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DE-CENTRING WOMEN'S ISSUES- PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ‘BECOMING-WOMEN’ ENTREPRENEURS. Radha Iyer

The subjectivities of women have been historically homogenised in hegemonic terms and women as a class have been the objects of ideological domination. Using data collected in India, through interviews conducted with media personnel and experts on entrepreneurship, and print media data, this paper examines how women are making attempts to reject patriarchal discourses and practical constraints. I argue that through self-reflexivity, women entrepreneurs are engaged in a continuous process of ‘becoming’ as “bodies” in “action.” In Deleuzian terms identity is a multiple act of connection, is rhizomatic, and a dynamic process of ‘becoming’, which implies that we need to distance women from notions of patriarchy and femininity that define and contain them in simplistic terms that limit their opportunities. I argue that critical pedagogy can enable women to shape new meaning systems that go beyond simplistic tracings of patriarchal meaning, towards a new “mapping” of meaning and the formation of diverse and multiple connections. Critical pedagogy is a continuous process of a ‘minoritarian ethics’ to establish the ‘other’ or in a Foucauldian sense, to enact resistance as an ethical experience.

INTRODUCTION

This paper highlights the significant advancements made by Indian women in redefining their identities and their subjectivities through entrepreneurship and examines how hegemonic discourses restrain women in this process. Using the theoretical frameworks provided by Foucault (1982; 1986; 1997), I argue that popular discourses in India impose the ‘technologies of citizenship’ on women, and are responsible in a large measure for a reproduction of the binaries of gender, and constructions of ‘gendered subjectivities’ (van Zoonen, 1994, p.124). I extend Foucault’s (1997) theories on ‘care of the self’ as a means not only towards empowerment, but as an engagement with the processes of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ as conceptualised by Deleuze and Guattari (1987).

I focus on two main questions: How far are women’s subjectivity formations constitutive of a ‘molecular politics’? Are popular media portraying the changes in identities of women, or are these identities being re-appropriated into the hegemonic system? To examine how media (re) construct these processes of change, I invited the views of editors of Indian women’s magazines and experts on Indian women entrepreneurs in India. The interviews were conducted in India as part of a micro-level study to provide a cohesive perspective on the subjectivity formation of women as entrepreneurs.
Economists and sociologists (Krishnaraj, 1998, Dreze & Sen 1995, Bannerjee, 1997) have noted that Indian women are deprived of basic resources, such as education, or technology, thus, reducing their productive capabilities. They have also noted how patriarchal views are integrated into the ideology of women as gendered beings, leading to the uneven spread of resource and profit sharing and lack of recognition of their work in family, and at work. Dreze & Sen (1995, p.193), argue that “gender based inequalities of well being” illustrate “the relevance of women’s actions and movements in bringing about change.”

In this paper, I argue that through entrepreneurship women are actively engaged in a process of change. To explain the processes of how these changes are achieved, I link Foucault’s theorisation on ‘care of the self’ with two prime aspects of the theories of Deleuze and Guattari: the notion of ‘becoming’ and the concept of a ‘molar politics.’ This link is significant for the following reasons. Women have been so constricted by societal labelling that their becoming ‘different’ and opting for different professional choices are continuously challenged by hegemonic public systems. They have been silenced by patriarchy and colonisation as subaltern ‘Others’ for too long and, combined with illiteracy and lack of basic necessities, cannot envisage a radical change to their lifestyles. Change for Indian women has occurred through a fluid process of adjustment to present circumstances and by continuously modifying these circumstances to their needs. This change goes beyond a structural adjustment in the family or the workplace, to a deeper level of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ as initiated through a focus on the ‘care of the self’ that enables these women to change. Entrepreneurship in women is the identification of a difference not only in career choice from the traditional careers that women have held, but to a difference in identity and subjectivity. This difference can be acknowledged if women in their position as businesswomen are seen as involved in an active, dynamic self – transformation, and in redefining their subjective positions.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND
Deleuze and Guattari state (1987) that women’s bodies are often appropriated for a ‘molar’ politics and it is a priority issue for women to recover their ‘selves’ constantly from this ‘majoritarian’, ‘molar’ construction. Deleuze and Guattari, borrowed the term Bodies without Organs (BwO, henceforth) from Antonin Artaud to explain how
organised public bodies control, and delimit women from the active processes of ‘being’ and ‘becoming.’

Government agencies, public media and the socio-cultural environment are those bodies that “with their organisation of organs called organism” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.158) determine and constrain women. The ‘Body’ is, as Deleuze & Guattari (1987) state:

All that is signifying and signified, all that is memorisable in the form of something recalling the something else, finally it is the Self (Moi) the subject, the historical social or individual person, and the corresponding feelings. (p.162)

Therefore, they use the term BwO’s to unpack and expose psychoanalytic discourse that demarcates sexual difference as phallic and castrated.

Deleuze and Guattari theorize how the processes of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ are an ‘alliance’, an ‘involution’ which is creative and constituted by rhizomatic interconnections, flows, and intensities, which ensure that women are actively changing themselves, not just opposing the molar, male world.

The critical aspect of this process of ‘becoming –woman’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), nevertheless, is not the achievement of a molar identity as entrepreneur, as such an endeavour is contrary to Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of becoming-woman. Their theories of ‘being’ and ‘becoming-woman’ exemplify how, by actively engaging in transformative practices, women have space to escape these organised bodies. This is a pedagogical venture that requires women to recognise and rework their current ‘molar’ identities endowed by society, and engage in this transformative process of becoming, which is always a process in-between, multiple assemblages.

In view of this perspective, I foreground how entrepreneurship in women may be interpreted, to quote Flieger (2000, p. 43), as “a tensile transformation or a transgression of identity.”

The processes of liberalisation of the economy in India in 1991, and the resultant increase in privatisation of businesses have only intensified an absence of ‘becomings.’ This has occurred through an inverse process of a higher regulation of local markets by global multinationals and an economy that operates through subtle capitalistic control. In keeping with this trans-national networking, globalised flow of information and mediated images are being produced for a highly consumerist culture. As Sengupta appropriately commented, “The media are creating an environment of
competitiveness resulting from liberalisation. Private operators provide Internet competition, and also help in cross-cultural fertilisation.” This culture has created supermodels who cater to an international clientele, and to concur with Krishnaraj (1998, p.393), this has resulted in the creation of ‘new women’ who are completely “at variance with important feminist goals”, women who fit into the molar categories of transcendent systems. The important goal for women, who want to be different, is to escape representations that construct them in ‘molar’ ‘majoritarian’ and clichéd terms. As Conley (2000) observes for:

Women artists, writers, painters, filmmakers, [or in this instance entrepreneurs] in the present era of standardisation and slogans, at stake is always a resingularising, or particularising to the point of universalising, or once again, becoming minoritarian, of embracing aesthetics and ethics rather than a militant reductionism. (p.29)

Entrepreneurship becomes a truly pedagogical venture for those women who succeed in creating a space within their present conditions of life and work, and are able to engage in ‘deteriorialising’, and ‘reterritorialising’, the dominant knowledges to their advantage. As an attempt to embrace difference, their project is a radical attempt towards encountering alterity. They have to learn to make multiple connections, disassociate themselves from any particular identity, develop rhizomatically rather than linearly, and re-create an identity constituted of ‘becomings’, trajectories, and assemblages. It is an ongoing process of a refusal to accept the ‘significance’ and ‘interpretations’ women have been subjected to, not by any radical overtures, but by working from within the system to overcome the irregularities of the system. As Deleuze and Guattari state (1987, p.161), “It is through a meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight, causing conjugated flows to pass and escape and bringing forth continuous intensities for a BwO.” Through engaging with entrepreneurship women have begun to perceive how society has ‘stratified’ their positions, constrained them to certain domestic duties and refrained them from going beyond mere assemblages of a ‘molar’ construction and from participating equitably in the public field.

Women entrepreneurs exemplify how capitalism can be used to advantage, as an expression of their freedom. Entrepreneurship in women is not a simple replication of the ‘molar’, ‘majoritarian’ world of business with its male codes. These women are able to create BwO’s for themselves, constituted only of their desires, their potential to achieve, and a “continuum of intensities” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.161).
Thus, entrepreneurship in women cannot be contained within male connotative terms such as “risk taker”, or “innovator”, or “manager”. It reinvests these terms with a new meaning, and maps on to them new identities and new subjectivities. In an article titled *Women successful entrepreneurs too* (Hasan, 1994, p. 17), in English Daily *Times of India*, businesswoman Vijay Gupta is quoted as stating that “The qualities of head and heart which a lady can offer while managing a company, lends affection and love to the whole system.” Household training also helps women adopt different perspectives to entrepreneurship, and endows different meanings to entrepreneurial terms. Buttner (2001, p.260), using relational theory, found that, “a common preserving theme [among women entrepreneurs interviewed] was the parallel between the entrepreneur’s organisation and family structure.”

This is supported by other research on entrepreneurs. Chaganti’s (1986) research found that women tend to have management styles that are “feminine” Fagenson and Marcus (1991) discuss how women business owners placed greater importance on feminine values, which was an entirely different way of conducting business from male owned firms. These studies claim that women entrepreneurs endow different connotations to defining terms. In examining the comment made by the entrepreneurs, Buttner (2001) found that entrepreneurs believed that, “a critical component of creating a team-oriented culture was to empower others” (p.263).

Therefore, following Gilligan’s (1993) theorisation of ‘ethics of care’ as it relates to women, it can be argued that women entrepreneurs’ ways of conducting business is a ‘care of the self.’ It is inclusive of the care of others, one that includes consideration of effect of decisions on others; it is team oriented and it encourages active empowerment of all workers. For women in their engagement as entrepreneurs or home-based business operators, capitalism becomes less a ‘system of control’ and more an immanent system of flows, as ‘plateaus’ constituted of intensities, and desires.

Theorising through Foucault’s technologies of the self (Martin, Gutman and Hutton, 1988) and trying to link these to Deleuze and Guattari’s theories of BwO’s and ‘becoming women’ requires a brief analysis of the nature of power as it affects Indian women. In the next section of the paper, I highlight the concept of difference that
underpins the notions of identity and subjectivity mapping it through the concept of BwO. I then discuss Foucault’s concept of the ‘care of the self’ through his notions of ‘technologies of the self’ that forms part of his revisionist theories of how freedom is an essential component of power. I link Foucault’s theory of difference that is produced through the positive aspects of power (Coles, 1991) to Deleuze and Guattari’s notions of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ to justify that the positive difference that Foucault advocates, one that is multiplicitous in nature and presents an alterior Other, occurs as an ongoing process of change and enhances the state of agency to empower women.

POWER AND DIFFERENCE THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Adopting an ontological position, Foucault critiqued hegemonic compartmentalization of identities as imposed transcendental categories and proposed the examination of the self as multiplicitous and open to change. Therefore, in a Foucauldian sense, if women’s selves are not a transcendentally imposed category, women need to rethink and reconceptualize new identities for themselves, differently from the carefully constructed, crafted hegemonic identities that women are endowed with by society. Foucault states, “From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art” (Foucault in Rabinow, 1986, p.351). In my view this implies the need to craft out new subjectivity positions, through what Foucault (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982) calls the dialogue with alterity or Otherness that is present in an immanent form. The notion of difference proposed by Foucault aligns closely with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) theorisation of multiple ways of ‘becomings’.

Entrepreneurship as a means of becoming ‘different’ offers Indian women a form of experience and a means to participate in reworking and reframing their social world with new terms of reference. If difference has to become acceptable, in ways conceptualised by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), we must engage in different ways of conceiving the feminine body. Entrepreneurship is a mode of thinking differently about women from their traditional roles as mothers, or, wives. The difference that entrepreneurship in women portrays is a non-linear development, with trajectories, intensities and ‘becoming woman.’ For Deleuze and Guattari (1987) ‘becoming’ is a verb with a depth all of its own; it does not reduce to or lead back to, “appearing,”
“being,” “equalling,” or “producing” (p. 239). It is a part of the whole process of ‘becoming imperceptible’ where all distinctions of gender are insignificant.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) define ‘becoming’ as

A becoming is always in the middle; one can only get to it by the middle. A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relations of the two, it is the in-between, the border or line of flight or descent running perpendicular to both. (p.293)

To apply Flieger’s (2000) explanation of ‘becoming –women’ to entrepreneurship, it might be claimed that through engaging in entrepreneurship women are attempting to change the terms of being oneself, passionately struggling to become equal, as well as insisting on being different from the codes that defined them.

Positioning women as different can be read as resistances, which through a form of self-government entail a ‘care of the self.’ This is the ontological position, which Foucault discusses in his later works (Foucault, 1997). The concept of ‘care of the self’ illustrates how entrepreneurship is an attempt to “unlearn” (De-Discere) the prior ‘bad habits’ (Foucault, 1997) women have formed as a result of patriarchal impositions of society.

**Entrepreneurship and self-empowerment**

Through his theorisation of power/knowledge Foucault’s aim was to question how certain discourses become hegemonic and to rediscover the voice of those who had been suppressed. Foucault’s theorisation reveals how it is, as Coles states (1991, p. 111) in “becoming “different”, that the self partakes in the creation of the social world.” This enables the foregrounding of different subjectivities and “different expressions of dialogical artistic existence” (Ibid, 1991, p.111). I contend that women entrepreneurs, in ‘becoming “different” exemplify how power operates in multiple forms both from the top down as well as from the bottom up, enabling ‘subjugated knowledges’ to be foregrounded.

To conceptualise how power operates for women, I adopt the four forms of power theorised by Rowlands (1995): ‘power over’, ‘power from within’, ‘power to’ and ‘power with’. These categories can illustrate how power and resistance operate in the Indian context. These classifications are aligned with those of other feminists such as
Hooks (1989) and Collins (1991) who have theorised power and empowerment processes in women.

‘Power over’ Indian women has historically constrained them to the rigidity of social rules and restricted them to traditional career choices. These factors, aided by the high level of illiteracy in women succeeded in disempowering them. Where women in India internalised social reductionism and accepted second-class citizenship, they were successfully socialised into an acquiescence of rules and regulations that led to their disempowerment. These forms of control started with physical and financial restraint and informed a whole normative ideology. The debate for women is not in gaining ‘power over’ but to empower themselves. As Dreze and Sen (1995, p.194) note, “women’s empowerment can positively influence the lives not only of women themselves but also of men and of course, those of children.”

Entrepreneurship in women in its empowering capacity is an appeal to the ‘power within’, as it aims not only for economic independence but, through it, to a sense of freedom of choice and self respect. Indian women are discovering that the power to initiate changes is in adopting a set of options by finding space in the choices available to them. They are using global influences around them to broaden their perspective, educating themselves about women in different cultural and historical settings and understanding the workings of capitalism (Townsend, Zapata, Rowlands, Albert, Mercado, 1999). It is through a pedagogical process of identifying issues to be rectified that women are re-educating themselves by networking, forming associations, and by listening to narratives of other women in similar circumstances. The pedagogical aspect of empowerment is illustrated by Kraus-Harper (1998, p.121) who describes how in a workshop on ‘empowering women through enterprise’ conducted by the author, participants from five countries identified characteristics of empowered women. The analysis showed a process of empowerment. The author identifies how the contributions of various countries showed “different stages of empowerment in the respective countries.” In India, it is an “awareness of the own situation,” and for the males “the empowered woman is one who is able to say no to parents, husband and others”, while for the European woman it is “self esteem and enjoying to be a woman” (Kraus-Harper, 1998, p. 121).
Foucault’s argument that establishes the autonomous entity of the subject does not explicitly deal with the process of autonomy (McNay, 1994). However, to extend Foucault’s theory, empowerment as an expression of an individual’s autonomy is a reflexive process that occurs through this disjunction of the power/knowledge nexus with resistance as an evaluative process of this disjunction. Although at the macro level patriarchal control is still the norm, within the limited sphere of options available to women they are able to exercise the ‘power to’ by taking initiatives. ‘Power to’ becomes a learning process, a ‘dialectical’ involvement with the self, aided by outside agencies through networking and information sharing. The positive aspects of power as seen from ‘power to’ are associated with an ‘ethos’ that provides for a different, positive view of the self as postulated in the later part of Foucault’s theory.

Foucault found that care of the self is an active process of self-governance that occurs through active agency of subjects in democratic situations. Drawing on Greek and Roman philosophy, Foucault argued that the care of the self involves being situated in the material world and also in a social context, which is not an individualised, isolated concern of the self at the cost of the larger social processes. Theorising through Plato’s Alcibiades Foucault argues, “Attending to oneself is therefore, not just a momentary preparation for living; it is a form of living…now it becomes a matter of attending to oneself, for oneself: one should be, for oneself and through out one’s existence, one’s own object” (Foucault, 1997, p. 96). The care of the self for Foucault has a critical function, “The practice of the self must enable one to rid of all bad habits, all the false opinions that one can get from the crowd or from bad teachers, but also from parents and associates” (p. 96). Using Plato’s concept, Foucault claims that taking care of the self is an ethical process because it involves caring for others. “This is why it is important for a free man who conducts himself as he should be able to govern his wife, his children, his household; it is also the art of governing” (Foucault, 1997, p.287).

A person who took proper care of herself would, by the same token, be able to conduct herself properly in relations to others and for others. According to Foucault, “care for others should not be put before the care of oneself. The care of the self is ethically prior in that the relationship with oneself is ontologically prior” (Ibid, 1997, p. 267). Research (Buttner, 2001, Eagley and Johnson, 1990) conducted on women
entrepreneurs, shows that women entrepreneurs (through an active process of caring for themselves) are more ‘democratic’ collaborative, and ‘nurturing’. According to Buttner (2001, p.264), women entrepreneurs talked of “Feeling significant satisfaction in participating in the growth and development of their employees.” I would extend this to the philosophical exemplification of the ‘care of the self’, which is not only a way to control and limit power, but is a conversion of power. Through entrepreneurship women have actively resisted the notions of hegemonic ideologies ‘to inscribe their subjectivity.’ It is an exploration by women ‘Not to discover what we [they] are, but to refuse what we [they] are’ (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 216). It is “A political, ethical, social, and philosophical issue [because entrepreneurship is an effort] not only to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state’s institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state” (Foucault, 1982, p. 216). It may be a near impossible ideal of achieving empowerment given the firm entrenchment of the patriarchal ideologies. However, there are micro-resistances forming throughout India, and new subjectivities are being formed by the initial step of a ‘refusal to accept.’ If we view power and empowerment through the lens provided by Deleuze and Guattari, we find it in Colebrook’s (Colebrook, 2000, p. 113) words not a “clarification or formalisation of possible experience, but a form of experience itself.”

How do media view these new processes of subjectivity formations among women? Do the popular media discourses represent the changes as they are occurring or are these new identity formations being re-crafted within the normative discursive systems? The next section examines some of the present discourses that contribute to the power/knowledge nexus. In order to foreground the tensions between women’s active construction of subjectivities through entrepreneurship and the reappropriation of their bodies by the media, I turn now to the perspectives provided in the print media texts, and by media personnel, and experts on Indian women entrepreneurs.

MEDIATED DISCOURSES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Viewpoints expressed by media personnel and experts on entrepreneurship whom I interviewed, accepted that women in India have an evolving perspective that is highly geared towards change. They recognise the ruptures and spaces being created
to encompass the ‘becoming’ of women entrepreneurs as part of a process against the
molar entity of ‘women’ in the organised body of patriarchy. However, the tensions of
catering to a highly consumerist culture impacts on the kind of representations that are
popular. The print media articles on women entrepreneurs and home businesswomen
exemplify how hegemonic discourses restrain women to binaries of power/
powerlessness, dominated/subordinated, inner, private / outer public, modern/
traditional. Consequently, while the media accepts that there are changes, it
reappropriates women’s bodies back into the patriarchal mould. Neera, Editor of a
popular women’s’ monthly stated,

Women entrepreneurs start thinking for themselves, start focusing on a life of
their own and they start bonding with others. It does not remain as a business
relationship, it goes far deeper, and so one advantage of being a woman is you
form associations, you try to help each other, and it spills on to our personal
life. You find a ladies wing of the Indian Merchant Chamber. There are new
faces every year with women joining up.

As a pedagogical process, entrepreneurship helps women towards becoming self-
reflective, independent, and autonomous in positive relationship with oneself.

Saroj, Editor of an alternative journal for women stated,

Women entrepreneurs are much better off than workingwomen. [In being an
entrepreneur] you are your own boss. Workingwomen anywhere are at a risk
of sexual exploitation, so it is often to their delight that they are their own
bosses. Women are often not going into businesses that require too much
dealing with bureaucracy, but in businesses that require relatively less
investment, don’t require licence permits and have suitable working hours.

Thus, entrepreneurship opens up new spaces for women and maps new subjectivity
formations. This gains particular relevance in an age where Third-World women’s
labour has been consumed by globalised capitalism (Mohanty, 1999). This labour has
been so appropriated by nation states and the transnational corporations that there is
an increased absence of ‘becomings.’ The media plays on the ‘reterritorialisation’ of
women’s work that is subjected to the fast moving capitalist economy as a positive
necessity. The cover story in an issue of Intelligent Investor (You’re in Business Mom,
2000, p. 24) has this headline below the banner, “So what if being a mother and
homemaker keeps you home all day? How to stay right there and use your three hours
a day to build a business” (Madhu T. and Nayak, with Bharadwaj, 2000). Given such
a scenario that reaffirms the traditional role for women as appropriate, ‘becoming’
entrepreneurs constitutes women’s attempt at individuality and particularity. In my
view, this is aligned with Foucault’s concept of self-governance, which has a
creativity to reform and rework the environment through micro resistances. As Anita, Editor of a popular and well established women’s magazine stated,

Women entrepreneurs are doing well. Sometime they come up against male chauvinism, but by and large they know how to cope. Their advantages are economic independence, emotional well being and socially they win respect. The notion of empowerment and the formation of new subjectivities in women call for new modes of thinking. The attempt to isolate patriarchal narratives is a pedagogical practice entailing critical understanding of normative texts that are reworking hegemonic ideologies into narratives. Following Gore (1993, p. 60) it can be argued that pedagogies operate as “regimes of truth” when such texts are understood as manifestations of the ‘internal self’ and represent how people identify themselves. The representations of women as post-modern fragmented subjectivities need radical feminist pedagogies that can foreground the significance of local sites from which a person can speak. A critical pedagogy can expose what Giroux (1995, p. 55) calls the “omissions and tensions” between women’s experience and the “hegemonic discourse” which enables us to envision how empowerment can be linked to a “participatory democracy” (Giroux, 1988).

If empowerment is a pedagogical process, readers must engage in a “critical constructivism” (Kincheloe, 1995) to examine how women are located within notions of patriarchy and femininity. Critical pedagogy helps to question and to seek continuous emancipation of the silenced voices of women, and offers dialectical understanding. It involves examining not just heroic narratives of women represented as overcoming their victimization by a globalised economy, but also texts that illustrate their suffrage and the constraints in their lives. Critical pedagogy can focus on the performative ability of women by examining the tensions in a text between different discourses and this can enable women towards resistance rather than victimization. Subsequently, the move can facilitate a shift in feminist linguistics towards new meanings thereby engendering new identity formations.

Critical reading of texts, therefore, is essential to critique the dichotomous and contradictory representations of Indian women that are currently circulated. This dichotomy is explained by Jyoti the Vice- President of a multinational TV channel:

There is this dichotomy the Indian woman lives with. On the one hand, we have had women in the highest positions of corporate sectors, bureaucracy,
advertising, arts, and university, just name it. On the other hand you still have “bonded” women. Bonded by family, tradition, convention, poverty, illiteracy, and above all, the all-pervading male. These tensions are explicit within popular media that craft dichotomous identities of a traditional homemaker who is suitably modern (Rajan, 1993), is entrepreneurial but sufficiently docile.

Nevertheless, views of entrepreneurs presented within popular print media articles project a ‘becoming’ that exemplifies a positive desire towards change and empowerment. The present situation for Indian women in their engagement with empowerment is that of negotiating a space, both locally and globally, through commercial and alternative media and through trans-media sectors like the Internet and satellite television. Such negotiations are even more relevant considering how entrepreneurship is a matter of great interest to the commercial media not as a source of empowerment in women, nor as a reframing of the concept of gender, but as a novelty to romanticize about. These romanticized visions are evident in titles like, *Behind this successful woman is a Mother-in-Law* (Haima, 1992, p.52), *The Queen bee* (Bhargava, 1988, p. 38), *Jelly belly girl* (2000), *Dream merchant* (Copy Editor, 1994, p.11).

Although features presented in the print media can be credited with creating a new awareness, and as creating greater solidarity and identity for women globally, these articles do not see women’s effort at entrepreneurship as an educative process or a process of ‘becoming.’ It views their success as isolated attempts at achievement in a male world. This is attested by Jyoti’s incisive statement,

> Media portrayal of women is something of a joke be it in print, films or TV. Though of late there have been some attempts at realistic portrayal, by and large the image is stereotype and extreme. In the beginning there was a great demand for women-centric themes on TV after alcoholism, drugs, poverty, illiteracy came- women as the favorite theme. Reams of footage and rhetoric later it was realized there is no money in such portrayals we came back to the stereotype. Unless it is woven into a good soap, themes around women do not have a market and let us face it- media is market driven. Except the national channel, newspapers, private television may perhaps once in a while carry realistic stories on women in Indian society- but this is a token tribute and often done at the behest of some group.

Articles on women entrepreneurs successfully re-situate women into the patriarchal mould, as the following example illustrates. Describing women entrepreneur Anjana Bhargav’s business in *Times of India* feature titled, *It’s a Perfect Ten All the Way*
author Sawhney (2001, p. 1) writes, “Anjana believes that if the women in the family know how to round off their personality and function with inner strength and outer poise, use correct language and follow appropriate form of social, domestic and business etiquette, they become role models for others to emulate.” The entire feature focuses more on the personal qualities of the entrepreneur rather than her business acumen. It thematically embeds the feature in the overarching hegemony of a patriarchal society with references to “living well” and “maintaining a domestic environment which is happy and well-balanced and therefore, conducive to intellectual growth and spiritual maturity.” The relativist notions on which these judgements are articulated are based on the transcendent hegemonic system which stipulates what is meant by ‘happy’ ‘domestic environments.’ However, articles can be credited with creating an ambiguity that in turn creates a space for a process of becoming. The article concludes with, “Her strong point? ‘I know my mind, know the path I want to follow and hope I have the strength to stand by what I believe in.’” This conclusion hints at what the entrepreneur believes she can achieve beyond the norms of a patriarchal system. Such statements are indicative of the self-reflexivity women entrepreneurs are engaged in, where through a ‘minoritarian’ perspective they are creating a process of ‘becoming’ different.

Views of women editors and experts on entrepreneurship point to this ambiguity of patriarchal discourses intersecting with new modes of representations. Jyotsna Sethi (personal communication, 1999) in her research on Indian women entrepreneurs found that “These women learnt from what they read or saw.” She found that “the media has been focusing on the direction women are taking, it has been concentrating on what needs to be done, whether it is family matters or matters of health”. Anita Editor of the popular women’s magazine, stated, “Focusing on women entrepreneurs in the media is to encourage others to put their potential to test.” However, as Daily and Dalton (2000) in their research on women executives noted, such portrayals are tempered by negative stereotypes of women. One editor who did not wish to be identified had this to say: “The media constructs the image. Even the manner in which stories are handled in the mainstream media are largely done from a masculine perspective.” She added, “Very largely the media contributes to the traditional set-up. India has a highly patriarchal set up of society, it is male oriented and the media policies benefit the males”. As Veena, Editor of a feminist publishing house noted,
“Mass media plays an important role in setting the agenda for the public opinion by selecting themes, items, points of views that tend to reinforce patriarchal norms. It constructs definitions of femininity and masculinity and images of women reflect and distort reality.”

An expert on Indian women entrepreneurs, Sengupta had this comment,

In the last five years there have been changes in the social system. The media reflects this change. There are two themes one can identify in the popular media. Women institutionalised through marriage, and the image of the strong, dynamic women, who can look after themselves. The media is creating an environment of competitiveness resulting from liberalisation.

The process of change that this view highlights can be envisioned as the process of a ‘molecular politics’ that these women are engaging in.

The alternative media tries to create some space. As Veena notes, “Alternative media was conceived to demystify the demeaning representations of women in the mass media and to empower women with the tools to project themselves.” As Kishwar, Editor of Manushi notes: “Journals like Manushi are platforms built for research, for debates on important issues and to build a consensus in favour of changes that India needs today, both on issues of rights and social justice issues.” Kishwar states,

women should not ghettoise narrowly on women’s issues, as then the implication is that all else belongs to men; so they (the men) decide the different affairs, the economic affairs, the political structure, leaving women to be concerned with marriage, rape, abortion, dowry, full stop.

The twin messages of delimiting women to traditional areas to articulate their views and the need to consider alternative media as a source of women’s authentic views comes across as a strong message.

CONCLUSION

As Luke (1996, p. 24) observes, “mapping new territories, and new feminist commitments, as attempts to reconstruct and rewrite patriarchal grand narratives [are] fundamentally concerned with reading and writing practices”. Narratives on women entrepreneurs illustrate Olkowski’s (1999, p.14) theorization based on Deleuze (1994) that language fragments, thus “creating new linguistic orders.” The capacity of language to “stutter” enables spaces of differences to emerge, and also foregrounds the obstacles women have to continuously overcome. If a philosophy of difference has to be espoused it begins with representations which uphold the differences through a ‘becoming’ that women are able to achieve. Entrepreneurship soon ceases
to be defined in normative terms that have male connotations, and exemplifies a
difference that is not subsumed within any dominant genus. The aim of studying such
representations foregrounds the importance of critical pedagogy that can provide
some course of action and posits a “language of possibility” (Giroux, 1988) from
within local sites from which women can speak. This aligns with Grosz’s (1994) view
that “texts, concepts and subjects can be put to work, made to do things, make new
linkages” (p. 200). If the process of becoming women entrepreneurs is to be
envisaged as a self-learning venture, it is important to foreground different
epistemological standpoints, “how [law] media [post] colonial policy, or educational
texts, concepts and subjects can be put to work, made to do things, make new
theory conceptualize and shape network of diffuse events of social and self

To sum up, I would argue that critical pedagogy can enable women to reinterpret
present Indian culture and cultivate resistance towards the way subjectivities are
constant reinforced in hegemonic terms. Women’s ‘stories’ must go beyond being
persuasive features and begin to illustrate their suffrage, and the constraints in their
lives. A critical awareness is demanded of readers to recognise what Ellsworth (1989,
p. 321) calls the “silence of the unknowable” where silence is “a language of its own”
freed from the “male defined context of Absence, Lack, Fear” (Minh-ha cited in

To conclude, I have offered the view that entrepreneurship is an engagement with the
processes of empowerment as a critically reflexive process towards new subjectivity
formation. The popular media texts that have a prominent influence on shaping
public opinion recast such subjectivity formations within traditional notions of
identity. Reading these texts requires the active ‘critical constructivism’ (Kincheloe,
1993) of readers who can interpret the examination of subjectivity formation and the
reconstruction of women in these media representations as ‘molar’ entities.
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1 In July 1991, a new economic policy was introduced by the government of India. This introduced a free market economy directed towards liberalisation of exports and imports.

2 Deleuze and Guattari,(1983,p.34) state that ,“Capitalism institutes or restores all sorts of residual and artificial, or symbolic territorialities, thereby attempting, as best it can, to recode, to rechannel persons who have been described in terms of abstract quantities.” Also refer to Deleuze, G.(1995,p.174)  “ “control” societies.”

3 For purposes of confidentiality, pseudonyms are used to refer to editors.

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