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Global Village/Another World: Globalization as a Contending Space

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The ancillary contention of this essay, as distinct from the advocates of ‘quick-fix alternatives’, is that the search for the transformatory axes in politics cannot be realized by any ready-made ‘alternative’. The *alternative* can emerge only through painstaking nurturing of different and diffused non-dominant/ non-mainstream

communication channels which question and contest the dominant order of things. Harold Lasswell(1948), though by no means a scholar of alternatives, had provided a classic formulation of political communication by advancing a set of apparently simple but extremely potent questions: “Who *said what when and how*?”. Keeping in mind that ‘alternative’ is a contested and somewhat slippery term, when we embark on the visualization of politics beyond the dominant- mainstream forms we can extend the Lasswellian formulation to pose the moot question: *whose order is it any way*?.

In the days of the inequitable globalization we increasingly hear the announcement of the “death of utopia” and the “end of history”, which emerges not only from the act of colonization of the political and economic institutions but also of the aesthetic and expressive faculties as well. The latter breeds “monoculture of the mind”. The Global Village *project*(Sinha 2010) not only effects material exclusion of the vast majority of people it also leads to symbolic exclusion which is effected through the denial of the “power of renaming”. The very idea of the Global Village is much hyped because it perfectly serves the interests of the globally dominant political forces to hide the tremendous disparities and discriminations. Who says that discriminations do not exist in village?

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It necessarily follows that any meaningful and effective exploration of the possible and plausible alternatives to the fast-paced construction of the Global Village needs a simultaneous focus on the role of communication *both as a facilitator of status quo and as a means of change*. As a *power-laden process of meaning generation and meaning circulation, through which the ‘reality’ is constantly produced, maintained, transferred and transformed*, the process of communication, on the one hand, facilitates production and reinforcement of the dominant order; on the other hand, it also gives birth to and intensifies what we would prefer to call the *zones of exclusion* — both material and symbolic— of the dominant scenario to provide clues to possible routes of transformation.

In this backdrop the need of the hour is to be aware of the dangers of the ‘ritual’ communication— which enforces ‘voluntary’ submission to ‘appropriately’ patterned

behaviour— by exploring ways and means to critique and subvert the high-pitched process of mainstreaming. But it has to be done by being in the mainstream and not by disengaging from the prevalent order or by engaging in a head-on-collision with it. Here we have in mind the “Delinking” thesis suggested by Samir Amin and the “Cultural Dissociation” thesis advocated by Cees Hamelink— both of which call for detachment as a deliberate strategy, respectively from the prevalent international economic order and international communication order. Their theses, so to say, are radical and tempting but impractical. If the successive protest movements against the current show of globalization raise the possibility of a “new dawn” in the struggle for alternatives they remain overwhelmingly struggles not only *by* communication but *in* communication vis-à-vis the prevalent world order. If communication is the *infrastructural backbone* of the discriminatory mainstream politics it would also be the same for progressing towards visualization of any viable alternative global order as well. The fundamental distinction between the two cases would be that in the mainstream form— as illustrated by the idea of Global Village— a singular kind of communication ‘order’ is being promoted, but the search for alternative politics should rely on diverse *orders*(Boyd Barrett, 2002) beyond the hegemony of one.

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Then again, the task ahead is not easy. As hinted, the issue of *alternative* is not a simple one and any attempt to address it should avoid simplistic generalizations that often plague the ‘alternative euphoria’. At the core of this issue lies the question of *alterity* of alternatives. In most studies on alternative modes the alterity question is not addressed adequately, if at all, with the result that in these studies there is some kind of taken-for-grantedness about the specific kind of alternative being advocated. The fate of the erstwhile socialist states has revealed that the construction of an ‘alternative’ order without sufficient alterity is bound to end up in failure. If alterity connotes *difference from particular others,*did the alternatives that are being regarded as so, have sufficient *alterity*in the sense of having completely different constitutive rationale and order? Or are they basically trying to advocate a supposedly alternative order at a superficial level to gain some space in the prevalent order? These questions must be addressed in order to construct the imaginary of *Another World* and to transform it into reality.

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