DOI: 10.35539/LTNC.2021.0043.T.K.8.29

Baltic Postcolonialism: A Prospect for Disciplinary History of Folkloristics

"I work in folkloristics and I'm not involved in politics." (Bērzkalne 1948)

"It is unnecessary to state that such and similar 'theoretical screeds' by Anna Bērzkalne not just stand far from any science, but they are also flat-out hostile to Soviet people. Recognising politics as interests of just one part of the people's collective, whereas commanding others to remain apolitical means to subvert the very foundation of the Soviet life." (Niedre 1948b)

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This article was funded by ERDF through project *ETNO-GRAPHICA: Visual Interpretations of Baltic Intangible Cultural Heritage* (no. 1.1.1.2/VIAA/4/20/628)

Keywords: Baltic postcolonialism, disciplinary history of folkloristics, colonialism, postsocialism, Soviet Latvia

Introduction

The application of postcolonial theory to the cultural histories of post-socialist countries holds many promises. In the last decade, it has been proven by a continuous flow of articles, conferences, special issues of academic journals, and an increasing number of high-level research monographs. Researchers of various countries and disciplines use this approach "to translate the ideological and cultural specificity of communist life experiences into the theoretical and critical languages with most currency in today's humanistic studies" (Şandru 2012: 1). Moreover, intersections of postcolonial and postsocialist research are mutually beneficial, as the latter extends the former and provides, for example, "interesting comparative material for subaltern studies, for resistance culture, for hybrid forms of ideological identification with and against socialism, for theorizing the antinomies of public and private space alongside the political and the sacred, and social inequality in the classless society" (Kołodziejczyk and Şandru 2012: 113–14).

The single basic premise that unlocks this potential is an assumption that there is some similarity, maybe a structural kinship, between the Soviet Union (1922–1991) and other colonial empires. Suppose this thesis is at least accepted for scrutiny. In that case, the postcolonial theoretical apparatus can be directed towards the specificity of communist hegemony, methods used for attaining and maintaining domination, discourses and strategies of subordination, shaping of the individual, group and national identities, their mutual relations and representations in culture, language, collective memory and arts of the colonizer and the colonized (see Korek 2009). Although explanations of the exact relationship between the postcolonial and the postsocialist are almost as many as the number of researchers explaining it, for this article, I will use an umbrella term 'postsocialist postcolonialism', denoting the common intention to apply the postcolonial approach to postsocialist histories.

In Eastern Europe, postsocialist postcolonialism so far most broadly has been explored in literary and drama studies (e.g. Albrecht 2020; Davoliūtė 2016; Kalnačs 2016a; Kelertas 2006a; Şandru 2012; Shkandrij 2014 and many others), slowly expanding to other fields. The current article aims to examine how the approach primarily devised to analyse creative representations such as literature or art can be applied to the history of knowledge production and the disciplinary history of folkloristics in the Baltic States after World War II. It would be a history of an academic field where 'everything was political'. To approach this aim, I examine the advantages and

principal components of postsocialist postcolonialism and its application in the Baltic States, introducing a particular project of colonial folkloristics. Furthermore, the main differences between (post)socialism and (post)colonialism and the strategies to overcome those are highlighted to arrive at nine theoretical implications of the Baltic postsocialist postcolonial folkloristics. To start a discussion if and whether this approach is feasible in practice, four central challenges of the postsocialist postcolonial theory are presented in the article's conclusion. A more general aim of this article is a contribution to the ongoing discussion about the application of postcolonial theory and methodologies to studies of countries previously incorporated in the Soviet Union in Eastern and Central Europe. Consequently, that would contribute to the liberation of postcolonial thought from the "ghetto of Third World and colonial studies" (Chari and Verdery 2009: 29; cf. Moore 2006: 29).

Locating postsocialist postcolonialism

For almost two decades, virtually anyone who has applied postcolonial thinking to postsocialist subject matters has started the argument with a justification for why and how the Soviet regime was colonial.[1] The adjacent question concerns similarities between "two posts"—postcolonialism and postsocialism as historical conditions, theoretical stances, or "places of enunciation" allowing a certain kind of reflection (on the latter, see Bhabha 2004). This scrutiny has led to a similarly significant diversification and fragmentation of the postsocialist postcolonial studies. This field represents multiple theoretical and historical genealogies, but a relatively small number of scholars tracing them. As a result, Eastern and Central European cultures have been analysed through concepts of semi-colonialism, global and intra-continental colonialism (Kalnačs 2020a: 255), reverse-cultural colonization (Moore 2006: 26), at least two types of internal colonialism (Etkind 2011; for historical variations see Balockaite 2016: 78), continental colonialism (Balockaite 2016: 78). Neil Lazarus defines this area as "postcommunist postcolonial" scholarship (Lazarus 2011; 2012), while Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery propose "post-Cold War studies" as alternative thinking between both "posts" (Chari and Verdery 2009). Similarly, Bogdan Ștefănescu invents a handy metaphor of postcommunism and postcolonialism as siblings of subalternity: "A degree of relatedness and family resemblance between two separate individuals rather than a perfect

1 See further on structural similarities; a solid example of a wide-ranging historical argument is provided in the seminal article by David Chioni Moore: "Those who would argue that the Soviets were simply differently configured colonists could point, again inter alia, to the mass and arbitrary relocation of entire non-Russian peoples; the ironic Soviet national 'fixing' of countless formerly less defined identities, and the related tortured intertwining of the Uzbek-Kyrgyz-Tajik border to guarantee an ethnic strife; the genocidal settling of the Kazakh nomad millions from 1929 to 1934; the forced monoculture across Central Asia and the consequent ecological disaster of the Aral Sea; the Soviet reconquest of the once independent Baltic States in 1941; the invariable Russian ethnicity of the number-two man in each republic who was actually number-one; the inevitable direction of Russia's Third World policy from its Moscow center; and tanks in 1956 in Budapest and 1968 in Prague." (Moore 2006, 27–28)

identity between them" (Ștefănescu 2012: 52). It is impossible to speak about one leading postcolonial postsocialist theory or even understanding at this stage of development.

Moreover, the historical configuration of post-World War II power relationships and the lives of subaltern subjects greatly varied across the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence in Eastern and Central Europe. As Moore puts it: "The Chuvash and the Estonians hardly had the same experience (Moore 2006: 28). That has led to a geographical variation of postcolonial theory when applied to postsocialist territories. A particular case here is the Baltic postcolonialism, founded upon unique layering of formative experiences that simultaneously unites the three Baltic countries and differentiates them from the rest of the region. Late integration and special status within the Russian Empire (Thaden and Thaden 1984), the experience of national independence between both world wars, consecutive Soviet, Nazi and again Soviet occupations generating guerrilla warfare and mass repressions, and, again, somewhat special status within the Soviet Union (Annus 2018) are core components there. Baltic postcolonialism started with a collection of articles by scholars simply applying some postcolonial concepts to Baltic literature (Kelertas 2006a). However, a comparative analysis was soon conceptualised as a distinct trend, spearheaded by Benedikts Kalnačs (Kalnačs 2011; 2016a; 2016b; 2020b; 2020a) and Epp Annus (Annus 2012; 2016; 2018). Similarly, applying postcolonial theories to Baltic culture from the initially dominant field of literature studies spreads to other cultural domains such as art history (e.g. Kangilaski 2016) or folk dance (Kapper 2016).

Whatever strain of postcolonial theory is constructed according to the authors' field of study, the geography of inquiry, and understanding of coloniality, there are and will be multiple points of disjuncture between studies of the West European overseas colonies (from the advent of modern times to the mid-20th century) and studies of post-war Eastern Europe. For example, Cristina Şandru distinguishes such general categories of difference as "differential inflections in terms of historical and geographical coordinates; divergent types of imperial occupation; asynchronous advents of modernity; different practices of othering; and, finally, post-Cold War ideological emphases" (Şandru 2012: 5–6). Other researchers most commonly follow the same path, highlighting one or another point of divergence.

However, parallels between the two "post(s)" scattered across different strains of the postsocialist postcolonial theory should also be addressed. As I will argue further, those can be reassembled as a methodological foundation of disciplinary historiography, leaving to other venues the discussion on whether the modifier "post" in postsocialism is the same "post" as in postcolonialism. First of all, it is levelling the ground of inquiry by "scholarly use and critique of the state-produced historical record, which follows and continues to reflect on a period of heightened political change" (Chari and Verdery 2009: 11). Second, it is a set of what might be called colonial practices, organized through structures of exclusion and inclusion, metropolitan centre and periphery, modes of othering and representations of differences, the experience of trauma and related configurations of collective memory, resistance as a complex of cultural practices (Şandru 2012: 8), and concepts such as ambivalence, mimicry, hybridity, alterity, minority and subaltern cultures,

and orientalization (Kołodziejczyk and Şandru 2012: 113). Third, it resembles forms and historical realizations of anti-colonial and de-colonizing efforts, most usually resulting in formations of nationalism. And last, it is the following neo-colonial aftermath. However, none of the practices and concepts mentioned above is exclusively colonial. According to Stefănescu, they become such when there "is a sense of the intruder culture being significantly different and the process of change is felt as alienation, an estrangement from the local tradition" (Ștefănescu 2012: 70). In the Baltic case, it is the fact that the Soviet regime was "forced from the outside and brought with it, in addition to economic imbalance and long-distance political supervision, also specific ethnic and cultural tensions, related to the effort to privilege a non-local cultural tradition" (Annus 2016: 3; cf. Kalnačs 2016b: 17). In other words, the military occupation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union during World War II was followed by governance that can be consistently characterized in terms of coloniality.

The Second World problem

Even though the research of Soviet colonial legacies promises valuable theoretical and historical opportunities for postcolonial thinking, it "mostly remain[s] on the research sidelines, not encountering real interest of postcolonial studies more generally" (Kalnačs 2016b: 25). Uneasy relationships between postcolonial and postsocialist studies, slowing down the advancement of both fields, can be traced to the Cold War dispositif and its tripartite world organization.

First of all, it is the historical and theoretical legacy of the mid-20th century anti-colonial struggles that leads to the first identity crisis of postcolonial studies thirty years later:

> The period of so-called 'Third World euphoria'—a brief moment in which it seemed that First World leftists and Third World guerrillas would walk arm in arm toward global revolution—has given way to the collapse of the Soviet Communist model, the crisis of existing socialisms, the frustration of the hoped-for tricontinental revolution (with Ho Chi Minh, Frantz Fanon, and Che Guevara as talismanic figures), the realization that the wretched of the earth are not unanimously revolutionary (nor necessarily allies to one another), and the recognition that international geo-politics and the global economic system have obliged even socialist regimes to make some kind of peace with transnational capitalism. (Shohat 1992: 100)

The metaphorical division of the globe into three worlds—capitalist, communist, and the rest or non-aligned world, lost any meaning but historical since the demise of the Soviet Union. Conceptualization and institutionalization of the postcolonial studies took place around the same time—in the 1980s and 1990s. Postcolonialism was a replacement for problematic notions like "non-Western", "Third World", "minority", and "emergent"

(Moore 2006: 14). It emerged as a historical, not analytical category, and was bound to the same three world division, more precisely, the relationship between the oppressing capitalist First World and the subjugated Third World. Being neither one nor another, the ex-Communist bloc simply did not fit the theory (Moore 2006; Chari and Verdery 2009; Kołodziejczyk and Şandru 2012; Ștefănescu 2012; Dzenovska 2013; Lazarus 2012). Moreover, most of the researchers concerned with this issue point out another closely related problem: the echoes of the USSR self-styled policy as a global anti-colonial force. It was both an imperial stratagem confronting the West through proxy sites and a camouflage for the actual colonial matrix of power that dictated order within the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence (Connor 1984). On the international arena, its legal facade was made by the USSR constitution (1936, 1977) with its bogus claims of republic sovereignty and the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (1955), commonly known as the Warsaw Pact. As a result, the colonial nature of Soviet policies has been more than often unnoticed or dismissed by postcolonial thinkers (Kangilaski 2016: 37; Račevskis 2006: 171; Kelertas 2006a: 1; Korek 2009; Ștefănescu 2012: 31). Moreover, the postcolonial thinkers themselves often might be adherents to some strain of Marxist theory while the Soviet Union claimed to be a Marxist practice (points out Moore 2006; Korek 2009; Ștefănescu 2012; Račevskis 2006).

Particular historical experience has led western scholars also towards a curious fixation with overseas as an exclusive model of coloniality (Lazarus 2012: 118), epitomized by such classic as Edward Said's *Orientalism* (Said 2003). Among others, recently, Alexander Etkind went to some lengths to prove that is no ground to dismiss the Russo-Soviet case as non-colonial (Etkind 2011). Indeed, the Levant by the sea was much closer to London in the nineteenth century than Tashkent by ground to St. Petersburg. More complex and also directly related to the three world model is a problem of capitalism. Like the sea travel component, the overwhelming evidence of historical colonialism is related to the "integration into a capitalist world-system" (Lazarus 2012: 120). Speaking about communist colonialism, this difference is usually negotiated by demonstrating similarities between various accounts of domination, subject formation, and resistance. In this regard, Katherine Verdery has developed an interesting analogy of redistributive (or allocative) power as a replacement of (accumulated) capital in the socialist system: "This involved accumulating means of production that would enable party-states to control the production of goods for (re)distribution to the populace—a prime legitimating ideology for the Soviet system—and thereby to shore up the power of the Communist Party" (Chari and Verdery 2009: 15). Similar to the opposition of Communism and Capitalism, one more Cold War dichotomy is that of West and East, also related with the over-identification of Europe as Western Europe. Baltic and other Eastern European countries from this point of view disappear within the undifferentiated Soviet whole (Hirsch 2005: 2), and thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall they return as denied European sub-consciousness, almost the colonial double:

> While not entirely outside the Western sphere of knowledge, the postcolonial subject nevertheless has access to a space of otherness, which can be a location of critical enunciations. European postsocialist spaces and subjects are not quite legible from

> within this framework, because they are neither one nor the other. They are not quite the West, as it is continuously illustrated in both scholarly and public discourse. And they are also not quite the Rest, for, while they are subjected to similar techniques of government as postcolonial spaces and subjects, the critical space of radical otherness, so familiar from postcolonial contexts, seems elusive, if not entirely absent, in European postsocialism. (Dzenovska 2013: 400)

The missing place of enunciation designates the void subject position of a postsocialist postcolonial thinker. It is marked by a postsocialist/colonial paradox: decolonization from subalternity within one set of relationships (Soviet) leads to identifying with the colonial force of another set (Europe as West). Thus, the denial of colonial subjectivity forms one more often mentioned obstacle in the advancement of postsocialist postcolonial discourse (Račevskis 2006: 166; Moore 2006: 21; Kalnačs 2016b: 17; Ştefănescu 2012: 34).

A racialized theory for a national discipline

Next to capitalist extraction of value and geopolitical position overseas, the racial difference between colonizers and the colonized has been among the major factors shaping the general understanding of colonialism (Rangan and Chow 2013; Ashcroft et al. 2013). The power relationships of coloniality are both racialized and racializing (Dzenovska 2013). Postsocialist postcolonialists researching Eastern and Central European past use varied strategies to overcome this historical stigmatization, and those mostly fit into two categories: either race is dismissed and (other) structural similarities between communist and capitalist coloniality are highlighted, or race is replaced with another relevant category of othering, for example, class or nationality.

Authors who claim that racial differences are neither necessary nor sufficient to define the colonial relationship (e.g. Annus 2018; Kalnačs 2016a; Kangilaski 2016; Ştefănescu 2012) usually refer to the theorization of colonialism as a system of domination by Jürgen Osterhammel (Osterhammel 2009). In this structural view, significant is the as such—in whatever ethno-cultural categories it is defined—not the particular difference of skin colour. One possible differentiation and discrimination mechanism here is national chauvinism, implemented through the ethnographic knowledge and overly important category of nationalism (Hirsch 2005; Korek 2009). Regarding the Post-war USSR, Benedikts Kalnačs characterizes an international chauvinism based on a "national pseudo-unit". While new nominally national socialist republics were created in the occupied territories, new settlers of various origins created a new group of society—the "Russian-speaking community." "Using their knowledge of the Russian language as a marker, this group was ideologically opposed to the local population" (Kalnačs 2020a, 259). In the following years, the Russification of national minorities was a side effect of Soviet nationality policies, increasing the same community.

Social class was another mechanism of discrimination and differentiation, often expressed in metaphors of sub-humanity. In the Soviet regime, class categories "clung to their targets like skin" (Chari and Verdery 2009: 27), thus ensuring that one's status is unavoidable, inheritable and immutable. Replacement of race with the class met with the Socialist never-ending quest for the enemy, grouping certain humans into a category of "class enemy" and thus condemning to discrimination, repressions and extermination. The indexes of the 20th-century bureaucracy efficiently replaced primitive "visual identification" of previous colonial regimes. After all, the Soviet experiment was an essentially modern project: promoting Enlightenment ideas of progress in secularized, technology and science-driven world.[2] When the superiority of colonizer was defined as a superiority of the socialist working class,[3] the colonial *Mission civilisatrice* was either "to proletarize" the new subalterns or "to liberate" them from real or imagined fascism, bourgeois nationalism and capitalism (Balockaite 2016; Ştefănescu 2012). Thus, class and nationality acted as determining factors in various combinations throughout the existence of the Soviet Union. Moreover, the current racialization of coloniality and corresponding dissociation with it has been pointed out as a compensatory behaviour by the subject peoples in Eastern and Central Europe, resulting from the extended subjugation. (Moore 2006: 20)

A related significant disjunction between postsocialism and postcolonialism stems from the relationship with nationalism. During the late 1980s, nationalism became the driving ideology behind decolonization movements in the Baltic countries, while the postcolonial studies were consolidated and institutionalized at Western universities.

> By that time the hopeful period of anti-colonial Third-World nationalism had come to the end and largely to a dictatorial and violent one. [...] So in the works of leading postcolonial scholars nationalism mostly appears as a failed historical project, exclusionary and inherently dominating, and/or as a form of make-believe, a false consciousness. (Peiker 2016: 116; See also Şandru 2012: 2)

When the Prague Spring (1968) brought general disillusionment towards the possibility of the so-called socialism with a human face in the Warsaw Pact countries, nationalism became a strategic direction consolidating and articulating anti-colonial sentiments in the Soviet bloc. It differed from politically right "essentialist" nationalisms of post-colonial countries as inclusive and somewhat apolitical ideology. In the meantime, colonialism was used as a designation of the Soviet system by leading politicians of the Baltic popular fronts and newly independent nation-states such as Lithuanian Vytautas Landsberģis (b. 1932) (Kelertas 2006b: 3) or Latvian Anatolijs Gorbunovs (b. 1942), addressing the United Nations' General Assembly in 1992 (Gorbunovs 1992). Nationalists used anti-colonial rhetoric, while postcolonialists—anti-national. What could, then, this theory do with such a nationally-oriented discipline as folkloristics?

2 A comprehensive overview of various interpretations of Soviet modernity is provided by Michael David-Fox (David-Fox 2016) ; see also modernity and material culture (Reid and Crowley 2000), and historiography (Feindt 2018).

3 Socialist working class by definition possesses the "class consciousness" and thus is aligned with the class vanguard—the Communist party.

Colonial folkloristics

The Story-Time of the British Empire: Colonial and Postcolonial Folkloristics (Naithani 2010) is by far one-of-a-kind disciplinary history that focuses on the interaction between folkloristic knowledge and colonial power production. Simultaneous investigation into multiple domains of the British Empire provides excellent material for well-founded generalizations on centre-peripheries relations, race, translation, and ideology. But, of course, the largest global empire at the peak of its power is an exception too; therefore, the task I have been given to myself is kind of deconstruction: to take out "the British" component, the unique historical configurations of a particular empire from this treatise on disciplinary history.

First of all, the author's model of colonial folkloristics is based on deprovincialization of the discipline:

> I will argue that "colonial folkloristics" should be accepted as the term that takes the transnational identity of the phenomena into consideration, and can be applicable across the epistemic and empirical boundaries between the colonizer and the colonized. Colonial folkloristics can only be studied and analyzed beyond national boundaries, because it was not created within a nation. It was also not created between two countries, but in a global context (Naithani 2010: 4).

Importantly, it involves a different genealogy (cf. Briggs and Naithani 2012) that cannot be directly traced back to some metropolitan/European origins. Originating in the early 19th century, this model is a contemporary of early European folkloristics. However, it is neither their offshoot nor essentially similar to it (Naithani 2010: 120). Most important here is the context of emerging European nation-states and ideologies providing a particular agenda for collecting, preserving, and studying folklore and traditions. Of course, nationalist ideologies were primarily formed within empires, including the Russian and Austro-Hungarian, which divided most of Eastern and Central Europe lands between them. Adding a layer of complexity, that still allows speaking of a different genealogy. Colonial power relationships were present in both projects,[4] but the nationality component, as I will demonstrate later, played a crucial role in organization of folkloric knowledge in the Soviet empire. Moreover, in the 19th century, "the individual motivations of colonial collectors do not precede the establishment of the colonial state in a particular country but follow it. This differs from the case of nationalist folklorists within Europe, whose work preceded the establishment of the nation-state" (Naithani 2010: 18). Again, this historical particularity is reversed in the second half of the 20th century Eastern Europe, when the framework is similarly international, but the independent nation-state is instead a memory of the past rather than a future project. Folklore collection in the British Empire was shaped by power, race and violence as historical determinants of coloniality (Naithani 2010: 23). As the race requires particular scrutiny and

4 For example, the first academic publication of Latvian verbal charms (Brīvzemnieks (Treiland), 1881) was bilingual, edited by a prominent nationally-minded Latvian intellectual, and commissioned and published in Moscow by the Imperial Society of Devotees of Natural Sciences, Anthropology and Ethnography.

was addressed in previous pages, now let's take a look at the theoretical implications of colonial folkloristics proposed by Naithani (2010: 112-13). Shortly summarized for the purposes of further discussion, those are the following:

1. Translators and the process of translation mediate colonial folklore;

2. Folklorists' academic identity and social capital is built upon the circulation and research of translated folklore texts;

3. Representations of the colonized folk are exotic and orientalised, amoral and immoral in order to amuse and shock the reader;

4. Some factors are constantly missing in the colonial writing, e.g. distress of the colonized or certain narratives about colonizers;

5. There is an apparent disdain for the religious beliefs of the narrators;

6. Carelessness towards time and place of collection, mentioning those in very general terms;

7. Ignorance towards classification systems and interpretations of the narrators;

8. Instead, (ideologically saturated) interpretation becomes the most crucial task of the folklorist.

At least to some extent or from a particular angle, all of those implications have found their expressions in Soviet Baltic folkloristics, too. Still, one should ask whether this is one-size-fits-all theoretical model or different socio-political configuration of the colonial matrix of power directly corresponds to a different configuration of folkloristics. In that case, the discipline's relationship with nationalism is especially important: how the different genealogies (European and colonial) correspond to Bolshevik's extraordinary relationships with nationality and its representations. The author of *The Storytime,* together with Charles Briggs, also warns that "Nevertheless, colonialism often gets contained within particular spaces (particularly India), periods and characters—British colonial officials and missionaries—thereby drawing attention away from how colonialism is connected with other spaces, subjects and times, such as our own" (Briggs and Naithani 2012: 243). The gaze of postcolonial thinking might be similarly directed to the former Second World as well as the so-called Fourth World, i.e. most marginalized and "pre-modern" regions of the globe.

Baltic postcolonial folkloristics

Postcolonial disciplinary histories are reflexive, post-structural investigations, which put a premium on the embeddedness of asymmetric power relations and ambivalent subject positions within them. That leads to three types of historiographic incentives: mapping the colonial matrix of power, re-constructing the horizon of possibilities for agents in the matrix, and recognizing the agency of subjects acting within the matrix. Now let us ask how the postcolonial theory-building bricks discussed previously can extend and reinforce the project of colonial folkloristics suggested by Naithani to generate research questions and inspire methodologies for disciplinary histories of the Baltic States in the second half of the twentieth century?

(1) First of all, translation is still central to the circulation of folkloric knowledge and power. However, its direction and locus are different. As Soviet (Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian) folklorists are mainly of the same nationality as their narrators, there is no language difference during the folklore collection fieldwork. The difference is on the administrative, representative, and interpretative levels. Theoretical treatises, legislation and guidelines for folklorists are initially published by the Moscow centre in Russian and then translated to other languages.

Similarly, local institutional documents like research plans and reports are translated into Russian to be revised and approved in Moscow (Ķencis 2019b; Kulasalu 2017). Translated and non-translated sources map the channels of power. Nevertheless, folklore materials are translated, but not as a source of research but as a representation of ideological consensus. For example, if the Communist Party states that folklore reflects the building of socialism in Soviet republics, the material that reflects the building of socialism is translated and circulated. Moreover, due to the ethnofederal composition of the USSR, translations are multidirectional to both Russian and other languages of the Union. Broadening translation patterns represent changes in Soviet policies and the economy. If we take Latvian folklore as an example: the 1940s-1960s are characterized by translations and editions of Latvian folklore in Russian, the advent of "the friendship of people" policy brings more translation in other Union languages in the second half of the 1960s and foreign languages in of the Socialist bloc in the 1970s (e.g. Bulgarian in 1971, Persian in 1974, Hungarian 1977, including combined editions of Baltic folklore). The late 1970s set a new milestone of first academic publications in English: "International and national in Latvian proverbs and sayings" (Kokare 1978) and Latvian folk-tale type index according to international Aarne-Thompson system (Medne and Arājs 1977). Administrative (documents) and representative (predominately non-academic folklore editions) types of translations are channelling primarily political and symbolic power. Translations of academic research (i.e. interpretations) is channelling (or embedding in power) the academic knowledge. Hereby doctoral dissertations, in the Soviet system called candidate, are written or translated into Russian to be defended at central institutions.

(2) This leads to the second tenet, confirming that folklorists' academic identity and social capital are built upon the translated texts' circulation and research. However, those are not

primarily folklore texts (which circulate on another—representative level), but the interpretations of folklore and traditions. Apart from doctoral dissertations, articles in journals and collections and monographs and conference presentations are also translated. Translation provides transparency to power and required exposure to censorship, in return providing access to status and rewards.

(3) The third, principle of othering, largely covered by the metaphor of orientalization, is equally valid, but again in different directions. The orientalised (eroticized, amoral, immoral) subjects are not all colonial subalterns but the so-called class enemies and political adversaries. The Soviet folklorist is called to collect oral histories of aristocratic and clerical oppression, bourgeois exploitation, and liberation from Nazis. Orientalization is a part of the class struggle and socialist history master narrative. Similarly essential is the same principle in reverse: the conspicuous demonstration of sameness realized through the doctrine of the Socialist Realism. The latter extends its innate hybridity (Boym 1994: 103) to folklore materials, blurring boundaries between research and propaganda. It was taken to extreme in the early 1950s Estonia, where historical folklore collections where censored with a purpose to remove any immoral obscenities from creations of the working people (Kulasalu 2013). The trend of New Soviet Folklore—representations of contemporary life and politics in traditional folklore genres—takes up in post-1934 Soviet Russia and, after ten years, is adapted in the Soviet post-war territories to decline after the death of Joseph Stalin's in 1953. Examples of folksongs praising Stalin and collective farms were invented, collected and published all across the Baltic countries (Kulasalu 2017; Ķencis 2019a). Later on, popular folklore collections were shaped and edited according to the principles of Socialist Realism: emphasizing class struggle, but downplaying religious connotations and obscene references. Collections of folktales about pastors served purposes of anti-religious propaganda, but folksongs praised the role of labour in human society. Similarly to and extended by representative translation, demonstration of sameness served to consolidate the symbolic power of the Soviet regime across national borders. National differences of "working people" were normalized and standardized, imbued with moral and patriotic characteristics, and retold variations of the same master narrative.

(4) "What is a good joke worth?—25 years in a prison camp!"—testifies a popular joke of Soviet times. Indeed, political folklore was a deadly serious matter under the totalitarian rule. As a matter of fact, not only jokes but also every other kind of folklore material unsuitable for the regime was (self-) censored: avoided during folklore collections, if collected—not included in the accounts of the folklore archive, if included—not referred in research and popular publications. Representations of the dark side of Soviet reality are missing from the Soviet writing, with some carefully controlled exceptions, for example, didactic jokes about lazy workers. Similarly, too positive representations of non-Soviet reality were avoided, such as Baltic independence's interwar period history. Desirable folklore content, events and attitudes were characterized in collection plans and official guidelines for folklore collectors.

(5) Fifth, when colonial folklorists manifest apparent disdain for the religious beliefs of the narrators, the Soviet agenda reads from the same page. The difference here is in content: the

opposition Christian vs heathen is replaced by materialist-atheist vs Christian. Notably, the same is a sense of moral superiority and zeal "to enlighten the backward natives". This intolerance can be also extended to other belief systems beyond religion, such as mythology and magic. Both are avoided subject matters in Soviet folkloristics. The Moscow-Tartu School of Semiotics from the late 1960s onwards is an exception that proves the rule (Ķencis 2012). In Soviet Lithuania, anti-colonial agenda was strongly represented by the neo-pagan Ramuva movement that was established at State University of Vilnius in 1970 (Savoniakaitė 2019). Among other sources, the movement exploited academic knowledge of folkloristics, and involved many actors of the discipline

(6) Representative translations and popular editions demonstrate carelessness towards place and narrator. The texts or "folklore units" here serve to represent a whole, not a part—the working people of this or that nationality, the socialist nation, workers of a particular industry or collective. However, it is not the case in academic editions of folklore, as there are other conventions in place reflecting a century of the discipline's development. Interestingly, sometimes the same anonymity of folklore materials collected during the Soviet period stems not from ignorance but caution of collectors. Rules of the game marking allowed or dangerous themes were rapidly changing, especially during the first post-war decade. So, if there is a folklore material that might raise suspicions towards particular narrators, a folklore collector might label it as "overheard on the train" or "told by some man in the buffet no. 6" (Ķencis 2019b; see also Langer 2021).

(7) Ignorance towards the classification systems of the narrators is hard to assess as a particularly colonial feature in the Soviet Baltic. First, soviet classification systems are native to European folkloristics that has also grown from European folklore. Even if by approximation, those are closer to "native systems". Moreover, the latter is already influenced by the onset of modernity, for example, a high level of literacy, exposition to various folklore editions, and discourse on folklore for over a century. Some "primaeval authenticity" to be ignored there is doubtful. How far it is ignorance towards the context of performance reflects just the state-of-the-art of the discipline: performance theory is still in the making. At the end of the day, the very division between the collector and the narrator presumes some kind of epistemic violence in any circumstances.

(8) Ignorance towards narrators' interpretations is another kind of subject matter as it is much more directly related to power. That leads to the eighth implication of colonial folkloristics: that interpretation becomes the most critical task of the folklorist. Indeed, it is also for the Soviet Baltic folklorist, but, more importantly—interpretation strictly within the constraints of Marxist-Leninist theory. According to the latter, folklore reflects the working people's class struggle and creative expression (Niedre 1948a). Correspondence with this definition was the true measure of authenticity of every folklore material. Therefore, to authenticate folklore, it was first interpreted according to particular, content-oriented theory. The necessity of interpretation arises from the pressure of control (the publication of "inappropriate" folklore materials or their interpretation can result in redundancy and other problems) and the pressure of planning (for example, if a plan states that in five years

500 revolutionary songs will be collected, it means that 500 songs are to be interpreted as revolutionary). Ignorance is bliss when it comes to overlooking the irony of certain narrators or the role of individual authorship when collective authorship is required

At the centre of colonial power, interpretation is also a locus of mimicry. Attribution of any meaning opens the possibility of other meanings, undermining the intended regime of truth and hierarchy of authority within it. Similarities of mimicry, mockery, and parody inspire writers following Bhabha to assume that mimicry is essentially anti-colonial: "Mimicry therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, an uncertainty in its control of the behaviour of the colonized" (Ashcroft et al. 2013: 155). To borrow a metaphor both from Jacques Lacan (Lacan 1998: 99) and the Brothers Grimm: mimicry is the camouflage that covers the king's nakedness. The king is important: mimicry still strengthens the established hegemonic position. Compliance with ideological demands is the reproduction of ideological power (cf. Verdery 1995; Grill 2015: 621). The mimetic nature of this reproduction arises from subaltern subject positions of Baltic folklorists, subordinated to the Moscow centre. Their place in the periphery undermines an authentic expression of power even if it is intended. Mimicry was practised by "speaking the right way" when participating in public discourse (Annus 2016: 3) and by interpretations of field data: emphasizing beneficial Russian influence on cultural history, class divide in folklore material, revolutionary passion in songs etc. However, as a theoretical tool, mimicry is an essential notion negating political resistance/collaboration duality, which reproduces the Cold War dispositif. The notion of mimicry creates additional capacities of agency under colonial rule.

So, with the help of postcolonial thought, theoretical implications of Naithani's British colonial folkloristics can be successfully applied to another colonial situation, namely, the Soviet Baltic. Similarly, transposition of racial to national or class categorizations and imperial to ethnofederal structures might productively reconstruct the claim that colonial folkloristics establishes a different disciplinary genealogy from European histories, where origins of folkloristics are closely tied to National Romanticism and cultural nationalism (Briggs and Naithani 2012; cf. Leerssen 2010). In the Baltic case, Soviet coloniality facilitates national scholarship in an international framework, not the other way around. Research institutions, dealing with local and national subjects in each country, were subordinated to Moscow through the network of Academies of Science, and regularly synchronized at All-Union congresses of soviet folklorists. Nationalist genealogies efficiently contributed to radical ambivalence of the folklore subject matter: it was simultaneously part of Soviet scholarship and propaganda and a sign of anti-colonial resistance, the resilience of independent national identity (Annus 2018; Herzog 2010; Kapper 2016; Kuutma 2016).

Folkloristics as a predominantly national discipline must be viewed in the context of Soviet nationality policies. While Soviet power relentlessly suppressed political nationalism, national identity was a fundamental organizational principle sustained until the bitter end to which it contributed (Chari and Verdery 2009: 17; Beissinger 2009; Slezkine 1994; Moore 2006; Hirsch 2005). In the Baltic case, the end of the Soviet project was at least partially brought by the so-called folklore movement, which rapidly politicized the discourse of folklore and

traditions sustained within the state-sponsored framework of amateur art, folk culture, and folklore research. Interest in folklore performance in Latvia and Estonia and initiatives for cultural revival like regional studies in Lithuania went hand in hand with anti-Soviet ideology since the 1970s, reaching the maximum in the late 1980s. An essential device of the folklore movement was a discourse on authenticity, juxtaposing a particular type of folklore performance to established standards of Soviet folk culture. The latter, in this light, reveals as a highly hybrid set of expressions.

(9) Adopting the postcolonial view, hybridity (together with the accompanying discourse of purity) might be the ninth theoretical implication of the Baltic Soviet colonial folkloristics. While in a broad context, the term commonly denotes "the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (Ashcroft et al. 2013: 135), for this discussion, I would prefer Nestor García Canclini's concise definition of hybridization as "a sociocultural process in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in a separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices" (García Canclini 2005: xxv). Postcolonial sensitivity requires distinguishing between various modalities of hybridization, for example, rising from forced assimilation, political co-option, social conformism, cultural mimicry, creative transcendence, critical appropriation, deconstruction and inversion (Shohat 1992: 110; Kalnačs 2016b: 23). Modalities transform over time, coexist, and gradually become the new normal—a discrete structure or practice forming the subsequent hybridization. The power asymmetry is significant here: a hegemony of one, more authoritative culture transforming the cultural signs of another. However, a concept of hybridity poses a significant challenge too: sometimes it may be problematic if not impossible to distinguish between hybridization arising from colonial hegemony and simply a process of modernization, especially if colonizers in the quest for progress are lagging behind their new subalterns. Technological progress constantly breeds new hybrids: each new media requires new forms of representation; new habits of society create new forms of production, etc. And if, infamously, the state owns the means of production, are any changes rising from the production development are state-produced too? Such changes may and do arise under a different political and economic regime as well. Or maybe it does not matter because each historical situation is concrete and finite? Often problematized relationship between socialism and modernity (or modernities) is too complex and broad for the discussion here, but definitely must be kept in mind.

In conclusion, the postcolonial view towards colonial folkloristics in the Baltic States, and, possibly, wider European postsocialist areal, offers heterogeneous yet strong fundaments. Moreover, it promises two productive openings for further research. First, the adaptation of the post/colonial framework allows acknowledging deeper layers of coloniality, approaching the actual complexity of a living culture. In the Baltics, it is an experience of both (intermingled) Russian tsarist and Baltic German colonialism, preceded by the role of ideas of *Volksaufklärung* as a modernizing Enlightenment driver, and further complicated by the controversial roles of hegemonic yet subaltern Polish culture in Lithuania and Eastern Latvia (on layers of coloniality see Annus 2016; Kalnačs 2016b; Kangilaski 2016). The treatment of most recent history as postcolonial adds to the complexity, introducing a displaced hegemon

(Chari and Verdery 2009; Ștefănescu 2012; Pyzik 2014; Kołodziejczyk and Şandru 2016) and misunderstood appropriation of early modernity through the experience of colonizing Gambia and Tobago by the 17th century Latvian/Lithuanian Duchy of Courland (Dzenovska 2013). All the layers are reflected in the disciplinary history of folkloristics. The second opening forms a critical perspective for investigation beyond anti-colonial nationalist narratives that inscribe foreign colonial power as a single object of critique. Instead, postcolonial sensibility requires a conceptual mapping of various de-centred multiplicities of power relations, for example, between colonized women and men, queer and normative, minority and titular subaltern, or holders of various forms of symbolic capital.

A challenging conclusion

A postcolonial approach to the Soviet-era Baltic folkloristics looks beneficial in many ways. It provides a toolkit for deep analysis of the disciplinary field, a solid theoretical foundation via adaptation and update of colonial folkloristics, and a vocabulary that allows capturing ambivalent, multivocal echoes of the past in today's scholarship. It is a model that simultaneously hosts different meanings of the research object and thus represents it closer to the actual historical complexity. It also promises to liberate the scholarship from outdated distinctions and oppositions native to the Cold War and its tripartite world division.

A third modality can be added to the multi-genealogy approach to the history of folkloristics—a hybrid socialist model next to historical romantic nationalist and colonial models. According to the authors of the multigeneological model, it has numerous benefits too:

> By articulating multiple roots for key concepts and practices, folklorists can expose their assumptions and expand possibilities for altering them, thereby opening up alternative meanings and potentialities and increasing the power and creativity of the analytical frameworks on which they rely. By locating genealogies beyond narrowly-defined disciplinary histories, folklorists can challenge the boundary-work that limits their ability to draw productively on other frameworks and genealogies and show scholars, policy-makers and other constituencies that the implications of their work extend in important ways beyond the boundaries of the discipline. (Briggs and Naithani 2012: 268)

However, to fully exploit and capitalize on the benefits mentioned above, the postsocialist postcolonial approach must overcome several serious challenges. Recalling discussion in this article, I will highlight four main challenges: design, clarity, timing, and positioning.

The design challenge is indirectly reflected in the postsocialist scholars' need to start every article and monograph on the subject matter with analysis or at least a disclaimer on how postsocialist condition is postcolonial. The implicated lack of legitimacy results in too many

ad hoc configurations of the theory. As a result, without too much exaggeration, one can say that no two authors are using the same approach. Fragmentation of this magnitude contributes to the slow development of the trend, which still needs consolidation, establishing a "school" to take off in the global academia. Moreover, as Ella Shotat warned in her brilliant deconstruction of the postcolonial theory (1992), somewhat similar fragmentation and fundamental uncertainties are inherent to the nature of this approach, thus making its later adaptation to the postsocialist context twice as difficult.

The lack of clarity (certainly similar to many other post-directions of scholarship like poststructuralism and postmodernism) is closely related to design. However, I would like to distinguish it separately as a problem of practical appropriation and use of the postcolonial postsocialist approach. In this regard, the lack of clarity stems from the excessive complexity of certain fundamental concepts. An excellent example is the awkward positioning of the East European self as explained by Bogdan Ştefănescu, "between *three* instances of the Other, all of which are at the same time adversarial and contaminating: the West, the Soviet Union, and the 'Orient' (the colonial primitive)" (2012: 109). Also, mimicry from a feature of the research subject tends to become a feature of the theory: while colonial folkloristics is structured by clear divisions of race, language, orality and writing, the same divisions are all displaced and blurred in the Soviet disciplinary history. And last but not least, eager equitation of the Soviet Union and other colonial empires may obscure "important differences that pertain not only to political organization and administration but also social ideology, aesthetic taste, and moral intention" (Dzenovska 2013, 398–99; referring to Yurchak 2006; Slezkine 1994). This is just another facet of the clarity problem.

If problems of design and clarity are internal to the postsocialist postcolonial theory, positioning and timing are predominantly external problems related to its global perception. The problematic positioning of the theory unfolds through interrelated facets of location, hegemony, and authenticity. As discussed previously, the location of Eastern and Central Europe (and the Baltic States within it) "does not fit well" the tripartite world division historically fundamental to postcolonial theory and the roles assigned to each of the three worlds in the global order. Eastern Europe is neither West nor Orient. It might be also both of them simultaneously. From a global perspective, everything European is amalgamated into a fictional unity, while in reality the entire continent is fragmented and divided by significant differences and historical experience. Referring to one of the central works of postcolonial theory (i.e. Chakrabarty 2008), Maria Todorova rightly states that our task

> [...] consists not so much of "provincializing Europe" but in "deprovincializing Western Europe". Not only has Western Europe expropriated the category Europe with concrete political and moral consequences. In the academic sphere, this translates as the mandatory necessity on the part of East Europeanists to have a good grasp of the West European fields, and the sanctioned ignorance of West Europeanists about developments in the Eastern half of the continent. (Todorova 2019: 113; see also Ștefănescu 2012: 104)

The latter is a facet of hegemony, implicating asymmetric relationships in knowledge production. Nevertheless, of course, it is not just the problem of Baltic folkloristics or even Eastern European humanities. Knowledge hierarchy similarly distorts social sciences and agricultural studies (Jehlička et al. 2020). Again, last but not least, and strongly inspired by the same knowledge hierarchy, is the facet of authenticity. Neil Lazarus points out that it may easily lead to imitation of postcolonial approaches established in global academic centres, a faithful reproduction rather than challenging and questioning (Lazarus 2012: 118). Definitely, that does not contribute to the health of a theory.

The fourth challenge of postsocialist postcolonialism is related to the timing of its emergence. Again, as discussed previously, the consolidation of postcolonial studies in the late 1980s coincided with the liberation of East and Central Europe from communist oppression. Dorota Kołodziejczyk and Cristina Şandru here concisely summarize missed opportunities and some of the reasons as well:

> For reasons both political (anti-communist or, rather, anti-totalitarian dissidence in east-central Europe was much too often treated in the west as framed within right-wing politics, a largely erroneous attitude) and disciplinary (commitment to post-structuralist culturalism), postcolonial studies missed out on the chance in the 1980s and early 1990s to grasp the moment of insurgency and the ensuing process of change that would have provided interesting comparative material for subaltern studies, for resistance culture, for hybrid forms of ideological identification with and against socialism, for theorizing the antinomies of public and private space alongside the political and the sacred, and social inequality in the classless society. (Kołodziejczyk and Şandru 2012: 113–14)

It has been already thirty years since the postsocialist condition emerged and acquired the shape of postsocialist theory or at least discourse, often trying to join forces but developing in parallel to postcolonialism. Thirty years is about the same time that divided contemporary postcolonial theory from most anti-colonial liberation struggles in the second half of the twentieth century. In the meantime, postcolonialism seems to be increasingly more fragmented and losing its grounds.

Despite these four challenges, I still believe that Baltic postsocialist postcolonialism is a promising approach to disciplinary histories of folkloristics and related disciplines in this region. As such, it is already tested in three research projects at the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia.

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Baltijas postkoloniālisms: Folkloristikas nozares vēstures iespēja

Toms Ķencis

Atslēgvārdi: Baltijas postkoloniālisms, folkloristikas vēsture, koloniālisms, postsociālisms, Padomju Latvija

Postkoloniālisms ir viens no 21. gadsimta sākuma vadošajiem virzieniem humanitārajās zinātnēs. Tomēr bijusī "Otrā pasaule", tai skaitā Baltijas valstis un citas Padomju Savienības okupētās teritorijas, ir vēsturiski problemātisks izaicinājums postkoloniālajai teorijai, kas liek kritiski pārlūkot ar rases reprezentācijām vai konkrētiem vēsturiski ekonomiskiem apstākļiem saistītus pamatprincipus. Tagadējās postsociālisma valstīs postkoloniālā teorija var tikt pieņemta tikai ar virkni atrunu. Postsociālisma postkoloniālā teorija un Baltijas postkoloniālisms kā šīs teorijas jaunākais atzars tomēr liecina, ka tā ir efektīva un daudzsološa pieeja padomju pagātnes analīzei.

Postsociālisma postkoloniālā teorija var kļūt par veidu, kā paskatīties uz folkloristikas kā nozares vēsturi padomju okupācijas laikā. Raksta autors ar šādu nolūku piedāvā pārlūkot astoņus teorētiskos principus, kurus no folkloristikas vēstures Britu Impērijā savulaik ir atvedinājusi pētniece Sadhana Naithani. Baltijas postkoloniālisms ir pieeja, kas ļautu šos principus adaptēt Baltijas un citu postsociālisma valstu folkloristikas vēstures pētniecībai. Tas radītu instrumentu kopumu padziļinātai nozares vēstures analīzei – stingru teorētisko pamatu, ko sniedz pārskatīta postkoloniālā teorija un jēdzieni, kas ļauj precīzi attēlot pagātnes daudznozīmīgās un pretrunīgās atbalsis pētniecībā mūsdienās. Vienlaikus Baltijas postkoloniālisma pieejas plašam lietojumam ir vismaz četri ievērojami šķēršļi: teorijas fragmentārā uzbūve, bieža jēdzieniskā neskaidrība un sarežģītība, problemātisks rašanās un lietojuma laiks un ideoloģiskais tēls mērķa valstīs.