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# Worlds Apart?: A Postcolonial Reading of Post-1945 East-Central European Culture

*Cristina Sandru*

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**Worlds Apart?: A Postcolonial Reading of Post-1945 East-Central European Culture** Cristina Sandru This study explores the relation of the Eastern European problematic to postcolonial critical practice, interrogating the extent to which postcolonialism can help illuminate instances of imperial domination in non-Third World contexts. It argues that colonisation is to be understood principally as a condition of ideological domination that has engendered similar forms of literary and cultural resistance; consequently, it offers a comparative framework which enables a reading in differential contexts of texts that ostensibly have little in common, but which, on closer examination, reveal a shared imaginative space, rhetoric and narrative agency. The book consists of two interrelated parts. Part one is a critical discussion of the ideologies, cultural imaginaries and representational practices articulated in a diverse range of representative postcolonial and post-1945 East-Central European texts; these are shown to share, despite dissimilar conditions of production, uncannily related narrative modes and thematic emphases. Part two is a comparative literature case-study which discusses two authors whose work is both highly representative of the cultural formations discussed in the first part (Milan Kundera and Salman Rushdie) and, at the same time, highly controversial. The chapters dedicated to Kundera's and Rushdie's work examine the cultural geography of their novels, particularly the writers' use of memory and story-telling to reconfigure history and personal identity in conditions of literal and metaphorical dis-placement. While their novels thrive on ironic subversion and ambiguity, they simultaneously gesture towards a redemptive space of the imagination, transcending the constraints of both locality and history.

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