

to the approaches (favored by journalists and politicians) that emphasize only a single factor. Perhaps she thought that these scientists are also seeking to assign collective responsibility to a single group or factor, while in fact they were offering a ranking of several causal factors. One of the best grounded and complex multiple factor theories is confined to a brief footnote; its author forcefully argues that the search for collective or personal responsibility in general is *not* the task of social science. Her contribution to this volume, in my opinion, fails to do justice to the social science theories that attempt to offer empirically testable explanations of the Yugoslav disintegration.

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To the Editor:

I read with increasing incredulity and disappointment the review of *From Sovietology to Postcoloniality* edited by Janusz Korek and published by Södertörn Academic Studies in 2007 in the Summer 2008 issue of *Slavic Review* (vol. 67, no. 2). Two-thirds of the review consists of admonitions against treating central and eastern Europe as postcolonial territories; only toward the end does the reviewer mention the contents of the volume he was supposed to survey.

The reviewer posits that since Franz Fanon, a black man, came to dislike French and European culture (although he wrote in French), no European nation can be subject to colonialism. But the second thesis does not follow from the first. He further posits that “the ‘Enlightenment Project’” (478) the colonized peoples of Africa and Asia rejected was embraced by intellectuals in eastern Europe, and thus they cannot themselves be colonial subjects. Even if this erroneous generalization about the Enlightenment were true, the second thesis does not follow.

Slavic Review is a periodical published in a country that began as the “thirteen colonies” and fought a war of independence against the colonizing power. White-on-white colonialism was not uncommon in Europe either. It is disturbing that *Slavic Review* has published reviews of books dealing with Russian/Soviet colonialism written by persons who on principle reject the notion that *non-Germanic central Europe* was a Russian/Soviet colony. Such conditions produce a rant rather than a review. Soviet/Russian colonialism often belonged to the white-on-white variety and developed unique features (such as the “surrogate hegemon”) that are presently being theorized by academics in a number of countries. Among the most outstanding is Dariusz Skorczewski of the Catholic University of Lublin. The review penned by Stephen Velychenko shows no familiarity with such research and appears bent on discouraging young scholars from pursuing this line of inquiry.

EWA THOMPSON
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Professor Velychenko responds:

Like most historians who dare to review modern literary scholarship, I am as overwhelmed by “litcrits” exposition of theory as by the ignorance of history most of them share. The imbalance is only partly compensated for by the insights that the best of the “postcolonialists” within this group sometimes provide. Yes, I would not encourage anyone to classify something as “white-on-white colonialism,” to study whether it was like or unlike a “yellow-on-yellow colonialism,” or to investigate whether Shaka Zulu was responsible for “black-on-black colonialism.” Perhaps such students could go the way of Napier, who began by counting angels on pinheads and ended with logarithms. My hunch is they will end up like Francis Bacon. Trying to discover a way to preserve meat, he died of pneumonia caught while stuffing dead chickens with snow.

Ewa Thompson implied that I am among those who “on principle reject the notion that non-Germanic central Europe was a Russian/Soviet colony.” I do not. Just as she wrote, this notion is just that, a notion, not a proven, generally accepted fact. The subject requires more historical study and, in my opinion as a historian, the jury is still out on the issue of whether or not Russian-ruled European lands were “Russian colonies.” “Litcrits” can think otherwise and invent more obscure neologisms like “surrogate hegemon,” to