

post-socialist **queer**

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At times it seems as if the globalised world exists not as the glorious summit of human history but as a multiple universe of parallel realities. While globalisation is marketed as if it has shrunk the world, I often wonder if it is critical thinking that has shrunk and conformed to the new set boundaries, while the world remains as vast as ever. Let's begin with several worlds and the usual numeric division (first, second, third) is as good a starting point as any. These divisions reflect the distribution of wealth and sometimes the extent of democracy, and they are divisions that allow the 'first world' to hold onto and defend its leading position. There are many tests one can put globalisation to, and sexuality is perhaps one of the best as it is present everywhere, globalisation or not. So, can models of sexual identity politics established in, say, the first world really be translated into every corner of the globe? What are the particularities of experience in these corners that must be taken into account? Or does globalisation really only mean generalisation?

In this respect, post-socialism is an interesting term for me as it permeates those questions. I will only mention the two most common understandings of the term. The first is purely geo-political, marking the time and space that chronologically comes after socialism. (Yugoslav socialism was somewhat more liberal than the Soviet model and therefore the geographical area I'm thinking of is the territory of the former Yugoslavia.) The second understanding sees post-socialism as a way of deconstructing the global world as a world in which all cultural, social and political differences are reduced to a minimum. This is based on the idea, to put it simply, that as socialism was trying to eliminate all differences among people, at least in theory, then the same can perhaps be said of globalisation (if we want or dare to regard global-

isation as ‘improved’ socialism). If we add queer to post-socialism it becomes an interesting hybrid term, which can gather many different definitions (Yugoslav in the Queer Zagreb instance or, more precisely, Croatian). Queer here should perhaps be seen as the reaction to the conservative aspects of gay politics, which made many people feel excluded over the years. Because Croatia does not yet have a history of the gay movement, it is possible that queer here could exist in a more original form than in places from where it began. The real trick, of course, is to push it to its limits and see whether it can satisfy all specific needs.

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