Neither Civil nor Info Society offers Muslims the Hope of Global Equity

In a deft move, at once original and productive, Roy then goes on to note how both models – the liberal pluralist and the Gramscian – assume that there is a certain kind of state. Both presume that there is a unitary state, but with limited powers. Yet Roy goes on to argue that there exists a kind of social contract about what counts as good. Finally, he argues that Michael Walzer calls ‘speaking in prose’, that is, a normal life. Yet Roy goes on to argue that the end of the global/local hierarchy, to those who are engaged in business, at least initially. In other words, the commercial class and those related to them who need commerce-capitalizing information still have the greatest access to, and use of, the Internet. And so information technologies remain inherently conservative. They reinforce global capitalist structures and asymmetries, as Sasken has demonstrated, and they do not augur a new or revisionist notion of civil society. What we are likely to see is that the lure of cyberfancy expands the further marginalization of the already marginal.

Euro-American elites, together with their Asian, African, and Arab counterparts, will continue to project interests and promote options via the Net, but most of their energies will be directed to non-political goals, neither a new civil society aborning nor a reconstituted civil society at home is high on their list, and to the extent that the underdeveloped becomes less visible as also less important, they may well wonder how socially transformative the revolution, which Castells has deemed the biggest since the invention of the Greek alphabet in 700 BCE, will be. Muslins, especially the urban poor in Africa and Asia, will likely be the least of its beneficiaries.

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