

# Heterotopias Created through Media Narratives and Manufacturing Consent for Women Empowerment in South Asia

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The argument of the paper is that media narratives serve the dual function of (de)legitimation. While manufacturing legitimizing consent for consumerism, media narratives delegitimize the old patterns of existence as well by penetrating deep in cognition and creating anomalous desires that refuse to take cultural rigidities as given. Media screens provide visual (re)presentation of real places and social arrangements; with the aim to overturn them with conceived mirror images of perfect. These narratives are endowed with the power to create new self, territorialized in heterotopias of the screen. The new personifications are contested by “pious” adherents of cultural continuity. By opting for the technique of Critical Discourse Analysis; paper aims to revisit the discourses of women empowerment and dependency, in a Hindi commercial movie “*Badrinath Ki Dulhania*” (Badrinath’s bride) (2017), and lifestyle advertisements of *Fair & Lovely* (Fairness Cream) (2002-2017) telecasted across South Asia, and an android phone *Q Mobile* (2016) in Pakistan.

Keywords: Media narratives, self, heterotopias, ambivalence, women empowerment

Prior to age of enlightenment humans were considered to be territorialized in a finite space, i.e., “space of localization”, with hierarchy of places<sup>1</sup>; produced by society as a realm to practice the peculiar cultural norms of everyday life. Enlightenment, according to Foucault replaced infinite with finite, and localization was replaced by the extension. The result in view of Foucault is an anxiety to expand, to move beyond the immediate, as near and far exist side by side. Foucault calls it “age of simultaneous”, where subject is no more situated but scattered. Elements of different and other places are juxtaposed in an arrangement, either “in opposition to one another, or link them together to create a sort of shape” (Foucault, 1997). Hence, a world is in process of making, composed of heterotopias, stretching across the global space with only one commonality, i.e., west with its economic system capitalism and culture of consumerism; with the free individual as base unit of society. To give it a concrete shape, vacuums of the infinite space are filled by western civilizational norms, connecting all four corners of world in a round globe with no edge and corner. West provided a mirror to rest of the world, to have a judgmental gaze on itself, and turn back to itself and reconstitute it according to logic of capitalism.

The view is corroborated by Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 2002), who is of the view that, it was the ever expanding reach of western world and urban norms that enabled

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capitalism to survive. Capitalism survives and reproduces itself in everyday life that was underdeveloped in relation to technology and production in mid-twentieth century. Capitalism transformed everyday life into zone of consumption (Elden, 2004). As elements of different and other are juxtaposed in the “age of simultaneous”, media serve as medium to convey the cultural codes around and across the globe. The representations of real world(s) are projected on screen of cinema and television. Culture is the product of culture industry and in turn “manufactures consent” for consumerism in different cultural settings giving rise to homogeneity. Media makes it a small finite world; a global village at the same time germinating the desire for infinite and other (west) in closed localized spaces of non-western world. Hence media makes world a finite space for west to penetrate and transform its social arrangements and infinite space of desire for the rest of the world. It is the reason that Critical Media theory (Schiller, 1978) associate cultural industry with cultural imperialism that control the conscious as well as the unconscious; in a way that subject identify itself with a “manufactured need”, and in process establishes affinity with “other”.

Media screen itself is a heterotopia that breeds heterotopias<sup>2</sup>, a hybrid third space<sup>3</sup> that combines western universals and ethnocentric local particulars. Media de-territorialize the self, embedded in local culture and creates a hybrid ambivalent subject that is the synthesis of dialectics between two cultures, where “Culture acts contrary to culture” (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002) The effect of message conveyed through media is new cultural norms, different identities, and novel subjectivities claimant to agency and authority. Media narrative (de)legitimizes both, the dominant as well as the dissident. It legitimizes the universal liberal norms of consumerism; at the same time delegitimizing the local hegemonic norms that act contrary to western universals and consumerism; in a way, legitimating the voices of dissent challenging the ethnocentric cultural rigidities and parochial hegemonies. In a non-hegemonic space of otherness media screens (big and small) becomes heterotopia of deviance, facilitating the creation of heterotopias of compensation, i.e., a real space that is other (Foucault, 1997).

The representation of “other” as “three dimensional space projected onto a two-dimensional screen”, produces the percepts of consumerism but its prime product takes the form of ideology of freedom. It acts in name of “freedoms”, i.e., the freedom of speech, freedom of individualism, freedom and power over one’s life choices with the desire to create the alternative self, that is completely “other”, to previous one (Burton, 2005, p. 232). Micro politics of desire compel cultural rigidities to recede; giving place to new norms to be embraced by a new self that is dissident to old patterns but capable to meet the requirement of new economies of consumerism, and integrated world capitalism. In context of South Asia, media is instrumental in giving space to dissident voices against the patriarchal gendered hierarchy. It is engineering consent for a “new woman”, motivated by the desire to have agency over her life and decisions, challenging patriarchal hegemony and a subservient status. The objective of this paper is to highlight the role of media in constructing the possible future for women and manufacturing consent for women having agency over her life choices. The paper is divided in three main segments.

The first will deal with the subjectivity embedded in social and mental ecologies and role of media in (de)legitimizing the narratives with reference to Lyotard (Lyotard, 1984) and Felix Guattari (Guattari, 1989) works. The second part of the study will focus on micro-politics of desire in illusionary spaces created by media that reveal the imperfections and illusions of real life; serving as antithesis to local hegemonies at the same time creating “other” spaces, perfect, meticulous and well arranged (Foucault, 1997). The third segment will examine the dialectics of desire and heterotopias of deviance and

compensation created through representation on cinema and television screen by opting the technique of critical discourse analysis of a commercial Hindi film *Badrinath Ki Dulhaniya* (Badrinath's bride) and life style advertisements of two consumer products i.e., the 'Fair & Lovely' and *Q Mobile* (android phone) displayed on South Asia media.

## **Social and Mental Ecology of Media and (De)Legitimizing the Narrative through Media**

The being of humans in collectivities is associated with the "invisible uniform they wear in their heads" (Goddard, 2011) It is the uniform of ideas that determine their language, body language, meanings of life, their roles and status in particular social settings, as well as their relations to self and to that with other, hence providing meaning to eco-logic of their very existence. This uniformity and coherence is attuned through repetition of messages that assigns meanings to everything else. Self, according to Lyotard is located at a post through which various kinds of messages pass (Lyotard, 1984). In view of Foucault, age of simultaneous is about arrangement and order, and creates a net that links point's together (Foucault, 1997).

The traditional societies used to orally transmit and repeat the discourses about right and wrong, normal and deviant, self and other, molded and ordered the human subjects according to the prevalent societal order. The narratives gained currency and legitimation through repetition across generations. Hence the "subjectivities were anchored in individual and collective pasts" (Guattari, 1989). Modern age in Foucault view is denial of time and assigning sanctity to what is called "history" (Foucault, 1997). It brings to temporary halt the existing social arrangements to facilitate transition from old to new formations, as media gives a presentation of "socially acceptable" ways of being or relating to others, and determining one's status in a group of people. (Carter & Steiner, 2004, p. 1) Any media system relies on 'shared rhythms, codes, pre-suppositions and drives that generate the patterns, dangers and potentials' that give rise to percepts about life (Goddard, 2011).

Media targets human cognition on two levels. It provides for the social eco-logic i.e., the social bonds and human relations. It also produces mental ecology of subject, providing it with an image about self in other's percepts. The realm of mental ecology is the subconscious. It is through "narrative that we come to know, understand and make sense of social world" (Thornhem, 2007, p. 55). To Guattari sensibility, intelligence and desire are the three vectors of subjectification, created through media, and individual is the terminal through which these vectors of subjectification necessarily pass. The unconscious through repetition of rhythms can be oriented towards a particular mode of subjectification (Goddard, 2011). According to Adorno and Horkheimer (Adorno, 1975), in culture Industry imitation becomes absolute and media penetrates in the lives of people in a way that real life becomes indistinguishable from the movies. In "Enlightenment as Mass Deception", they argue that dominant idea assures order but not coherence. The idea promoted through media is the bourgeoisie work of art without any antithesis, coordinating between the whole and part. To them power of the culture industry resides in its identification with a "manufactured need" (Adorno, 1975).

According to Herbert Schiller, media not only sales the products but also produces. Its main product is consumer. It creates an audience community 'that learn to buy particular "brands" of consumer goods and spend its income accordingly' (Schiller, 1978). The life style advertisement instills the values of materialism and consumerism, creating a product-user relationship, hence easing the rupture from rural economies to a predominant urban

cultural pattern in postcolonial societies (Burton, 2005, pp. 224-227). Liberal pluralists argue the benefits of such narratives as information provider, for promotion of individual choices and economic efficiency, and most importantly for a shift from traditional to modern. The neo-Marxist criticizes the lifestyle advertisement for maintaining an illusion by which the exploitative system is perpetuated" (Burton, 2005, p. 230). Everyday life is constituted on the intersection of "illusion and truth" and lived space of "imagination is kept alive and accessible" through works of art and literature (Lefebvre, 2002, p. 57).

Media discourses construct subjects, by informing it about its identity (gendered, national, ethnic, cultural, and personal). Like any discourses media discourses normalize the practices that create consent for hegemony whether it's the hegemony of dominant political classes, capitalist and on the most micro level the patriarchal gendered roles. Media critics are of the view that it never simply mirrored or reflected reality, but gives a representation of hegemonic definitions of what should be accepted as "real" and "common sensual" (Carter & Steiner, 2004, p. 2). Hence the media content always remained bias in favor of dominant classes as it represents the conditions of existence at any given time. The dominant media discourses normalize hierarchy and inequality and created "public consent" in favor of a capitalist patriarchal arrangement (Thornhem, 2007).

### **Patriarchal Gendered Roles and Feminist Critique of Media Representations**

Feminists were perhaps the first to raise voice against the representation of women in print media, as dominant media discourses were at odds with feminists definition of a 'more progressive, egalitarian womanhood'. The feminist struggle against media representations of women dates back to 1860, when feminists in USA and UK were complaining against the print media that ridiculed the "new women", who sought the greater social, educational, political and economic' roles; and celebrated a particular form of 'domestic femininity operating in a sphere completely distinct from men' (Carter & Steiner, 2004, p. 2). The second wave feminists contested the content of magazines, articles and fiction of the age, presenting dichotomous men and women spheres as natural, given, and hence unchangeable. Critical Feminists of 1970 objected the 'patriarchal capitalists' agenda of media and its services for creation of consent for the patriarch. (Carter & Steiner, 2004, pp. 1-5)

Life style advertisement based on psychological research, assign "sign values" and cultural meanings to commodities and services, and socially construct our needs. People associate with the products to create identities, social bonds and distinctions. (Burton, 2005, p. 236). The lifestyle advertisement portray women involved in household activities, and men assuming the role of responsible breadwinner, actively participating and planning not only for the present but also for the future of household, i.e., arranging for insurance, managing bank accounts, arranging loans for a comfortable living of the family, providing it with homes and luxuries. Women are either characterized as passive domestic women taking care of household or as 'object', with ideal beauty emphasized in 'her glossy lips, matt complexion, her unfocused eyes, flawless figure, and extraordinary hair'. Hence the women centered frame of media is the embodiment that either offers pleasure, or restricts women within the accepted bounds of femininity' (Thornhem, 2007, p. 7).

## Micro Politics of Desire and Creation of New Subjectivities

Media was criticized for treating the existent boundaries between public and private; good and bad women; and public/private gendered division of labor as sacred given and natural order of things. The narrative constructs agency, empowerment, personal identity, and desire of becoming to be the male traits; at the same time celebrating women passivity, and selflessness to protect the private spheres of lives from intrusion. A dominated women accepting patriarchal hegemony considered to be necessary to protect the division of labor named “natural”. To Foucault, presence of binaries like dominant and dominated, powerful and subservient implicitly means that our lives are “ruled by a number of unrelenting opposites, which institutions and practices have not dared to erode” (Foucault, 1997).

But media can have an alternative role serving as instrument to empower marginalized strata of society. The “other” spaces (heterotopias) of media present in households across the globe. Previously used to maintain status quo the space can now serve as site of struggle and place of birth for new “ethico-aesthetic paradigms” (Guattari, 1989). It is capable to create the heterotopias of deviance; constituting a sort of counter arrangement in which all the real arrangements found within society, are represented and challenged by contradicting the real with its “other”. (Foucault, 1997) These heterotopias have a relation of denial with the past. Although subjectivity is rooted and anchored in individual and collective past; the human subject and subject status is not fixed across time. “All history is nothing but progressive negation of slavery by the slave”. (Sarup, 1988, p. 22) Subjectivity is the product of social forces, we already discussed as the vectors of subjectification passing through and making the subject with all facets of its identity in any given epoch.

Media endowed with the power of creativity, and invention serves as laboratory of thought for new ideas and provides for an embodiment of future forms of subjectivity (Goddard, 2011). By alternatively producing the vectors of subjectification, it can create a rupture in consensus and communicate the message about a mutant desire, ‘capable of infecting the entire social field’. In words of Guattari, the mutant desire ‘leaves the forces of order scratching their heads’ because it is something non-existent and challenges the pre-existing identities (Guattari, 1989). According to Lacan, the desire is ‘desire for the other’, and it arises when needs are not properly satisfied. It pushes you to demand something (Sarup, 1988, p. 24). Mutant desire also relies on repetition of codes, rhythms, patterns and repetition of message. This micro-politics of desire created through dissident vector of subjectification, occupy the heterotopic space of media screens and then in cognition of subjects. The alternative desire suspends meaning, and an anomalous situation arises that challenges the order and coherence of given; and suspend, neutralize and invert the set of relationships. The micro-politics of desire open new vistas of “conditions of possibilities” about future, beyond and different from the conditions of existence. According to Adorno and Horkheimer, ‘once a particular brand of deviation from the norm has been noted’ the culture industry owns it. (Adorno, 1975). With this the dialectics begins, where culture acts contrary to culture.

## Dialectics of Desire and Heterotopias Created through Commercial Art/Culture Industry

Guattari assigns media stakes that are political or ethico-aesthetic (Goddard, 2011) serving

as site of resistance and place where mutant desire comes into play. But can we call media constructed reality a utopia (having inverse relation with society)? Do the images of society presented on screen is “society brought to perfection”, and in essence have a distant relation with reality? The answer of these two questions is “No”. Then what signifier can be used for the space appearing on media that present a counter order in dialectical relation to reality. Media screens serve as spaces where contrary ideas come into play; a space where societal relations are presented and inversed at the same time. Hence media images can be signified as heterotopia; “a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet is actually localizable. In contrast to utopias, these places which are absolutely ‘other’ might be described as ‘heterotopias’”. To Foucault “heterotopias are linked for the most part to bits and pieces of time. Men find themselves in total breach of their traditional time. It is a place outside time created with a desire to evolve through all times, eras and forms in a single space (Foucault, 1997) with perceived openness previously non-existent. To Stuart Hall, media is an exemplar of opens society. He adds that ‘rights and freedoms are historical. Defined by one group or class, in one historical situation, they are likely, in the dialectic of history, to be expropriated and put to a new and different use by another group or class in another historical period’ (Hall, 1986, pp. 7-8).

Freedom of expression and media freedoms were previously used for political empowerment of masses and democratization of western societies in West. Now it has become a site of struggle to redress gender grievances and eliminating the inequalities inherent in patriarchal order; as Postcolonial world is passing through the transition from tradition to modernity.

## **Dialectics of Desire in South Asian Context**

In the countries of South Asia, media narratives of feminity are produced within the cultural bonds and bounds. Likewise in west, through such narratives that gendered identities are structured and framed either celebrating the docile, passive, domesticity of ideal women of character; or a commodified image of feminine beauty as a pleasure giving object; a prohibited realm for the ordinary women.

In previous section, we discussed that mutant desire is the product of dissatisfaction of need. Either of the feminine representations cannot fulfill the needs of identity for normal, educated, aware, active, modern women of South Asia. The media needs the narrative of a ‘new women’; neither is she docile, constrained, passive; happy with a limited role as an ideal housewife; nor is “she” a commodity to be bought and sold for sake of pleasure. Hence emerging ‘new women’ of South Asia needs a distinct image and representation to overcome the traditional, gendered and imposed ‘identities, and become other than it is’, i.e., a new subject, its own opposite (Sarup, 1988, p. 24). The image of this new woman is the mutant desire that will leave the forces of cultural order in chaos. It will come into play with the given, i.e., the thesis, as a negation or what one can signify as the antithesis<sup>4</sup>, to be synthesized as new image (Sarup, 1988). Voices of dissidence arise in media discourses causing tension for traditional order. The rupture in consensus about local rigidities that hegemonize the social fabric in name of cultural particulars is in accord with universal norms of freedom and equality. Therefore the dissidence against local rigidities enjoys the support of forces of integrated world capitalism at the same time promoting humanism, gendered equity and women rights, i.e., the celebrated enlightenment norms in non-western societies.

New York fashion week (2016) is one such example of creating new possibilities for the women as survivors of patriarchal norms (Lui, 2016). The survived acid victim from

India Reshma Qureshi took the runway and has been made the face of a campaign to ban the sale corrosive. Pakistan is a traditional society where patriarchal norms combined with cultural and religious rigidities leave a limited breathing space for women populace, but it gives plenty of room to manoeuvre to dissident media narratives, emphasizing on women rights generating a mutant desire among womenfolk to exercise their free will about life choices. Sharmeen Obaid Chennoy, the winner of two Academy Awards is one such voice against patriarchal gendered norms denying women freedom of choice. Her two documentaries “Saving Face” (2012), and “Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness” (2016), rose controversy in a hybrid<sup>5</sup> Pakistani society that legitimize the customs in name of religion, therefore increasing the risks for dissident voices challenging the age old order.

The images presented in these documentaries, can be detested for two reasons i.e., images are neither utopic nor heterotopic but can be categorized as dystopia portraying the dark picture, real yet cannot be generalized to whole society; and the documentaries were not meant for common masses to create awareness and remained limited to an elite circle. Although, local orthodox criticized Sharmeen for her connections with the west, she was unable to create a popular wave. The real agents of change in South Asian context are commercial Hindi films released across South Asia (India, Pakistan, Nepal, Srilanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan etc.) and world for Diaspora South Asian communities, constituting second largest world audience after Hollywood films on cinema as well as on television; and life-style advertisement promoting the consumer brands as well as the norms of individualism, and mutant desires of personal identity.

### Reconstructing Gender as a System of Relation in *Badrinath Ki Dulhaniya* (Badrinath’s Bride)

Foucault (1997) is of the view individual exists in a set of relationship; in an arrangement that defines positions. The unconscious according to Guattari “remains bound to archaic fixation, only as long as no assemblage exists within which it can be oriented towards the future” (Gauntlett, 2002). As future is also rooted in existential territory, to him future is not determined but can be existentially reoriented. Like all critical paradigms feminist are not content with given hierarchical order ordained by power. They translate the present scenario in the idiom of power and provides for a perception of future where margins of today will form center of tomorrow, when power will be distributed differently, or there will be a change of definition of power. For a group of feminist theorists, power is a resource, unequally distributed between genders. Equal distribution of power will result in a future based on gender equality. For other power essentially means domination that reinforce master-subject dyadic relations between male and female. Alternative distribution of power will reverse the equation. Third group of feminist thinkers take power as agency and transformation towards empowerment by just relying on feminine traits (by being women with all the traits of care and motherhood), where women are in position to influence others to their will by relying on soft power of love, nurture and mothering. (Allen, 1999, pp. 7-20) The negating “other”, the alternatively constructed future found a realization on media screen. For purpose media inspired by feminist critique on master/slave dyadic relations between men and women exhibits the dialectics in action on media screen; where new self, existentially territorialized in “other” (heterotopic) formations of sensibility and sociability; result in a new social contract between genders.

In this context, the *Badrinath Ki Dulhaniya* (Johar, 2017) is a heterotopia created with the aim to root the future in a new existential territory. It questions the opposites that society take for granted like a contrast between “public and private space, family and

social space” (Foucault, 1997) serving the dual function of (de)legitimizing, i.e., delegitimizing the sacredness of traditional societal binaries of gender roles and legitimizing the figure of “new women”, ready to take the rein of her life in her own hands. As Indian society is going through rapid transformation in the epoch of globalization; Badrinath’s *Bride* is a movie that challenges women dependency on the economic, social-legal and moral psychological registers, elevating their status from an underclass to empowered subject (Dean, 2010, p. 76).

In existing Indian societal order male child is considered to be an asset and female child being a liability owing to women dependency on economic register (where one depends on another for subsistence e.g., the house wife (Dean, 2010, p. 76). In hierarchical division of places, public space is male territory with a role of breadwinner; and female is placed in private space of home given to her by male, where she is “His” responsibility, doing insignificant household chores; with prime obligation to bear male kids for her master. As the given order deems more value to paid ‘productive’ labor over unpaid ‘reproductive’ labor; the commercial movie provides images of both spaces, i.e., real and “other” (heterotopic) and dialectics in action. The other space is presented as “perfect, meticulous and well arranged”, in contrast to existential real space as “disordered, ill-conceived” and hence in need to be reoriented. The film is centered round the character of Badri (Varun Dhawan) and Vaidehi (Alia Bhatt). Badri becomes the victim of first sight love to Vaidehi who only loves her dream of having a self-identity, and become an asset for her father who believes her and her sister as liability. Father as being is territorialized in a social order that allocates higher status to a man having sons; as sons are considered to be the guarantee of prosperous old age in South Asia. Being the father of only daughters means an insecure future, as woman has to leave for their husband home and become the part of joint family of spouse. The status of women is that of subservient in dyadic gender hierarchy. Her education, career and desires of agency seem meaningless as she has to fulfill the needs of private sphere as dependent housewife.

The initial phase of film is about how “tradition is actuated by the veiled sacredness”. Badri being the narrator of his lived experiences delegitimizes the traditional arrangement in a sarcastic manner. He exposes parent’s emotional blackmails to keep their next generation in lieu with tradition of arranged marriages. Narrating the love tale of his elder brother he says that “heart attack button is fixed” in his father who uses oxygen cylinder to counter the risk of heart attack an expected outcome when his sons (males)<sup>6</sup> and females of household try to defy his authority. Being the semi-educated son of a money lender living in Jhansi<sup>7</sup> (State of Uttar Pradesh), during a marriage ceremony he falls in love with Vaidehi living in a small town Kota (Rajasthan), as Vaidehi argues with him on tradition of dowry and says that tradition is like making material evaluation of humans and determining their price. Vaidehi accepts Badri’s friendship and marriage offer as he helps her to find a perfect match for her sister who idealizes a famous film star. Some days prior to marriage the elder sister convince Vaidehi to leave her lifelong aspiration of having a career as “Air hostess” as compromise to being “happy” in a traditional manner. The plane is the other space<sup>8</sup> (heterotopia) where she can actualize her dream of economic empowerment, taking her outside her defined space. She elopes home with hands colored with Henna patterns (the customary practice of almost all Asiatic societies and a marriage ritual). In traditional thinking act of eloping is considered an act to defy parental authority to choose a partner of one’s choice, or choosing a master for oneself. Act does not change women status on economic and psychological register, as she enters in dependent relation in relation to a male. Vaidehi acts of eloping is different as she elopes not with a male who promise her a dream life, but she leaves home alone as sovereign subject, chasing her

dream to fly.

She appears before a selection committee where an expert tells her that Cabin Crew is a tough job and if she is entering the field with a desire to see world, she is mistaken. The girl tells confidently referring to Seven Wonders park of Kota that I have seen whole world in my small town, and now it is the inside world of desire that is motivating her to leave earth and fly. Vaidehi referring to a heterotopic place a public garden that according to Foucault is the “smallest fragment of the world”, representing its totality, is the reference to changing world, where small local places like Kota are connected with global making world a finite space.

Badri and Vaidehi families are disgraced in society due to Vaidehi’s act and Badri’s father asks him to find her, bring her back and murder her in name of honor. Badri finds her in Singapore where she is getting training. It is in other space that one way love of Badri is reciprocated and opposites start reconciliation. Traditional arrangements are brought to a halt in third space, and “everyday life comes in contact with unending history”. Badri starts giving respect to Vaidehi and tells her that she is better than any son, and any man would be fortunate to have a wife like her. Badri acknowledges the feminine power and Vaidehi wishes of empowerment. Vaidehi asks her to challenge the authority of father and inverse women role by asking father that “Vaidehi will do job after marriage”. As Vaidehi is asking for a new identity, that can cause panic in social order, Badri comes back to Jhansi with suspended beliefs.

The film reaches its climax, on occasion of “Puja” (sacred rituals) as Badri’s sister-in-law is expecting a child. Badri challenges moral-psychological fixations as he exposes the clergy that “if he can guarantee male issue after ritual, why he himself has only daughters”. Vaidehi’s mutant desire of agency finds a place in Badri cognition as he finally negates father’s authority. He tells the truth that he met Vaidehi and left her in Singapore instead of killing her for honor as she is quite happy there, earning more than a male. He gives transcendental references to his father about his lived space Jhansi that “you have forgotten that you are living in Jhansi that is famous for her queen not king”. “On the dramatic occasion Vaidehi comes in cinematic frame and asks forgiveness from her parents and Bansal family, and declares that it was her desire to become the son of her father sharing his responsibility in old age despite her being as women. In unconventional manner she proposes Badri, and both opt for a “live in” relation in Singapore and India, again repudiating the tradition and territorializing future in a new possibility and existential territory.

Badrinath Bride can be attributed as Hegalian-Marxist dialectics ending in resolution of opposites in “synthesis”, but it is something beyond this. The heterotopia created on screen, interlinked and juxtaposed the opposites in a system of relation where all elements sustain each other and exhibit new socio-logic. It is not about eliminating the contrary and differential but about embedding gender in a “new” system of relation with equal worth and respect for male and female; and opening the public space not only for women but also the private sphere of household for male, breaking the fixation about gender roles in age of simultaneous.

### Heterotopias Created through Life Style Advertisement

To Foucault (1997), the space of our primary perception, our dreams and of our passion holds within itself intrinsic qualities. According to Graem Burton, the life style advertisement

is based on psychological research. It defines and categorizes its audience according to two traits. It targets the sub conscious of those who are “achievement oriented”, as well as those who are “driven by the need to belong” (Burton, 2005, p. 236). The achievement is the trait associated with male in capitalist patriarchal arrangement. We have already discussed that media system relies on repetition of rhythms, codes, whose percept and affect is in form of potential and dangers. Media through life style advertisement ‘creates a space of dreams and fantasies and above all of fantasies of a new level of ‘control and mastery’ (Thornhem, 2007, p. 114).

The critical discourse analysis of two lifestyle advertisements, repeated after intervals on South Asian media reveals how heterotopias are crafted by juxtaposing the seemingly incompatible elements, presupposing a hybrid ambivalent space for new women.

### *Fair & Lovely* Synthesizing the Images of Beauty, Traditional Gendered Roles and Empowered Women entitled to Freedom of Choice

To Guattari (Guattari, 1989), capitalist power has become de-localized and de-territorialized. As we have already established that it gives penetration to west in non-western space making it a finite world and remake everyday life (Lefebvre, 2002), its grasp is not restricted to social, economic and cultural life of the planet, but it has infiltrated to unconscious levels of subjectivity (Guattari, 1989). In age of simultaneous, with a little external opposition (limited only to left oriented academia), capitalism in age of simultaneous manage “the worlds of childhood, and love” with the help of art fulfilling the needs of culture industry. But as per supposition of this study media acts as site of resistance making men and women little soldiers fighting individually for a better life. Consumer products do not just have a consumer value but have the capability to empower the marginalized. One such product is a beauty cream, the most valued consumer stuff for South Asian women conscious about their skin tones. Previously better skin complexion was a requirement for arranged marriages, where apparent traits are decisive for women fate. But *Fair & Lovely* since 2002 has started a campaign for “New Women” of south Asia motivated by the mutant desire to have agency over their life. It challenged urban-rural opposites, as well as girl child secondary status, and gender equality. One such example is the *Fair & Lovely* advertisement popularly signified as “Equal-Equal”<sup>9</sup>. The advertisement is telecasted on televisions screens of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh with slight variations, addressing the similar cultural patterns prevailing in three nation-states of Indian sub-continent.

As the beauty product meant for fair skin tone is the obsession of young women aiming to lighten the tan skin tone. Advertisement starts with two friends sharing their dreams and fantasies about future. Future in South Asian women in traditional arrangement is of course “a happy married life” with a caring and perfect partner with a reasonable fortune and earning. The mentor tells the medium-height girl that for a perfect match, she should enhance her height. The other girl asks But How? as height is given. The first one says “by becoming something”. As becoming and agency in public sphere is a male orientation, the discourse is a challenge to tradition that women can become something, independently. In other scene, father at home tells the medium height girl that he has found the “Perfect Match”, for her, i.e., 6 feet 2 inches in height; surgeon; well settled; having his own house; with all that a girl desires”. The girl returns to friend and says “I wanted to do job and become something, but”. The friend says “Ok”! “You wanted to”, so go ahead and get married and gives her “*Fair & Lovely*” to enhance her looks as a perfect bride

for the Perfect match. The girl uses the *Fair & Lovely* that not only changes her looks for the better but also increases her level of confidence to argue with the father. The mutant desire of becoming something dominates the girl. The Dialogue with father is popularly named as “Equal-Equal”, used as signifier of gender equality; as girl is saying “No” to enter in dyadic subordinate gender relations and asking for equal economic status. She says, “Well father I am ready to marry that 6 Feet 2 inch tall perfect match, but! After three years. First I will do job, it will increase my height, then there will be increase in career and my height will increase even more. I will be well settled, have my own house, only then it will be a perfect match, “Equal-Equal”. Father looks in astonishment to her passive daughter who by using a consumer product transforms in active decision maker of her life. Like most of the product advertisement displayed in South Asia advertisement ends with a song, and a lyric is “there is new light in ideas”.

The advertisement is the perfect synthesis merging traditional with modern, presenting the standard image of beauty that fits within the frame of consumerism at the same time, creating the space for “New Women”.

### *The Q Mobile and Creation of New Space for Women in Men Centered Field of Cricket*

Q Mobile<sup>10</sup> advertisement is more challenging, but like the previous one it juxtaposes the tradition with modern. The mother of a young girl tells her husband that Sara (a young girl under eighteen) has been selected for training camp for women cricket team selection, and asks for his consent, as Sara is all set for a career as player. The father remains rigid. The mother asks Sara to talk to father, and she says, father will not listen as he is in habit of just dictating his commands. She leaves but remains under the soft surveillance of her mother sending her the details of each and every moment through Android phone. On camp, Sara performs her religious duties as a devotee Muslim and fast during the month of Ramzan. Sara gets selected for the team and becomes a match winning player bringing pride to nation and his street as well. The father receives congratulations from fellow who say that Sara is the pride of community. Father talks to Sara on mobile with tears in his eyes. End is "Sara wins". The background lyric states that lessons can be taught by young to old.

The advertisement creates a real heterotopia combining the traditional spaces of walled city with cosmopolitan training centers and cricket grounds in urban centers and foreign countries; traditional "dupatta" (scarf) during performance of religious duties and sports suit for playground; promoting the virtual space of mobile phone that brings together the opposites and irreconcilable.

## **Conclusion**

Feminist theory challenges hierarchical gender relations for three reasons, i.e., women dependent status on economic, socio-legal, political, and moral-psychological registers (Dean, 2010, p. 76) due to unequal distribution of power between male and female subjects; dyadic master-slave social order emerging from the said distribution of power, and overestimation of male “productive” labor over female “reproductive” force, celebrating masculinity (Allen, 1999, pp. 7-20). The women subordinate status being the trait of traditional patriarchal setups were challenged successfully in the western world owing to

economic compulsions that first led to the nuclear family and at the end individualism. Challenges of capitalism are knocking the doors of tradition bounded societies in the age of globalization; new economic order requires reordering of traditional gender roles. The desire of agency and individuality in case of South Asian women is a synthesis of universal and particular, the net result of dialectics negating both (Sarup, 1988, p. 23). As the mutant desire of becoming, in words of Guattari is ambivalent desire, women are motivated for the agency to perform ascribed cultural roles of securing parents old age and fulfill the void created in their life due to an absence of sons. Vaidehi in Badrinath's Bride wants to have agency over her life not for the sake of individual liberties but to perform the responsible role previously associated with only a male heir.

For Guattari, the purpose of creating a system of relations is not the resolution of opposites, but to establish harmony between the opposites, to create new existential territories. The Father-daughter dialogue in *Fair & Lovely* commercial represents the mutant desire of becoming that leaves tradition scratching its head, leaving a question mark in cognition of viewers; that whether forcing daughters to enter into an in-equal covenant is desirable or to allow her to lead an empowered life. *Fair & Lovely* commercials are significant in another way, as it not only addresses the gender lag but also the economic-cultural ones between urban and rural, providing a vision of equality and equity between multitudes of spaces. A rupture in the consensus of tradition is normalized by repetition, creating a new assemblage of incompatibles, forging new values. New ceased to be new through repetition of message and it seems that it has been "already existent". (Guattari, 1989) *Q Mobile* advertisement is significant that it not only opens a masculine field of cricket ground for women but also creates compatibility between seemingly incommensurable religious orders with modern-day requirement of women agency giving Muslim women the status of an independent subject.

In words of Adorno and Horkheimer, the cultural lag gives space to capitalists to maneuver and intervene. Although the cultural industry targets the conscious and unconscious states of minds of millions, the mass remains secondary and serves as objects of calculation an appendage of a system, meeting the new demands on system. "Manufactured Needs", desires and demands integrate the opposite from above. A vision of everyday life is hence actualized on heterotopic space of screens, on the intersection of "truth and illusion, power and helplessness; on the intersections of sector man controls and sectors he does not control, perpetuating a transformative conflict between diverse and specific....social rhythms" (Lefebvre, 2002). With "unimaginable, repetitive and differential structure and agency...conscious and unconscious, disciplined and trans-disciplinary" (Soja, 1996), the third space normalizes and (de)legitimizes in the name of freedom, individualism, power, and agency, it constructs an alternative reality, that serves

**Notes** embodiment for the possible future.

<sup>1</sup> Foucault is of the view that during middle ages in "space of localization", places were ordered according logic of hierarchy, i.e., the sacred and profane places; urban and rural places; and places where things were shifted as a result of violence. To Foucault it was Galileo who introduced the concept of infinite and space of localization of middle age was dissolved, and localization was replaced by extension. (Foucault, 1997)

<sup>2</sup> The concept of Heterotopias is given by Michel Foucault and is employed in human geography. As Utopia is ideal where everything is perfect, contrary to dystopia that is associated with everything bad; heterotopia is the space neither good nor bad but "other". In heterotopias contrary comes together to create a sense of real. Heterotopia juxtaposes several spaces in a single space, i.e., garden. Heterotopia is creation of an illusionary space that exposes the real. The space is real yet its relation with the real is that of the "other". To Foucault, like a ship it provides an escape from authoritarianism and repression.

- <sup>3</sup> Concept of Third Space is given by Edward Soja, the cultural geographer. Soja combined the concepts of heterotopias by Foucault and critique of Everyday life by Henri Lefebvre. To him Third Space is a space that combines subjective with objective, abstract and concrete etc. (Soja, 1996)
- <sup>4</sup> Dialectics is a negating action that challenges the given by providing alternative ideas. Given is challenged initially by ideas that invokes action.
- <sup>5</sup> Pakistani society is a combination of tradition and modernity. With urban cosmopolitan cities exhibiting all signs of globalization, there are far off distant areas where cultural norms are considered synonym to religion. The traditional practices consider women the possession of its family. Practices of Vani (women are exchanged to settle feuds), and Karo-kari (men and women are murdered by their families in doubt of having illicit relations) are norm in rural areas of Pakistan. Strange phenomenon is that it is not only modernity that is penetrating to rural areas in form of consumer culture and mechanized living but tradition that is moving upward from rural to urban spaces. The practice of Honor Killing that was considered to be a barbaric feature in educated middle classes of cities is now taking root as an accepted norm legitimized in name of religion. Retrogressive trends are as present in society as progressive attitudes towards modernity and urbanite life styles. (Toor, 2011, p. 163) (Weiss, 2014) (Weiss, 2012, p. 3) (Rehman, 2006) (Perveen, 2013) (Obaid-Chinoy, *A Girl in the River: Price of Forgiveness*, 2016)
- <sup>6</sup> In traditional patriarchal societal order father son relation is a relation of command and obeys.
- <sup>7</sup> Jhansi is famous for its female queen Rani Lakshmi Bai, a leading figure of Indian war of Independence 1857 (signified as Indian mutiny by British historians), known as symbol of valor and courage considered to be the masculine traits.
- <sup>8</sup> To Foucault the ship is heterotopia par excellence as it means economic growth.
- <sup>9</sup> Fair & Lovely "Dad and Daughter" youtube.com
- <sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWbStB0qXlw>, Be Proud of Daughters Ramadan 2016

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