



Cultural Landscapes of Post-Socialist Cities (Re-Materialising Cultural Geography)

Mariusz Czepczynski

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The cultural landscapes of Central European cities reflect over half a century of socialism and are marked by the Marxists' vision of a utopian landscape. Architecture, urban planning and the visual arts were considered to be powerful means of expressing the 'people's power'. However, since the velvet revolutions of 1989, this urban scenery has been radically transformed by new forces and trends, infused by the free market, democracy and liberalization. This has led to 'landscape cleansing' and 'recycling', as these former communist nations used new architectural, functional and social forms to transform their urbanscapes, their meanings and uses. Comparing case studies from different post-socialist cities, this book examines the culturally conditional variations between local powers and structures despite the similarities in the general processes and systems. It considers the contemporary cultural landscapes of these post-socialist cities as a dynamic fusion of the old communist forms and new free-market meanings, features and democratic practices, of global influences and local icons. The book assesses whether these urbanscapes clearly reflect the social, cultural and political conditions and aspirations of these transitional countries and so a critical analysis of them provides important insights.

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