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Travels of the 'Authentic Craftswoman': representing lives of value across transnational markets

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Abstract

This article assesses representations of the 'authentic craftswoman' as she travels from an all-women's cooperative, Haath Ka Honar (HKH), in Rajasthan, India through the transnational craft market. it suggests that the representations at HKH exceed the hegemonic discourses of both the neoliberal (female) 'entrepreneur' within international development and 'authentic' third-world cultures. In contrast, HKH seeks to produce a market subject, who works within a collective that both reclaims dynamic traditions and guarantees the artisans' livelihoods. However, this subject and her gendered labour remains governed by market structures, and require 'translation' into these hegemonic discourses in order to become legible and deemed valuable within the market. This study exposes limits to alternative economic structures – particularly regarding their ability, on their own, to change larger capitalist systems that are sustained through gendered and racialised discourses and value systems.

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Introduction

The neoliberal doctrine of free markets and self-responsible entrepreneurs tends to present itself as the 'only option' and the one 'solution'.[1] Within international development, neoliberalism has manifested itself as the (gendered) 'rational economic woman' of microcredit who takes sole responsibility for her own 'improvement' (Rankin, 2001) as well as the 'authentic native' (Chow 1994) who markets her 'pre-modern' culture for Western consumption. Yet, some argue, there *are* other options, that is, alternative economies that prioritise people over capital accumulation, the (re)production of flourishing lives over profit.[2] While alternative economies work within capitalist systems in order to survive, they are 'hybrid', as they work in ways that do not adhere to capitalist values, but instead, look to create economic systems that move 'beyond what actually exists' (Santos & Rodríguez-Garavito, 2006: xxii). Therefore, these alternative economic structures, such as worker-owned cooperatives, are not just economic but *political* spaces, based on principles of equity across race, gender, ethnicity, and, in the case of South Asia, caste, and actively promote solidarity within and beyond one's immediate communities (Coraggio, 2009; Santos & Rodríguez-Garavito, 2006; Gaiger & Anjos, 2013).

In the following article, I analyse the all-women's cooperative,[3] Haath Ka Honar. Haath Ka Honar (HKH) is based in the district of Barmer within Rajasthan, India, and sells contemporary products that incorporate traditional embroidery work. These products are sold to 'niche' international markets that value the artisans' work due to the handicraft's authenticity and the initiative's entrepreneurship.

I argue that, while the handicraft market exists within unequal transnational capitalist and colonial relationships of power, the subjects that the market produces are negotiated by those who inhabit (and represent) these market subjectivities. Beyond simply the production of dominant discourses, HKH's hybrid market subject,[4] the 'authentic craftswoman', is neither individualistically entrepreneurial nor culturally essentialised. Instead, she collectively employs the market to dynamically sustain changing traditions and is entitled to a dignified and sustainable livelihood. However, this production is highly negotiated as these subjects exist within a dominant neoliberal market in which only certain subjects are deemed 'legible' (or 'valuable'). Therefore, representation, as a means of translation, is instrumental within these alternative systems of production, but runs risks of committing 'epistemic violence' (Spivak, 1988)

[1] Several theorists discuss the ways that neoliberalism shuts down conversation for all other possible economic alternatives (see Coraggio 2009; Santos and Rodríguez-Garavito 2006; Mignolo 2011; Gibson-Graham 1996).

[2] Alternative economies have been discussed by different academic and activist forums (postdevelopment, degrowth, ecofeminism, solidarity economies, cooperative movements, to name a few), and while having points of difference, these movements overlap on many fundamental values that reject a profit-centric and individualistic capitalist system that benefits the few, at the expense of the many (including the environment). As these movements radically question mainstream economic assumptions and seek to 'transition' to noncapitalist systems (Escobar, 2015), they can (theoretically) be distinguished from movements and trends that seek to work within capitalism as a 'third sector' or to give capitalism a 'human face' (Caffentzis & Federici, 2014). However, as some scholars note (eg. Santos and Rodríguez-Garavito 2006), there can be a spectrum of alternative economies that work more or less within capitalist systems, with tensions between these different models (Corporate Social Responsibility and Fair Trade are examples of more 'within-system' models that are heavily critiqued [Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy 2015]). HKH, the cooperative in my study, is situated along this spectrum, with certain areas, particularly with respect to management responsibilities, that differentiate it from more radical alternative structures.
Among the various alternative economies groups, in this article, I focus mainly on Global South theorists, particularly those of the solidarity economy, as they most readily incorporate concepts of coloniality/decolonising – theories which are integral to my analysis – and many (along with feminists outside of the global South such as Gibson-Graham) are cognizant of the feminist concern with revaluing traditional women's reproductive labour (Díaz). Solidarity economy theorists have many ties with postdevelopment theorists (particularly Escobar), but argue that an important differentiating feature is solidarity economies' focus on transnational alliances, while postdevelopment tends to be particularly focused on the 'local' (Santos & Rodríguez-Garavito, 2006).

[3] HKH is a 'producer company', which is considered part of a 'new generation' of cooperatives (Singh, 2008). See footnote 23 for further a description of a producer company.
HKH, as well as its associated women's empowerment organisation (known in this paper as Mahila Sashaktikaaran, or MS) and interviewees, have been given pseudo-names in order to preserve anonymity. Locations have also been changed to ensure anonymity as well.

[4] Drawing from Homi Bhabha, by 'hybrid' I here refer to colonial subjects who are '*not quite*' what the colonial discourse would like them to be, allowing the possibility for a counterhegemonic subject. This concept is further discussed in the Theoretical Framework and Literature Review section. At this point, I would like to draw a connection between the hybrid subject and the hybrid economies referred to above, the latter which can potentially provide a space for the hybrid subject to enact a transformatory politics.

that forces 'intelligibility' in dominant discourses. Hence, I suggest that we cannot merely conceptualise alternative economies in terms of combatting material exploitation within capitalism. These economic spaces must counter-act systems of social domination (Quijano, 2006) that have an *epistemological* underpinning, particularly as carried through mediums of representation, in order to re-define who, and whose (re)productive labour, is *worth valuing.*

In this paper, I ask the following: How (and by whom) are travelling representations of the 'authentic craftswoman' negotiated and 'translated' within hegemonic systems – systems that require specific subject-productions in order to be legible and of value within transnational (albeit, 'alternative') markets? What are the 'freedoms' (Rose, 1999) and limitations of the hybrid (and gendered) craft subject, produced through encounters in the market between development(alist) discourses with conflicting value systems? And specifically, what are the political effects of the representers in the market, who are necessary for those unable to be heard?

I begin this article by situating my argument within postcolonial analyses of third-world representations and feminist economists' notion of 'women's work', while noting the underlying gendered and racialised values systems that determine who and how particular groups are represented. In this section, I also introduce the concept of hybridity to better conceptualise the ways subjects do not (fully) conform to these dominant systems. After describing my methodology, I then analyse the 'authentic craftswoman' as represented by HKH employees and within the marketing material of HKH's client, specifically focusing on this subject's hybridity and negotiations with hegemonic discourses. I end my analysis with my thoughts on the role of representation within alternative economies.

The (in)visible and (de)valued: Analysing the 'rational economic woman', third-world authenticity, women's work, and hybridity

In the following section I situate my question within existing theoretical and empirical literature on the (gendered) neoliberal development space in order to analyse the discursive negotiations over the (re)production of the 'authentic craftswoman'. I explore neoliberal representations of the 'third world woman', racialised notions of authenticity, the status of women's reproductive labour in capitalist systems, as well as the transformative potential of hybrid subjectivities. I undergo this analysis in order to understand what is (and is not) recognised and valued within hegemonic discourses that HKH artisans negotiate, but also to conceptualise the space to create subjectivities other than those demanded by these discourses.

To understand the production of the 'authentic craftswoman', I begin by examining feminist analyses of neoliberal development(alist) representations of the 'third world woman'. I utilise the concept of 'developmentalism' (Escobar, 2012; Madhok, 2013), to mean a form of governmentality[5] with logics and practices that seek to produce subjects who are 'amenable to "development"' (Madhok, 2013: 1), the latter which is 'a technical, political, ethical and intellectual project' (2013: 2). I furthermore understand 'development' as a normative pursuit that may have changed its focus and specific aims, but continues to partake in systems of coloniality (Quijano, 2007), that is, normalised Eurocentric ideas of 'progress' that invisibilise exploitative economic systems (Madhok, 2013:28; Kapoor, 2004: 628–630). Developmentalism, in a relatively recent discursive shift very relevant to the craftswomen at HKH, has instrumentalised neoliberal logics to make the (gendered) entrepreneurial subject the bearer of development. As Rankin (2001) describes, neoliberal governmentality utilises political rationalities of 'self-regulating markets' and techniques, commonly microcredit, in order to produce the self-responsible 'rational economic woman' who is 'empowered' through market linkages. While previously the 'third world woman' was represented as a 'victim' to be saved (Mohanty, 1988), Wilson (2008, 2011) has noted

[5] I draw here from Foucault (1991, 1997) in understanding governmentality as consisting of (competing) discourses, that, imbued with underlying truth and *value* claims, *represent* knowledge (Hall, 1992:291) and produce the ethical subject who transforms himself (sic) to be aligned with the value system of a particular discourse (Foucault, 1997:225) and larger governmental objectives.

that under neoliberalism, the 'victim' has now become the 'agent'. This new 'third world woman' is gendered 'naturally' efficient and altruistic – a member of the 'deserving' and industrious poor who will bring her family and community out of poverty. Moreover, this image retains the implicit Western viewer who has the moral responsibility to 'rescue' the woman from her 'backward' culture through market intervention (Wilson, 2011: 329). Through the market, gendered inequalities, both within and outside of the economic sphere, appear incidental or 'solved', and any economic exploitation faced is simply 'overcome'.

Additionally, there are significant epistemological implications to these (new) representations of the (speaking) agentic third world woman. These representations unquestioningly glorify the 'pure, unmediated subaltern voice' (Kapoor, 2004: 637), thereby hiding the Western subject/consumer/donor 'masquerading' as both knower and (absent) representer of the 'transparent' Other (Spivak, 1988).[6] This presumed translatability of her speech into the oppressor's language is a violent act of epistemic 'plundering', of forcefully translating the *un*translatability of the subaltern discourse (Chow, 1994: 132, 139; Spivak, 1988: 300). These representations are therefore complicit with, through discursive erasure of, international modes of economic exploitation (Spivak 1988), the very systems that women in the third world collectively mobilise against (Wilson, 2008: 83). As Spivak notes, however, there is a 'line of *cultural* difference within the 'same culture'' that joins the interests of international elite managers of the transnational NGO complex (2003: 618), thereby producing a *classed* representation of the 'third world woman' who serves as a foil for a *global* elite woman (Dosekun, 2015).[7] Spivak's hidden knower may also be the 'native informant' (1988: 284) who commodifies 'difference' as 'ethnic culture' that is then 'packaged and 'niche'-marketed' (Kapoor, 2004: 631).[8] Spivak concludes, whether victimised or 'given voice' through Western or local elite, this 'violent aporia between subject and object status' (1988: 306) is a form of epistemic violence that silences the subaltern.

In addition to the discourse of the 'rational economic woman', I argue that HKH simultaneously navigates the racialized discourse of third world authenticity, which has similar epistemic concerns. As Chow argues, in representations of the subaltern, this 'defiled native' (e.g. colonised and exploited) is presumed to have a 'lack' that can be compensated for, by the good Western liberals or third world nationalists, by 'giving' her an 'authentic' voice (1994: 131). Chow maintains that we have a desire to look 'underneath' this defiled image to find the 'authentic' in order to provide ourselves with a mythical alterity that is nostalgically 'outside' of modernity – unchangingly Other, and therefore governable and complicit with systems of coloniality (1994: 140-45). We make 'them' *almost* like us, just '*not quite*' (Bhabha, 1994) – with the 'not-quiteness' marking the boxed-in area of authenticity, the native in her 'proper' place (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013).[9] In this 'proper' place she is able to be 'valued' (as inferior) within the dominant discourse, and therefore is able to 'matter' (Beverley, 1999),

[6] To be clear, political work *is* being done to interpret these voices – it is not simply letting the 'oppressed speak for themselves' (Spivak 1988, 292) – but these politics are erased by claiming access to an unmediated subaltern experience (or voice). Experience as self-evident, uncontestable proof, as Scott (1991) argues, is untenable, as experience is constructed through discourse and always requires *political* interpretation to have meaning.

[7] To note, while analyses of the 'third world woman' risk reifying the very 'West'/'rest' binary that postcolonial feminists scholars wish to dismantle, these interjections do remain important as long as 'Eurocentric analytic paradigms continue to flourish' (Mohanty, 2003:509) and as an intervention to name power (Ali, 2007:192). However, these critiques must be complicated by analyses of other 'scattered hegemonies' (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994), especially along lines of economic exploitation.

[8] As discussed in the Data Analysis section, this point is pertinent for HKH, as 50% of the consumers of HKH's product are in cosmopolitan centres *within* India, and also due to the classed nature of representation within HKH itself regarding who gets to represent.

[9] Chow critiques Bhabha's concept of hybridity – 'almost the same, *but not quite*' – as merely an attempt to interpret as 'agency' into 'what a dominant culture permits in the interest of maintaining equilibrium,' and part of the liberal humanist (and complicity imperialist) project to 'try to make the native more like us by giving her a 'voice' ' (Chow, 1994:131). I find that this critique of the colonial appropriation of the native's voice in order to 'manage' the native for capitalist purposes is crucial and a 'not-quiteness' manifested as an 'authentic culture' can be a mark of this appropriation. However, I argue, drawing from Bhabha's argument, that hybridity has a counterhegemonic potential, a point further elaborated below.

while being epistemically alienated[10] from this 'authentic' representation.

This notion of 'authenticity' has considerable currency within the handicraft market, a market in which material products ostensibly 'represent' the producer. 'Authentic craft' is many times framed in a self-congratulatory light of facilitating indigenous artistic 'renewal' or preservation of age-old traditions and frequently draws from notions of the 'primitive' Other ('mystical' and 'unchanging') (Myers, 1991), bringing about an 'imagined access to a world of difference,' that 'enhances' the consumer's knowledge and power (Phillips & Steiner, 2002: 3). Creating the 'authentic' oftentimes *depends* on a separation of the producer and consumer in order to create the appearance of the authentically Other (Steiner, 1995). However, this authenticity is considered to be destroyed through commodification, as it becomes 'tainted' by catering to consumer needs (rather than its 'original' use), and therefore, with hybridity suspect, the (inevitable) commercialisation of the authentic good in the market must be carefully concealed by becoming an 'artefact' of some distant past (Phillips & Steiner, 2002: 4). Where 'hybridity' is valued, it tends to be homogenised as some ethnic third world Other that shares a common 'primitiveness' (2002: 18). The authentic craft, as Venkatesan (2009) notes in India, can serve for nationalist purposes (in collusion with imperialist ones), with elite groups dictating the terms and conditions of the 'quintessentially Indian' (2009: 81) by displacing local artisans from the complexity of their social situations to become symbols of national identity. Therefore, the artisans become specific subjects – 'traditional' craft producers – with particular agentic capacities that 'conserve' power relations.

The discourses of the female entrepreneur and the authentic native are both outgrowths of coloniality while also inherently paradoxical. The incongruous representations of the 'third world woman' requires, at times, a 'rational economic woman' who freely acts in the market, and at other times (or at the same time), an 'authentic native' who represents her unchanging, pre-modern culture. This acts as a contradictory incitement to 'modernise' (or develop) through neoliberal economic systems ('to become like us') and to remain the statically 'traditional' as part of some prehistoric past ('*but not quite*'). Both these discourses, I argue, profoundly shape the space that HKH acts in – constricting the artisans' *discursive* legibility and their *material* opportunities.

Furthermore, the all-female craft work within HKH must also be considered in the context of the *gendered* forms of capitalist exploitation discursively (and materially) founded in women's role within social reproduction. As many feminists argue (Barker, 1999; Nelson, 1995; Bjornholt and McKay, 2013), the autonomously self-sufficient (and disembodied) market actor in the world of 'production', is an ideal that tends to be more attainable for men, marginalising traditional women's roles associated with non-market and 'reproductive' activity. However, at the same time, as several Marxist feminist scholars note (Luxemburg, 1951; Mies, 1986; Hartsock, 2006),

[10] I use the term 'epistemic alienation' to draw together Spivak's idea of 'epistemic violence' and concepts of 'alienation', by Marx and coloniality scholars, from what one materially and culturally produces. By 'epistemic violence' I refer to the silencing act of hegemonic discourses in explicitly or implicitly denying the capacity for a marginalised group to produce knowledge (Spivak, 1988). In *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx discusses alienation as an estrangement from the product and the production process within capitalism, as the capitalist, not the worker, controls the creation of this product and the product is for the purpose of an external consumer (as opposed to a use-value product). For Marx, the product is meant to *represent* the worker, as a form of self-expression or 'objectification of labour', which is cut off through capitalist relationships.
Marx's theory of alienation focuses on the individual's lack of self-representation while dislocating the individual from any particular culture from which he (sic) is produced (a gendered and racial blind spot regarding the 'local' that Spivak [1988, 279] notes). However, as the (Foucauldian) subject is brought into being through discourses that belong to specific cultural contexts (Butler, 1993, 1997), an alienation from 'oneself' necessarily implies an alienation from the *cultural* production of one's being. Furthermore, in the context of coloniality, the colonised, by becoming a cultural relic of an authentic 'past', are 'plunder[ed] of their place in the history of the cultural production of humanity' (Quijano, 2000:541), resulting in a '*temporal* displacement or alienation of *space*' (Alcoff, 2007:85) in which the colonised's sense of time is so that they '[see] 'now' as occurring in another space' (ibid). Colonised people's knowledge is 'systematically delocalized' with 'somewhere else' as the 'reference point', and so the colonised are dispossessed of their means of knowing – 'It no longer knows' (89).
Therefore, coloniality results in the alienation from one's cultural representation, as is often the case in the handicraft space, through the creation of a product that represents *someone else's* idea of their 'authentic' culture, with that someone else's sense of space and time as the reference point that this idea of the 'authentic' refers to.

capitalism depends on the availability of a labour force that is more flexible (and therefore, exploitable) than the male employer/employee capitalist relationship of production, including women's work. As Mies (1982) argues, the ideological construction of women as 'housewives', and therefore 'non-workers', serves to devalue women's work, thereby allowing for the invisibilisation and super-exploitation of women in their reproductive role *and* when brought into capitalist systems of production as (non-) workers.

I argue that HKH artisans' embroidery work constitutes 'women's work', associated with the *cultural* reproduction of their communities, with important de-valuing consequences of this gendered labour. As many feminist scholars argue, especially with respect to alternative economies (Hillenkamp, 2015; Guérin & Nobre, 2014; Díaz, 2015), the gendered division of production and reproduction must be dissolved for a truly *alternative* economic structures. 'Reproductive' labour must be valued and allowed autonomy through access to the 'productive' sphere, while 'productive' labour must serve the purpose of 'reproducing' flourishing human lives (Díaz, 2015). Valuing HKH artisans' (cultural) reproductive labour within the productive sphere may be a step in this direction, blurring lines between 'productive' and 'reproductive' labour. Nevertheless, this revaluing is limited by what is considered valuable in the market. Furthermore, in order to closely analyse the subject-production of the 'authentic craftwomen', we must take into consideration that the racialised epistemological underpinnings of exploitative systems differentially situate globally disparate gendered subjects. I maintain that the new, neoliberal 'rational economic woman' and the 'authentic native', instrumentalises patriarchal and racial ideologies so that, instead of invisibilising gendered labour, hyper-visibilises a very specific (and inferiorised) production of an (authentic) entrepreneur that proves useful to capitalist systems, doing little in terms of re-*valuing* the gendered labour of racialized women.

Yet, are the discourses of authenticity and third world female entrepreneurs totalising, over-determined by oppressive systems of coloniality? As Foucault states, relations of power are 'mobile, reversible, and unstable' as they exist '*only* insofar as the subjects are free' (1997: 292) to do otherwise and, potentially, to demand to be governed differently, '[not] in the name of those *principles*…not like that, not for that, not by them..[not] at that *cost*' (2007b: 44-45, emphasis added). In a postcolonial context, Bhabha argues 'a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same but not quite*' (1994: 122), retains a necessary 'Otherness' – 'its slippage, its excess, its difference' (ibid) – to preserve the inferior status of the colonised, but also due to this 'slippage', there remains an *unpredictability* in this subjectification process that is a threat to colonial epistemic authority (ibid). Therefore, this subjectivity is *hybrid* due to the hegemonic powers that have marked its existence *but were never complete*. Rather than being an 'inauthentic self,' hybridity serves to critique dominant narratives, as this discursive 'incompleteness' flies in the face of 'myths of nationalist or imperialist hegemony that are employed to justify cultural domination and discrimination' (2007: 8). While criticising an elite cosmopolitanism that benefits from neoliberal systems, Bhabha argues that hybrid perspectives demand a 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' that 'is inflected with the discourses, experiences, and social dialects of those who are defined as minorities' (2007: 10) and that is committed to a right to difference without resorting to notions of authentically pure cultures. However, I argue that hybrid subjectivities are spaces of *potential* for counterhegemonic politics, but can also be co-opted by larger hegemonic systems. Therefore, the transformatory *effects* of hybridity within the above discussed systems of domination and exploitation is critical for analysis.

Therefore, while the realm of 'empowerment' remains a contested place among neoliberal market and holistic feminist models,[11] I am

[11] The differences between the neoliberal and radical feminist forms of empowerment is thoroughly discussed by Mayoux (1995), Cornwall and Rivas (2015), Wilson (2008), and Cornwall, Gideon, and Wilson (2008).
It is important to note, however, these discursive 'battles' over 'empowerment' are not simply a Manichean fight for hegemony, but are discourses that confront each other just as much as they share a

interested in analysing the production of the hybrid subject within the global market, as negotiated through politically unequal transnational discourses of empowerment that resist and re-assert systems of coloniality. Drawing from Abu-Lughod (2010) and Madhok's (2013) research on rights discourses, I analyse the political 'work' that these developmentalist discourses do for the artisans, specifically, the 'freedoms' and 'costs' (Rose, 1999) of this particular development subject within the market. As Sharma (2014) notes in her analysis of Indian development organisations' strategic usage of neoliberal language, neoliberal discourses do not *determine* the politics of empowerment, but there can be significant 'manoeuvrability' within governing structures that allows for more radical practices (2014: 95). Similarly, I am interested in analysing this manoeuvrability within neoliberal developmentalism at HKH, made possible through hybridity.

In addition, I look to analyse the power dynamics of developmentalist discourses through *representations* as they travel (as they must) across different geo-political market locations – travels, which, I suggest, significantly constrain this manoeuvrability and allow for larger governing structures to remain intact. Therefore, in this paper I analyse *how* the production of the 'authentic craftswoman', as a hybrid subject, through layers of representation, is governed differently, at what costs, by what values, to what (and whose) ends. As Quijano notes, we cannot simply seek to change systems of *economic* exploitation, as the underlying mechanisms that underwrite this exploitation are colonial systems of *social* domination based on Euro-centrism (2006). Therefore, a transformative agenda requires that the *political* remaking of social relations in addition to *material* changes in capitalist structures. However, drawing from Spivak, I ask, what happens when (gendered) members of alternative economic spaces are unable to participate in political places of decision- and meaning-making? Even when we describe the subject as the 'vernacular' cosmopolitan, just how 'vernacular' can she be in order to be 'heard' by hegemonic systems? What kind of 'translations' need to happen? It is here, I believe that the politics of representation prove central. In my analysis of HKH, I explore the layers of representations (and representers) within market structures that heavily mediate how the artisans, as hybrid subjects within HKH, a hybrid entity, become governed differently.

Methodology

In this study, I conduct a close textual analysis of interviews and marketing material on website pages. I focus on HKH, as I am interested in analysing developmentalist market discourses within alternative economies, which aptly describes HKH.

The interviews are of HKH's one non-voting board member (or 'expert director'), two founders (or 'mentors'), and CEO.[12] The expert director is a representative from Mahila Sashaktikaaran (MS),[13] Anju, while the two founders, Kamlesh and Lakshmi, are considered 'consultants',[14] providing strategic advice and vision for HKH and Anand is the CEO.[15] Three interviews were conducted in English and one in Hindi, with all transcribed,

common interest in producing (different) subjects of development through 'encounters' with local knowledges and discourses (Madhok, 2015:115). However, due to the limitations of my study, as discussed in the Methodologies section, regarding my access to the artisans' themselves, my analysis tends to centre on 'neoliberal' and 'holistic' empowerment logics. Furthermore, as with the neoliberal entrepreneurial subject, the (holistically) empowered subject also comes at certain 'costs' in its production as well, running risks of participating in 'the machinations of colonial feminism and the politics of 'global sisterhood' ' (Mahmood, 2005:36). 'Empowerment', in other words, is not an uncontested good. My analysis, therefore, centres on the political effects of these developmentalist discourses within systems of coloniality.

[12] All interviewees signed written consent forms, either in English or Hindi. All participants have been given pseudonyms in this article.

[13] As described in more detail in the Data Analysis section, while the majority of the board is reserved for the artisans, producer companies, as stated in each company's memorandum, are allowed to have a limited number of 'expert directors' who do not vote but can give professional guidance. HKH used to be a part of the women's empowerment NGO, MS, but later became an independent entity, while still maintaining close ties to MS. While not required, it is understood that one of the non-voting board members will always be a representative from MS, who will advocate for women's holistic empowerment.

[14] The role of 'mentors' is not specifically stated within the memorandum, but is allowed as hired consultants, who cannot be members of the cooperative.

[15] For ease of discussion, I call this group of people the 'management group', as this group gives important managerial advice and drives HKH's overall vision. However, it is important to note that there are 18 non-member staff members at HKH who also take a part in various managerial roles.

translated into English if necessary, and then coded. These interviewees were chosen for practical reasons, as the interviewees speak languages that I am fluent or at advanced levels in (English and Hindi, respectively), while the artisans largely speak the local language.[16] However, while limited without the artisans' interviews, an analysis of the discursive space of this particular 'node' in the market – that of the management group – is a useful beginning. These '(nonrepresenting) representers' (Spivak, 1988) provide the face of HKH (and therefore the artisans) to international markets, and have also set up governance mechanisms to ensure the artisans and their work become intelligible to larger market systems.

Additionally, to understand the artisans' representations as they travel, I conducted a close textual analysis of two pages on the website[17] of the International Folk Art Alliance (IFAA).[18] I chose the 'Who We Are' and the 'What is Folk Art?' pages, as these get to the heart of questions of representation and IFAA's role as representer.

Data Analysis

In the following section, I analyse representations of the artisans within HKH and through market travels, focusing on the representations' (counter)hegemonic effects, which shift depending on their geo-political location. I specifically analyse how these representations draw on concepts critical to the handicraft space, particularly 'authenticity', 'value', and 'sustainability', which take on neoliberal and colonial definitions or exceed and resist them. I maintain that these representational meanings are heavily negotiated within the market by HKH staff and the artisans themselves, producing an 'authentic craftswoman' who, contrary to hegemonic discourses, values collective market practices and actively sustains ever-adapting and changing local traditions. However, this subjectivity is a struggle within a market that renders visible 'empowered' third world entrepreneurs and 'authentic' (read: 'pre-modern') artisans, and therefore, meanings acquire hegemonic forms within the market. Furthermore, the necessary representation within the cooperative structure itself points to the limits of 'vernacular' cosmopolitanism within a cooperative context, due to barriers to knowledge production that lead to more control over economic structures by privileged groups.

I begin my discussions of HKH by providing an overview of their history. This is not to give an 'objective' historical depiction, but to place HKH in the discursive space in which those in the management group negotiate and draw from in their representations of the HKH artisan, particularly in relations to questions of valuing, re-valuing, and sustaining women's 'authentic' labour in a market context.

A History of MS/HKH

Barmer, a remote desert area with relatively recent links to India's state and national governments[19] as well as commercial markets, started to be visited in the 1950's and 60's by outsiders, both tourists and tradesmen, who became interested in local embroidery work. Barmeri embroidery work had been a cultural practice, a necessary skillset passed down by female relatives to teach girls to make embroidery collections for their dowries. When brought to the market, the question from the inception was – 'what is the *right* value?'[20] – with no clear 'translation' into the market's monetary language. As a result, middlemen controlled commercial

[16] Also, given the short period of time, interviews would have been difficult with the artisans themselves due to power differentials between me and the artisans. My position as part of a 'hegemonic monolinguistic culture' (Spivak, 1993:192) has meant that despite not speaking with the artisans directly, I have been able to 'speak for' (Spivak 1988) them. Without the artisans' perspectives of their own subject-production, speaking for the significantly less privileged artisans is both ethically and epistemologically of concern. Therefore, any further endeavours in this research should involve conversations with the artisans themselves, which will require more time.

[17] See Appendix A for images and description of the IFAA website.

[18] IFAA is an organisation in Santa Fe, New Mexico that organises the International Folk Art Market every year for artisans to connect with potential clients to sell their craft products. HKH has attended this festival for several years, with, at first, some difficulty getting accepted into the market (see footnote 29). This festival is now an important 'market-making' avenue for HKH, as well as many other artisan groups.

[19] Barmer, as the district within Rajasthan that borders Pakistan, is considered to have stronger cultural and historical ties, including local languages, with communities across the border than with the state of Rajasthan (as recounted by Punitbhai).

[20] As Punitbhai recounted, 'there was no *right* costing to that. It's like a *perceived* value.'

production and pocketed the returns, with the women as mere piecemeal 'labourers'. Furthermore, as these middlemen prioritised quick turnarounds, the quality of the 'authentic' embroidery work began to deteriorate. Organising embroidery production, in contrast to Barmer's male-dominated craft, was difficult, as this work was (and continues to be) home-based.

In the 1970's, Rajasthali, the brand of the state-owned Rajasthan State Handloom & Handicraft Development Corporation, became a primary distributer of Barmeri embroidery work, as part of a development strategy for both income-generation and women's empowerment. After conducting several craft initiatives, the Corporation tasked a Jaipur-based development organisation and local Barmeri professionals with investigating the effects of Rajasthali's works. These investigators found that despite market linkages, women had little control over production processes, received meagre piecemeal returns, and had many issues unaddressed by the market linkages (health and education concerns, decision-making processes in the household, etc.). In response to these findings, the group of development workers decided to create an NGO, founded as Mahila Sashaktikaaran (MS), in order to both provide a sustainable solution to both remove the middlemen, giving the women the 'real artisanal price' and decision-making control, and also work towards holistic empowerment goals.[21]

Once founded, MS continued to work with Rajasthali as an important linkage to the market, although this proved to be limiting. Through Rajasthali, MS, with the artisans, began to learn market standards and timelines, while also having a dependable market for their production. MS brought women into management processes in collections and quality control as well as discussions with government officials.[22] However, while Rajasthali proved important for branding and marketing (assessing 'market needs'), market reach was limited, as Rajasthali catered to a mass market. Not only was the commercialisation of once high-quality ('authentic') embroidery work still an issue, but also artisans expressed frustration with the repetitive nature of the work, unable to express their own creativity nor the intricacies of each community's cultural identity. Furthermore, an oversaturated global craft market soon caused Rajasthali to be unable to sell the craft in the market.

In response, MS decided to create an independent brand, HKH, to sell the artisans' products to 'niche' markets that appropriately value the embroidery work. Once separated from Rajasthali as a brand in 1997 and from MS to become a cooperative entity in 2010, HKH aimed to initiate a 'revival to the craft' – bringing back the designs from motifs lost through commercialisation as well as supporting the artisans creatively produce new designs. There has been, therefore, a double emphasis on 'sustainability', as both an enduring craft tradition and as market viability. HKH is also meant as a means for the artisans to reclaim the value of their skills, both remuneratively and creatively.

I bring in this history of HKH in order to understand the discursive narratives and market structures HKH had faced and worked within and against, and to then better examine the ways in which HKH strives to have a different relationship with the market. The question of de-valued women's labour within capitalist systems, particularly the alienating labour of third-world women, is a central concern of HKH, as the artisans' piecemeal work was given little value in the market and the artisans had little say in the product or production process. HKH has sought to re-value this labour by promoting craft that they believe to be 'authentic' (a notion to be further unpacked below), and seeks to sustain this re-valuation, despite the governing market forces that relegate this work to a place of exploitation

[21] MS began organising other empowerment programs at this time as well, first starting with crèches for the children of women going for labour work as well as women's health initiatives. MS now works in various areas, including women and girl safety programs (such as public safety audits and legal advisors for domestic violence), microcredit and cooperative programs, support for local musicians (such as a community radio), and collectives to prepare women contesting local elections.

[22] As Lataben recounted, government officials had previously told women, 'You aren't artisans, men are artisans. They work with us. You don't do orders.' MS later worked with the government to allow the women to interact as artisans with Rajasthali.

and devaluation. As I examine below, HKH's aim to change the value of these women's work within the market does not mean that the artisans are 'free' from market governance. Rather, the governing mechanisms are *different* – hegemonic notions of unchanging authenticity and (third world) entrepreneurship become strong governing narratives – yet, as I shall demonstrate, these forms of governing prove more negotiable through the collective structure of the cooperative.

Analysing Hybridity at Haath Ka Honar (HKH)

In the following section I analyse HKH's work through the lens of hybridity. I examine the discursive negotiations between narratives of the 'rational economic woman', 'authentic native', as well as the collectively empowered woman within feminist discourse to understand the hybrid production of the authentic craft woman. I begin by first analysing the discourses running through HKH's hybrid economic structure and subsequently, the political effects of the production of the authentic craftswoman as subject.

A Hybrid Economic Structure

Separating from MS, HKH became an independent entity in order to become self-sustainable while still maintaining an artisan-centric vision. This legal structure, known as a 'producer company' under the Company Act of 2013, falls under the federal regulations of a typical company with additional requirements that ensure the producers receive the company's profits.[23] As specifically stipulated (and required) within HKH's memorandum, member eligibility is threefold – members must be *women* from traditional embroidery work *communities* residing within the particular *province* in Rajasthan. The structure, therefore, is designed to give membership protection, preventing 'free-riding' from any non-producers. As Anand points out, if simply there for investment or managerial purposes, 'there is no *relationship* of yours with any sort of a *production*…Those who are working hard, should get the benefit of the work' (emphasis added). This structure, in effect, supports HKH's goals to be 'artisan-driven' while still functioning as a commercial operation. With non-craftswoman workers as 'facilitators', the artisans are, in some sense, the 'real' workers whose reclaimed relationship with production is prioritised, working against material and discursive barriers of 'women's work' (decentralised work, unpaid or devalued, not 'really' [craft] work).[24]

Yet, while profits and ownership are structurally set up in the artisans' favour, the managerial components, as well as crucial non-embroidery labour, is not mandated, leading to divisions between 'ownership' and 'management' as well as embroidery and 'professional' work. The producer company board is allowed to have non-members ('expert directors') but they must be non-voting and the ratio to voting members cannot exceed 1 to 4. However, although HKH's artisans have voted in 12 board members, one from each ethnic community (as required in HKH's memorandum), the legal approval process has been difficult due to the women's education levels, leading to only six official voting board members. Furthermore, the artisans, while

[23] A producer company is a new form of cooperative within India that differs from the traditional cooperatives in a couple of ways. One is that the regulation for producer companies is under the central government with stronger disclosure requirements, whereas cooperatives are under state regulation and have been associated with issues of corruption and 'arbitrary' and 'inefficient' practices. Under a producer company, the 'one member-one vote' policy remains and there is a limit to the return on capital, but technically, in a producer company, owners as well as certain groups of people, such as those in the supply chain, can buy shares (Singh, 2008:23). However, HKH has decided to permit only member ownership of shares, and the profits on shares are kept particularly low in order to discourage owners from buying shares for investment. Lastly, the producer company is allowed to hire professionals to manage business and regulatory activities, but professionals are unable to own any shares in the company. They can also make up to 1/5 of the board of directors, as 'expert directors' who do not have voting rights. The intention of this structure is to 'co-opt' professional management skills that many producers do not have, while having a cooperative structure that the benefits the producers (24). Some of the issues with this set-up, in particular, questions of management, are described below.

[24] As discussed with Anand, at the time of registration, HKH was the first all-women's company to be registered as a producer company under the Company Act. As noted in several informal and formal discussion I had, there are many regional crafts that are marketed to consumers outside of the area, but the particular nature of embroidery work – decentralised in women's homes without the same economic benefit of centralisation of production – has made organisation more difficult that these other crafts. Interestingly, the gendered aspects of craft 'switch' in IFAA's representations that prioritise a gendered female image of craft, associating images of unchanging 'authenticity' with the role of the (third world) woman.

making up the majority of HKH's workers, are supported by several crucial units – finance and administration, marketing and sales, design units, etc. – that are vital to the functioning of the company within global markets. Therefore, while artisans participate in management processes, both as board of directors[25] and as part of production and design processes (to be discussed further later), daily business decisions and negotiations with the market as well as reporting requirements are the purview of the business and finance teams.

In discussions about this divide, the management group stressed the necessities of this structure within the market. To be a producer company regulated by the central government, certain documents in English or Hindi are needed for governance and reporting purposes, certain regulations for official audits, and particular accounting practices met with appropriate tax payments – the inevitable 'limitations' of the producer company set-up. Likewise, the artisans, with no formal education, do not have the business skills needed to negotiate the market. This divisions in labour tends to be discussed in terms of 'difference' in skillset, with certain jobs given to 'professional groups' with the particular 'expertise' (that the artisans happen to not have) for 'practical' reasons. Consequently, the final decisions regarding the artisans' *representation* to those outside HKH – whether as government reporting or, perhaps more importantly, to customers – are largely given to educated professionals who have the capacities to navigate the relevant governing structures, whether the government or the market. The market, as Anju states, can be *dangerous* without profit – therefore, a full-time professional team to negotiate the market is necessary.[26] The 'transparency' of the system – the ability of the artisans to access the books and the management themselves (even the ability fire them) – is understood as a means for the artisans to hold management accountable.

In these market negotiations, the marketing/sales group requires that their clients[27] recognise HKH's work as high-value, artisanal products. One of the HKH sales team's major negotiations is over timelines – as Kamlesh explained derisively, 'this is not a factory line production' – as women have seasonal holiday obligations and sudden emergencies, but also as their work is a creative process that cannot be 'on demand'. Furthermore, marketing and sales require that the products be presented with other 'high-skill' products (with a similar branding 'vision') – as Kamlesh states, 'the way *we* value it.' These teams also look to share the same values with their clients – respect for 'authentic' craftwork and commitment to ensuring the 'right' and 'fair' price for the artisans. HKH is therefore particular with their client choice, interested in long-term relationships that can be sustained through certain common values. Through these relationships, HKH is able to guarantee work for the artisans, rather than depend on the whims of market fluctuations – allowing for a sustainability, or 'freedom', through the market that enables HKH to demand *certain* ways of governance (regular, 'fair' work) by abiding by particular ('authentic') terms.[28]

Nevertheless, several interviewees did note the issues with respect to how markets regulate production. As Anju explains: 'Let's say 'I want a bag', but for me [as a consumer] embroidery is

[25] The board makes important decision regarding profit allocations, membership decisions, high-level business strategies, etc.

[26] Anju, as the MS representative advocating for women's empowerment on the board, tended to portray more tensions between (holistic) empowerment and market goals than the other interviewees. One example is Anju's discussions of the meetings to explain business strategies to the artisans, which at times was put by the wayside during peak seasons. As Anju remarked – 'Fine, go on with production, pay attention to the market, but remember, this is women's empowerment and *that* is what you need to sustain.'

[27] Most of HKH's clients (60%) are not the end-consumer, but are businesses, as part of a 'B2B' or business-to-business model, that then sell to their own customers. Some of HKH's clients include museum shops, DIY stores, boutiques, to name a few.

[28] Engaging in the 'politics of authenticity' have proven to be more 'sustainable' (or freeing) than either the 'politics of emotions' or mass production when they had previously worked under the state government. Kamlesh and Lakshmi, who calls the former, 'sympathy buying', both noted how this buyer – the one who buys simply because the women are 'poor and oppressed' – is the 'wrong type' of buyer, as they can be fleeting, depending on their feelings at the time. Kamlesh also recounted the increased freedoms due to market sustainability after MS took over from the state government, returning to the state government's handicraft unit to sell their high quality 'authentic' products and stating, 'the tables have turned - now HKH will create the products and present you the samples, you can order whatever you would like to buy, and if you're not interested, then we would find outside markets.'

not the main concern. The bag is. So, what will I do? I will look at the bag. But HKH, through this work, looks to sustain the art, and the culture, the women's occupation, their skill.'

The governing apparatus of the market, at times called market 'needs' or 'requirements', is structured around the preferences of the consumer, which, while able to be swayed, will always need to be considered by the producer in an exchange relationship. HKH, as a collective entity with claims to authenticity, which slides in its meanings from producer to consumer,[29] may be able to demand a certain recognition of value, but must always consider what someone *else* will want. This someone else will likely be in a privileged location, and may only understand value through a version of authenticity that can leave the producer epistemically alienated from her product.[30] This is particularly violent in the commodification of the producer as part of the product itself – she must sell her 'authentic' self along with the product as part of the product's 'value'. Additionally, there is the political work of those entrusted to 'take care' of the artisans' 'interests', who are, in fact, *representers* speaking for the 'oppressed'. Access to books (that the artisans cannot read) or the ability to fire educated employees (who provide necessary market linkages) does not erase these power differentials. However, this space *is* negotiated – at the level of cooperative ownership and client relationships, but also by the artisans themselves as market subjects.

The HKH Craftswoman as Hybrid

The 'authentic craftswoman' at HKH is a result of the negotiations and confrontations in the production of the (empowered) subject of freedom. The HKH artisan, in collective efforts as part of a community, draws from connections to her heritage to create products that are marketable but not (or less) alienated, translated into legibility, but not (or less) violently so. This process of acquiring legibility in dominant discourses is not merely in terms of 'knowability' and 'governability', but is a way to demand visibility and value as self-defining craft subjects. In other words, intersecting and competing neoliberal and holistic discourses of an 'empowered' (female) subject have produced HKH's market-savvy artisan, both disciplined by and negotiating the market, with creative capacities for reclaiming and re-defining her identity as a *collective* process, but *specifically* and *only* as a craft producer.

As empowered market subjects, HKH artisans negotiate pricing – a capacity fostered by MS/HKH staff – and also validate the right value of the product based on the time and intricacy of the work. As Kamlesh explains, MS/HKH's mission is to build an 'awareness through a critical thinking process.' Yet, for MS/HKH, empowerment meant negotiation skills as well – as Lakshmi explained, 'You [the artisans] have to be able to *convince*. There's a struggle for it [the price].' Therefore, HKH supports the artisans' capabilities to understand what they can and cannot demand within market structures. While disciplined by the market, the artisans also have the right to negotiate the market, in fact, due to HKH's notions of authenticity that demand that the artisans' own assessment of value not be jeopardised in the market. Each community prices motifs based on work and skill required, which, if

[29] While this 'slide' is described in more detail in the following section, one telling example of the discrepancy and, at times, conflict in notions of 'authenticity' can be seen in HKH's initial interactions with the IFAA, which centred around the 'authenticity' of HKH's products. HKH was originally rejected from IFAA's annual craft festival for a number of years as they were considered too large of a production unit, with 1200 artisan women. IFAA defined artisans as much smaller in size – 1200 was too close to perceptions of industrially produced products (read: 'commericalised'). Ironically, HKH has difficulties working with larger brands that 'support local craft' (such as 10,000 Villages) as they are unable to produce the mass-required amounts that these 'producer-friendly' initiatives require. When HKH was finally accepted into the Santa Fe craft festival, they were requested to bring with them not only their internationally marketable products, but also their 'traditional' clothes and other embroidered items. Anand recounted, in exasperation, how bringing these clothes from India was entirely unnecessary as HKH was well aware that customers would be uninterested in buying these goods (the purpose of the festival being, supposedly, not merely the display of the 'authentic' for Western eyes but for market-making purposes). HKH brought the traditional clothes, and then brought the clothes back to India, as none were sold. Ironically, while HKH needs to have a certain number of artisans to reach an economy of scale to achieve a level of clout within the global market and must also cater to certain cosmopolitan tastes, the drive among global market gatekeepers to maintain certain notions of authenticity actively discourages this from happening.

[30] This alienated form of authenticity is further discussed in the analyses of advertising material at the end of this section.

disregarded, leads to consequences in production decisions.[31] Therefore, the communities must *authenticate* the value of the product with the 'vernacular' price, while always in negotiation with the sales teams. In other words, while artisans do not solely determine the price, the is an *epistemological* necessity within HKH's understanding of authenticity that requires that the artisans' assessment of the price contribute to the final valuation.

The creative work within artisan design groups and with other HKH teams, as a collective process of co-production, underlies HKH's notions of authenticity. Product creation is discussed in terms of *translation* of traditional designs into marketable products – a process, while structured by market dictations, becomes a creative (or 'productive') process with multiple negotiations between market teams and artisan designers in order to ensure market intelligibility while maintaining communities' self-defined forms of expression.[32] In HKH's workshops, artisans create designs for their communities' design bank, with older generations recollecting old stitches, in conversation with younger generations creating new embroidery ideas.[33] Therefore, community designs are not static 'preservations' of age-old motifs, but are actively re-thought and re-conceptualised from within each community. As Anand explained, 'we have given space to change. But change which is *brought in by the community, not by the market* or by the outside' (emphasis added). The product is not simply to cater to the 'market needs', but, as Anand elaborates, is '[what] the artisans want to express – that is what we will make marketable.' The product 'becomes the medium to *represent* and *present* their skill.' If it does not, there is no 'point' in producing it, as HKH's mission is not sales for the sake of sales, which would severely alienate the artisans from their own product. The hybridity of HKH's product demands a mixture of old and reconceptualised cultural ideas that is dynamic and changing, refusing stagnant and appropriated notions of Others' cultures.

Through design as well as production-related tasks, HKH encourages managerial roles as part of the organisation's empowerment goals, but also as part of the process of disciplining the artisans to adhere to certain market standards. During an initial exhibition, Anju recollected the artisans' realisation – 'our embroidery has a lot of value, but because of the quality, we are not realising this value.' 'Quality', with ties to authentic (non-commericalised) handmade craft, is a key marker of value within the market, with trainings and 'learning phases' at HKH for new artisans to 'sharpen' their skills. As 'high quality' status gives HKH bargaining power in the market, quality is of continual concern for HKH's production teams, with issues of 'quality control' as common reasons for market rejections. Timeline requirements lead to constant pressures as well, despite the negotiations of the marketing team, with artisan leaders often putting pressure on artisans to complete their work. As Kamlesh, the more pragmatic businessman, explained – this is not work that is 'at my convenience', the way it was traditionally for women making embroidery work for themselves. At the same time, artisans are trained in deciding their work allocation in the form of 'kits', allowing them to plan their income and work ahead of time. Therefore, a degree of 'professionalism' is demanded and acquired by the artisans in order to function as 'proper' subjects in larger market systems.

[31] Lakshmi, who spent a considerable amount of time understanding the various communities' distinct embroidery work, recalled a time when artisans were demanding a higher price for a specific stitch, Karikan Kambhiri, than Lakshmi had thought was reasonable given the amount of work necessary for the stitch. Due to the low price given to this stitch, the artisans never did the stitch again. Lakshmi, investigating this issue, then later found out that these artisans were doing this stitch without any layout to follow, which required a much higher precision in the stitch than Lakshmi had previously realised and so the price was modified.

[32] While colour combinations are often based on 'market needs', the designs are important places of artisan collaborations – drawings are made by the communities, which then go through an iterative process with the illustrator, after which, the pattern is finalised. The final product decisions (such which type of bag) are coordinated with communities as well (as particular motifs are connected with certain bag types), but also certain product designs coming from international market styles are discussed with communities in order to decide the appropriate local design to 'match' the product. As Anand stated, the designs are 're-arranged, re-shuffled it, re-scaled', but with the community's style, and therefore identity, sustained.

[33] Lakshmi recounted a time where a young artisan brought in a plastic heart to one of these workshops, seemingly out of place in traditional handmade handicraft space ('I was like, what is she going to do with this?'). This artisan then began to use the heart to outline embroidery motifs to create new designs with the traditional stitches.

Yet, the artisans' presence in the market as a collective is a crucial source of strength. As a collective, the artisans attain economies of scale (e.g. bulk orders for raw materials or better pricing with clients), but also, the collective creation and ownership of community designs is the basis of their recognition of authenticity in the market ('*we* represent *our* culture').[34] The artisan, in other words, would not, as an individual, be 'heard' within the market, being unable to become a market player with her own authority to make demands. While needing representers and adherence to certain market rules, this collective presence of the artisans in the market, both as a bargaining tool and through 'authenticity' status, allows for this alternative structure with different values to exist within capitalist systems that myopically exalt the individual entrepreneurial subject.

While all interviewees clearly supported collective organisation, the rationale for the associated rights of the artisans as members of the collective shifted in conversations, from 'rights of the worker' to 'rights of the entrepreneur', each with different gendered effects. The hybrid structure of the producer company (economies of scale to benefit the producer-owners, value-based relationships with customers, etc.) limits many risks of the market, which allows HKH to guarantee work for the artisans. This structure allows for the artisan as worker to plan ahead her work, although once committing, must fulfil her obligations as per the negotiated timeline. While this certainly has gendered effects in (re)valuing systematically undervalued women's work, this also interpolates the artisans specifically within the market, leaving their gendered roles outside the market, such as care-taking responsibilities, untouched, causing concerns for holistic empowerment goals.[35]

The discursive move to the 'entrepreneur' was less used, except by Kamlesh, with two different meanings in two separate occasions. At first, the 'entrepreneurs' were the artisans who deserve the full returns on their work. The distinguishing feature between the 'worker' and 'entrepreneur' seemed to be connected to the *epistemological* value of the latter who must be 'creative' and 'innovative'. This is not to say that the artisans are not this, but only that there is a higher bar for 'deserving' the remunerative value of one's labour for the entrepreneur. Yet, rather than comfortably sitting within neoliberal market systems, Kamlesh uses this argument to legitimise a *different* relationship of the artisans to global markets – one in which they can reclaim the value of their (innovative) labour. The second discursive use of the 'entrepreneur' was in relation to the founders themselves, as entrepreneurs different than the 'typical' entrepreneur who keeps profits for himself (with an implied call for 'gratitude' that the founders were not exploitative). This slippage regarding the question of who is, or gets to be, the entrepreneur is an unresolved question within HKH, with the artisans as (quasi-)entrepreneurs being represented as such by the hidden ('real') entrepreneurs. As discussed further in the following section, these slippages of certain vocabularies, including that of the 'entrepreneur', let definitions morph at different market locations, allowing for economic structures to develop that embody values different than neoliberal ones. However, this morphing of definitions, facilitated through 'transparent' representations, also allows for certain larger structures to *remain in place* – the entrepreneur is still glorified – and in doing so, hides the discursive and material barriers to the gendered, racially classed subject from becoming the 'entrepreneur'.

At HKH, the 'authentic craftswoman' is a market negotiator and a coordination manager, a designer of new and reclaimed embroidery motifs and products. She is part of a collective of workers (or entrepreneurs?) that are together

[34] As noted elsewhere in this section and demonstrated in the analysis below of marketing/website material, what it means to 'authentically represent' one's 'culture' changes depending on market location. 'Authenticity' may be a common 'value' that sustains relationships in the market, but the *meaning* changes. This can cause tensions (see footnote 29), but also manoeuvrability within discourses of authenticity.

[35] This point was discussed in detail by Lakshmi regarding women's role within the household and the necessity of sharing household and childcare responsibilities. While women may have increased bargaining power due to income from HKH, Lakshmi discussed this division of household labour as deriving from training at an early age, and emphasised that boys and girls need to be trained differently in order to get to the root of the problem of power differentials within the household. In other words, Lakshmi understands these issues to be beyond the scope of the market.

sustaining what they value in their tradition through market structures. It is this particular subjectification that allows for the artisans to 'matter' in the market – by producing a valued product, the artisans' *lives* become worth valuing. This may be why HKH stresses the importance of MS's work, work that is not market-based and therefore does not have the same demands for 'worthy' lives, allowing for the artisans to become subjects who are not (as) regulated by market demands. The specificity of the 'authentic craftswoman' has led to issues, as younger generations have not expressed the same interests in continuing the craft. Furthermore, the narrowness of the subjectification has consequences for transformatory concerns – the women are *only* interpolated as the producers of a gendered craft while keeping all other social structures intact. The 'not quite-ness' has limits that are mediated by market intelligibility. Lastly, the issue of representation is of central importance as it is these 'translators', with the artisans' 'best interests' in mind, who negotiate this box of intelligibility. While these representers subscribe to values that resist neoliberal logics, the power of the representer has the tendency of being 'erased' in market representations.

Travelling Representations in the Market: The International Folk Art Alliance (IFAA) Website

In this following section I analyse the representations of the 'authentic craftswoman' as she journeys to IFAA. As the primary purpose of these representations is to sell the product to a particular cosmopolitan consumer, these representation, as analysed below, shift to prioritising neoliberal and colonial discourses, particularly as the representation move farther from the artisans themselves.

IFAA's website shows a level of alienation from the discourses at HKH – not merely because IFAA represents other artisans as well, but because of the conformity of the rhetoric with hegemonic notions of the market and the 'authentic'. The folk artists are described on the website as 'facing challenges', which domesticates the workings of global market and phrases the issue as 'obstacles to be overcome' by hard work (and external help). The market linkage as solution is absolutely unquestioned, jumping quickly from market access to commonly accepted development metric improvements (girl education, sanitary water, etc.). As stated in their 'vision', IFAA sees the folk artists as entrepreneurial 'catalysts' for 'positive social change'.[36] IFAA, in conjunction with the cosmopolitan viewer/buyer, in effect, are removing the apolitical market barriers for the artisans, who have talent (as 'talent is universal'), but just need to be given the 'opportunity'.

While IFAA's narrative incorporates the neoliberal narrative of 'liberatory' markets, the marketing tropes are also deeply invested in the artisans (as 'natives') authentically representing their cultures.[37] Rather than HKH's aims to 'sustain' cultures, IFAA seeks to 'preserve' cultures, as a 'living' relic of some distant past. In addition to 'entrepreneurs for change', IFAA envisions a utopia that 'values the dignity and humanity of the handmade', seeming to conflate the product with the producer (can a handmade item have 'dignity' and 'humanity'?), that stays faithful to the 'timeless' culture. The marketing descriptions value the symbols of authenticity (re-defined, where convenient, as a capital 'Art') more than the artisans themselves.

The 'folk artist', gendered in the images as female, is a universalised depiction of any 'authentic' craft producer, discursively homogenising 'diverse' cultures, who also abides by ('modern') market norms. The folk artist, the bearer of authenticity, has natural talents to express and represent her culture, but is forbidden from 'an individual or idiosyncratic artistic identity' that might make her an 'artist'. She belongs to a different time that values informal education, implying that formal education is perhaps 'unnecessary' for the folk

[36] In contrast, HKH make no such claims regarding HKH's role in overall 'development'. HKH's management group was very clear that HKH does not 'solve' all the problems of development, which is why HKH's partnership with MS is crucial for their holistic empowerment goals. While HKH management might call this 'economic empowerment', HKH as a market initiative is not understood as the engine for all other forms of empowerment.

[37] Interestingly, the IFAA uses the term 'folk art' rather than 'craft' (as HKH uses), the former which seems to emphasise the (primitive) cultural connection over the intricacy of the handmade design (as the word 'craft' may suggest).

artist (convenient for neoliberal policies of state rollback). Therefore, the folk artist is simultaneously an individual entrepreneur for development causes and an identity-less symbol of her culture, subservient to larger cultural preservation goals. In this perplexing combination of the 'modern' entrepreneur and the 'traditional' artisan, the folk artist becomes 'useful' within larger systems of neoliberalism and coloniality, restricted to a very controlled space of subjectification discursively complicit with systems of exploitation.

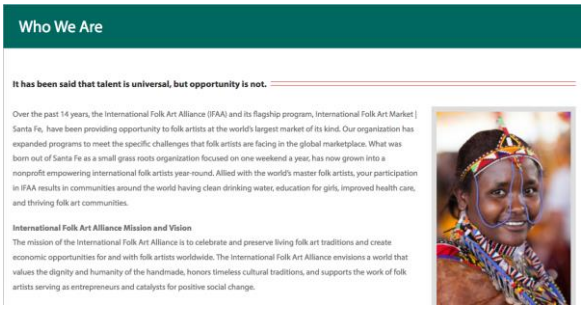
Conclusion

In this article, I argue that HKH supports the production of a craft artisan who does *not quite* subscribe to neoliberal market mandates. She has strong connections to her culture (as the 'authentic native' should), but this culture is sustained (as opposed to 'preserved') through community-initiated changes that allow for the artisans to express their *own* understandings of their culture. She partakes in a business initiative (as expected of the 'entrepreneur'), but one that values collective processes and strengths. HKH is situated within, yet not *determined* by, the market. The invisible representers, from the management and sales teams to HKH's market facilitators, play a key role, having the authority to circumscribe the meanings and identities that define HKH's artisans. As representations travel, notions of authenticity, value, and sustainability are 'translated' into hegemonic forms that are less threatening to the status quo. This translation happens because the representers, but perhaps especially the 'ethical' consumer to whom these translations are catered, may not wish to confront the political effects of their own socio-political location – effects that run contrary to saviour notions of 'saving' brown women and 'dying' cultures and expose the elite consumer interests built into the production process. Therefore, while the HKH artisan gains an element of freedom in the market through the morphing of meanings, this space is constricted and alienates the artisans from the meanings of their work, so to not shake the larger governing structures in fundamental ways.

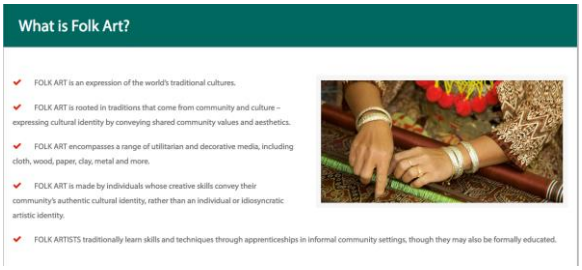
Therefore, the depoliticising nature of markets must be considered in discussions of alternative economies, and especially the effects on the most marginalised groups 'linked' to the market. While the (white, male) 'entrepreneur' may have his own concerns of precariousness within neoliberal markets where success (and loss) is 'deserved', the third world, female (almost-)entrepreneur confronts gendered and racialised systems that prevent her from becoming a 'real' entrepreneur. She also has *more at stake* in this subject-production, as the failure to do so leaves her exposed to these exploitative systems, relegating her to a (non)existence that does not matter. While alternative economies abide by different values, they are, to varying extents, forced to speak the language of capitalism, which both limits the ability for transformation and necessitates 'translators' for marginalised groups. This means that alternative economies must work in tandem with social movements that allow for more radical questioning of the status quo. While many theorists of alternative economies acknowledge this necessity (Coraggio, 2009; Santos & Rodríguez-Garavito, 2006; Laville, 2010), a further point I would argue is that these movements, with greater capabilities to radically refuse (violent) translations into hegemonic discourses, provide more speaking room for marginalised groups, allowing for less dependency on representing parties and greater space for solidarities (instead of ethical consumer/'saviour' relationships).

Yet, reclaiming economic spaces that are seeking political transformation is important work, providing an economic basis that supports larger movement goals, including the dismantling of capitalist values. But perhaps, the question is, do these economies need to come at such high costs? Does the ethical consumer have no sense of solidarity that this product could speak to? Could craft producers create solidarities with each other, leading to bargaining power within the markets that could change the terms of the relationship with the consumer? While these questions are unresolvable within this article, I leave the reader with the possibility to look 'beyond what already exists.'

Appendix A: The IFAA Website



IFAA's 'Who We Are' page has a description of IFAA's role in the 'folk art' market – largely 'giving opportunities' to folk artists who 'face challenges', thereby 'empowering' them. The summary encourages the viewer to participate, as this will lead to various forms of development, such as clean drinking water, girl education, etc. IFAA states that its mission is to 'celebrate and preserve living folk art traditions' as well as to provide 'economic opportunities' for the artists. IFAA states that its vision is a world that 'values the dignity and humanity of the handmade' as well as one that 'honors timeless cultural tradition' and supports folk artists as 'entrepreneurs' of 'social change'. The page ends with an injunction to 'join' IFAA – as this is the 'Work of Art.' To the right of the text is a nameless ('third world') woman in 'traditional' dress smiling at the viewer, the future benefactor and beneficiary of her work.



The page of 'What is Folk Art?' has a list of descriptions of 'folk art' and at the end, for the 'folk artist', all wrapped around an image of the hands of a woman (also in a 'traditional' dress) who is presumably in the process of creating folk art. The first descriptor explains folk art as 'an expression of the world's traditional cultures,' corroborated by the second descriptor, which emphasises that folk art is 'rooted in traditions' and 'expressing cultural identity' as well as 'shared community values and aesthetics.' Folk art, in the following line, is described as using both 'utilitarian and decorative media.' Lastly, to clarify the above, folk art is then described as involving individuals with 'creative skills,' but specifically, represent 'their community's authentic cultural identity,' *not* an artist's individuality. Folk artists are explained as learning through 'informal apprenticeships', with a caveat that they might also be 'formally educated'.

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