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Focusing on the post-1989 urban representation of Berlin, Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest and their identity-shaping processes over the past two decades, Agata Anna Lisiak's book is not just a welcome addition to the field of comparative cultural studies but a book with a strong and innovative theoretical agenda. Lisiak's main argument is that the history of urban space in the above-mentioned Central European capital cities is best interpreted if read through the lenses of postcolonial theory and Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek's concept of "in-between peripherality." Critical of the post-socialist and post-communist labels that have been used to describe developments in the region since 1989, Lisiak instead proposes the concept of the (post)colonial. According to her, after the end of the colonial period which was marked by Sovietization and their belonging to the Eastern Bloc, during the last two decades the four Central European capitals analyzed in the book have experienced the spread of globalization and westernization, which has been equivalent to their entering a new period of coloniality. Therefore, these cities are both post-colonial and colonial, an overlap which Lisiak proposes to call "(post)colonial." As she argues: "the (post)colonial city is a city whose politics, culture, society, and economy have been shaped by two centers of power: the former colonizer, whose influence remains visible predominantly in architecture, infrastructure, social relations, and mentalities, and the current colonizer, whose impact extends over virtually all spheres of urban life." In addition, Berlin, Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest are doubly "in-between peripheral" places since they are geographically located between the West and the East and temporally "torn between the Soviet colonial past and the Western or global colonial present." (p. 36).

After this theoretical opening, the rest of the book concerns itself with a demonstration of this predicament in five chapters that are dedicated to the post-1945 history of these cities, as well as their representation in contemporary city marketing materials, through old and new architecture, and in film and literature. The strength of these chapters varies. The one discussing the history of Berlin, Warsaw, Prague, and Berlin under communism lacks research into primary sources and is largely reliant on Tony Judt's insights as articulated in his *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (2006). By contrast, the most interesting and well argued are the chapters in which Lisiak analyzes the urban representation of Berlin and Warsaw in recent German and Polish literary works as well as in movies such as *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003), *Herr Lehmann* (2003), *Kolja* (1996), *Moszkva tér* [Moscow Square] (2001), *Córy Szczęścia* [Daughters of Luck] (1996) and *Warszawa* [Warsaw] (2003), among several others. The literary and visual representation of peripheral urban spaces in these texts and movies, as Lisiak argues, goes against the grain of city branding attempts made by municipal authorities both online and in official guidebooks - discussed by the author in another chapter - which highlight monuments and urban scenery to be found in the downtown areas. Similarly, the role of new architecture wearing the signature of world famous architects such as Norman Foster, Frank Gehry, Rem Koolhaas, Christian de Portzamparc, Daniel Libeskind and I. M. Pei in Berlin, Warsaw, and Prague (but less so in Budapest, where no such architecture exists) is to promote these cities in a global urban tourism market at the expense of other architectural sights.

In the chapter on (post)colonial architecture, Lisiak also discusses post-1989 efforts to remove and hide the material remnants of the socialist past. One of her important findings is that while in Warsaw, Prague and Budapest this effort was radical and thorough (with the significant exception of the Stalin-Era Palace of Science and Culture in Warsaw which proved to be physically too hard to remove, and therefore the adopted solution was to fence it around with skyscrapers), in Berlin some of the iconic socialist buildings and monuments (such as the East Berlin TV Tower and various statues dedicated to Marx and Engels) were allowed to stand and were reinserted in the urban matrix by the new German authorities. The events of 1989 also created room for a critical rereading of the socialist past, which allowed for the erection of new statues and monuments commemorating moments of resistance against socialism as well as for the revalorization of pre-1945 buildings and monuments in the public spaces of the cities under discussion. Finally, another development was the museumization of the socialist past, reflected in the opening of the Stasi Museum, the Stasi prison memorial in Berlin-Hohenschönhausen, and the GDR Museum in Berlin, the Museum of Communism in Prague, and the Statue Park and House of Terror in Budapest (interestingly, the opening of a similar museum was delayed and is still under discussion in Warsaw).

The examples marshaled in all these chapters serve more as proofs of the existence of a Central European (post)colonial context, within which they are contextualized, than as part of a sustained analysis of the specific social and economic workings of (post)coloniality in Central Europe. As such, there is a disjunction between the theoretical promise of the book, and the way each chapter contributes to and adds to the main argument. Similarly, while the chapters on (post)colonial architecture, literature, and film work along a diachronic axis, the one on the representation of Berlin, Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest in municipal media, discusses online and guidebook representations of these cities as they were articulated in 2008, having thus a synchronic dimension which allows for interesting comparisons but eludes discussing the historical dynamic which led to their continuously changing shapes during the 1990s and early 2000s. What is not explained either in the book is to what extent the (post)colonial condition of the four Central European cities covered in Lisiak's narrative is unique and different from that of other capital cities belonging to the former Eastern Bloc, such as Sophia and Bucharest, if not Belgrade and Tirana? Is (post)coloniality a category that could be applied only to Central Europe or something more universal that, in addition to developments in Latin America, Africa and Asia (all mentioned by Lisiak), could also be applied to the Balkans?

These misgivings aside, Lisiak's book is a theoretically path-breaking work and the first book-length study to innovatively address urban representation issues in four capital cities that are very rarely connected to each other. Seen from the perspective of the prospect of the Europeanization of Hungarian Studies and its more frequent interaction with the field of German and Slavic Studies, the inclusion of Budapest in such a study is a welcome development. Hopefully the book's comparative cultural approach and trans- and interdisciplinary insights will incite further research and debate in neighboring fields such as literary and media studies, imagology, urban sociology, urban history, and urban studies in general.