukraina: Kultura spadshchyna svidomist derzhavnist*. Kyiv, 1998. S. 281-90; S. Velychenko. *Empire, Loyalism, and Minority Nationalism in Great Britain and Imperial Russia, 1707-1914 // Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 1997. No. 3. Pp. 413-441; reprinted in: V. Kravchenko, S. Velychenko (Eds.). *Rossia et Britannia*. Special edition of *Skhid-Zakhid*. 2001. No. 4.

¹⁶ Colley. *Op. Cit.*

¹⁷ Windschuttle. *Op. Cit.* Pp. 253-284 painstakingly analyzes his work page by page.

method in place for the last fifty years if not longer. That is, they must write so readers can understand. They must be aware that:

1. Conclusions are provisional and always subject to change in light of new evidence.
2. All are subject to biases because of beliefs, origins and status.
3. Documents (texts) must be scrutinized carefully because were written by fallible individuals with biases.
4. Perceptions and representations of reality can be as important as reality.
5. One should not read the present into the past, mistake effect for intention, or pass judgment on entire generations on the basis of single documents.

SUMMARY

Стэфен Вельченко анализирует основные идеи и методологические положения постколониализма, и прежде всего – постколониальное литературоведение, которое претендует на роль социальной теории. Терминологию этого влиятельного направления, а также методологию литературоведческой критики он называет сомнительной и неточной. Вельченко настаивает, что нет никаких оснований для изучения истории украинской политической и экономической зависимости с позиций постколониальной теории. Хотя формально Украина может быть сопоставлена со странами “третьего мира”, т.е. с бывшими колониями, гораздо больше оснований сравнивать ее с такими некогда зависимыми европейскими странами, как Ирландия и Греция. Любое государство на том или ином этапе своей истории было зависимым, что совершенно не предполагает применения постколониального метода анализа и интерпретации прошлого этих стран. Данные тезисы Вельченко развивает применительно к Украине и постсоветскому пространству в целом.