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The Field of Marriage: Cultural Capital and Women's Submissiveness in the Light of Pierre Bourdieu

Abstract

Since the dawn of history, women have always been subjected to and condemned by men's will; their choices and power have been limited by men's authority and domination in patriarchal societies due to their gender. This paper examines Elizabeth Gaskell's Wives and Daughters and Parinoush Saniee's The Book of Fate and demonstrates a reciprocal relationship between cultural capital and women's subordination in the marriage field, the analysis of which will be based on Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical concepts of field, capital, and habitus. Drawing on Bourdieu's theoretical concepts as well as the contextual analysis of the selected novels, the findings of this paper indicate that women's submissiveness, present in different patriarchal societies throughout history, is the outcome of men's use of culture as a sort of capital to retain and reproduce their power and domination in all fields, even those related to women, including the field of marriage.

Keywords: Pierre Bourdieu, field, cultural capital, habitus, women's submissiveness, Wives and Daughters, The Book of Fate

1. Introduction

Culture is pivotal to understanding the heterosexual strategies of marriage embedded in the social structures of the patriarchal societies and can shed light on how it can lead to gender inequality and, therefore, women's submissiveness in the field of marriage. Bourdieu was "aware of the role that 'culture' played as a determinant factor in the way people responded to their surrounding; in

other words, their cultural background partly shaped what they thought and how they acted" (Grenfell, "Applying" 19) and believed that marriage strategies are "inseparable from the whole set of strategies for biological, cultural and social reproduction that every group implements in order to transmit the inherited powers and privileges, maintained or enhanced, to the next generation" (Swartz 108-09). Therefore, culture can be "a source of domination" (Swartz 1).

Loscocco and Walzer also explain that "the development of cultural beliefs is essential to the construction of gender as an organizing principle of social life," and that "the content of gendered cultural beliefs" stems from "dominant social groups" (2). Therefore, men as the dominant social group in the patriarchal societies determine "how marriage should be performed and form the basis for gender stereotypes" (Loscocco and Walzer 3). When it is said that marriage "can only be between men and women," a kind of "symbolic domination" is exerted. (Ritzer and Stepnisky 375). The residents of the patriarchal societies, both men and women, tend to treat the dominant gender beliefs as "shared cultural knowledge whether or not they endorse them" (Loscocco and Walzer 3). Schwalbe et al. also bring up that "shared but routine cultural expectations recreate inequality even without the conscious intention of the actors" (438) since these cultural expectations consist of "a layer of embodied experience that is not immediately amenable to self-fashioning" (McNay 102). The purpose of the present study is to scrutinize how cultural capital can provide the background for the perpetuation of men's domination and women's subjugation and subordination in the field of marriage. To achieve this end, this paper uses Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical concepts of field, capital, and habitus and analyzes the context of the selected novels in detail.

2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Pierre Bourdieu has become a major theoretical voice in the critical study of cultural practices. Bourdieu's theoretical concepts contribute to the study of "the sociology of culture" and are becoming "standard references in current growth sectors like the sociology of culture" (Swartz 2). Grenfell also states that Bourdieu's preoccupation was "to explain the social, political, and cultural practices that surrounded him" (Key Concepts 15); in short, to "restore to people the meaning of their actions" (Bourdieu, "Célibat" 109). To accomplish this, Bourdieu introduced the three concepts of field, capital, and habitus that will be explained respectively.

2.1 Bourdieu's Concept of Field

Bourdieu refers to his concept of field as a "structured system of social positions occupied by individuals" (Thrope 496). In other words, "the structure of the individual field is defined by the relations between the positions occupied by the agents within that field" (O'Hara 43). Thus, Bourdieu makes it possible to analyze the relations between the positions of the agents. "Position-takings arise quasi-mechanically – that is, almost independently of the agents' consciousness and will – from the relationship between positions" (Bourdieu, Cultural Production 59). There are several fields. Although diverse, fields are "relatively autonomous," they are "structurally homologous: all the fields are subsumed by the social field, which is in turn subsumed by the field of power" (O'Hara 43). Therefore, fields are internally structured by power relations. Bourdieu states that "in order for field to function," field must be endowed with "the inhabitants that imply knowledge and recognition of the immanent laws of the field" (Cultural Production 72). Bourdieu refers to the rules of the field as doxa – "pre-reflexive, shared but unquestioned opinions and perceptions mediated by autonomous social microcosms (fields) which determine 'natural' practice and attitudes via the internalized 'sense of limits' and habitus of the social agents in the field" (Grenfell, Key Concepts 120). In patriarchal societies, gender is "part of a field" since gender is "extraordinarily relational, with a chameleon-like flexibility, shifting in importance, value and effects from field to field" (Adkin 6). Therefore, men in patriarchal societies establish and inform a set of gender rules in the field of marriage with which they try to "preserve its boundaries and forms in line with their interests" (MacArthur et al. 3), while women as "challengers will strive to overtake them, turning the field into an arena of struggle for power" (Swartz 136-37).

2.2 Bourdieu's Concept of Capital

The concept of capital is of significance in Bourdieu's theorizing of the social structures; "[t]he structure of the social world is defined at every moment by the structure and distribution of the capital and profits characteristics of the different particular fields" (Bourdieu, "Social Space" 734). Capital has various forms among which cultural capital is an influential one that can become "a power resource" (Swartz 75) because this form of capital is "symbolic and derives its power from

the attribution of recognition, it defines limits, what is and is not do-able, and thinkable, in terms of what is (and is not) recognized and rewarded" (Grenfell, "Applying" 20). Therefore, the most important principle of the cultural capital is that "it embodies or transmits the logic of practice of … the field in a way that differentiates and therefore establishes hierarchies" (Grenfell, "Applying" 20). To retain and reproduce their power, men who possess a higher position in the patriarchal societies take advantage of the cultural capital to establish a set of rules in the field of marriage and determine and define "what is included and excluded from it … what is possible for individuals" (Grenfell, "Applying" 19-20) and women who are not "capital-accumulating subjects" but "capital bearing objects, whose value accrues to the primary groups to which they belong" (Skeggs, "Context" 28-29) try to adapt themselves to those established rules to be able to function in the field of marriage. Femininity as women's virtue is considered a form of cultural capital in patriarchal societies. It is "the discursive position available through gender relations that women are encouraged to inhabit and use. Its use will be informed by the network of social positions of class, gender, sexuality … which ensure that it will be taken up in different ways" (Skeggs, Formation 10).

2.3 Bourdieu's Concept of Habitus

The concept of habitus is vital to understanding how the principles of the field of marriage are embodied. Habitus is both "the embodiment of our social location" (Noble and Watkins 522) and "the structure of social relations that generate and give significance to individual likes (or taste) and dislikes with regard to practice and action" (Laberge 136). Bourdieu defines habitus as "a way of being, a habitual state, in particular, a disposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination" (Outline 214). Individuals' habitus is not invariable and can change according to "past experiences" and can be "modified by new experiences" (Bourdieu, Logic 60). Therefore, early experiences are of great importance since the habitus "tends to ensure its own constancy and its defense against change through the selection it makes within new information by rejecting information capable of calling into question its accumulated information" (Bourdieu, Logic 60). In this way, produced dispositions are "durably inculcated by the possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions inscribed in the objective conditions" (Bourdieu, Logic 54) and

therefore make “patterns of thought which organize reality by directing and organizing thinking about reality” (Bourdieu, “Intellectual Field” 194).

3. Cultural Capital and the Field of Marriage in Wives and Daughters by Elizabeth Gaskell

Cultural capital, with its related cultural norms and principles established by patriarchal societies, is considered the most significant factor in exerting limitations on individuals’ freedom, especially women’s in the field of marriage. In the culture of the patriarchal societies, heterosexuality in the field of marriage is considered as a form of capital available to men, who occupy the dominant position. This capital is recognized as the currency of the marriage field, with the help of which men determine the rules of this field, doxa, and “define what is included and excluded from it” (Grenfell, “Applying” 19). This form of capital is symbolic: “every kind of capital tends (to different degrees) to function as symbolic capital” (Bourdieu, Pascalian 242). Since this heterosexual capital is symbolic, it “defines limits, what is and is not do-able, and thinkable, in terms of what is (and is not) recognized and rewarded” (Grenfell, “Applying” 20).

Therefore, in patriarchal societies, heterosexuality is “celebrated as the natural order” (Lzugbara 11) in the marriage field with which men try to maintain and reproduce “male superiority” and also “cast women as objects of control, subjugation, and subordination by men” (Lzugbara 23). In other words, the capital of heterosexuality is, in fact, a cultural device that “embodies a range of gender relations, which in turn underscores patriarchal society” (Lzugbara 12) and therefore leads to the more passivity of women and reinforcement of men’s dominance in the field of marriage because, as Bourdieu writes, one of the pivotal functions of heterosexual marriage is to “reproduce the social relations of which it is the product” and to “correspond very closely to the characteristics of the social relations which have made them possible and which they tend to reproduce” (Outline 52). Therefore, the heterosexual capital provides “a set of pre-emptive rights over the future” for men and guarantees them “the monopoly of some possibles” (Grenfell, “Applying” 20).

In the field of marriage, Victorian men took advantage of the capital of heterosexuality to establish a set of rules and feminine traits, as “long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body” (Bourdieu,

Reproduction 84), to specify the characteristics of a desirable and ideal woman for marriage and determine “natural practice and attitudes via the internalized ‘sense of limits’ and habitus of the social agents in the field” (Grenfell, Key Concepts 120). Victorian women had to internalize and adapt themselves to them since “each field has its own distinctive logic of practice” (Grenfell, Key Concepts 70) or “accepted way of behaving” and “participants in a field share common beliefs, an adherence to which determines one’s membership of the field" (Beckman et al. 3). Therefore, Victorian women had little opportunity to resist and were “condemned to give at every moment the appearance of a natural foundation to the diminished identity that is socially bestowed on them” (Bourdieu, Masculine 30). Thus, women were clearly obliged to participate in the symbolic violence of gender and follow the social structures of domination.

In the Victorian era, the important established cultural principles that were regarded as “the qualities a young Victorian gentlewoman needed” to prepare her for marriage were “to be innocent, virtuous, biddable, dutiful and be ignorant of intellectual opinion” (Perkin 103). These established cultural principles constituted Victorian women’s habitus. This habitus made the Victorian women “act, perceive, and think according to the rules of the field” and also consider these principles as “natural” (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer 25). In other words, Victorian women had to act “intentionally without intention” (Bourdieu, Other 12) and according to their “sense of possible position-takings, that is, to the ‘space of possibles,’ open to that person in a given field of practice” (Emirbayer and Johnson 27).

After the death of her mother, Molly Gibson lives with her father before his remarriage. This has a great impact on the formation of Molly’s dispositions and habitus because habitus is “structured by one’s past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and educational experiences” (Grenfell, Key Concepts 51). Molly’s father is a man of science, which causes Molly to spend all her free time learning and educating in issues and subjects attributed to the intellectual realm of masculinity. Her family, her father, is the main source for “the systematic cultivation of a sensibility in which principles of selection” are expressed in “dispositions to acts of particular kinds” (Grenfell, Key Concepts 111).

Molly endeavors to develop her intellect by reading her father’s science books. “She reads such deep books – all about facts and figures” (Gaskell 416). Having masculine intellectual attributes,

Molly violates the required features of a desirable marriageable Victorian woman, and, therefore, her potential and worth are disregarded as a wife and a mother by men as she challenges the heterosexual foundation of the Victorian patriarchal culture. Bourdieu mentions that "to be 'feminine' means essentially to avoid all the properties and practices that can function as signs of manliness" (Masculine 99). Panek also states that "while women were selected for beauty, men were primarily selected for 'genius': the natural order decreed that women's contribution to the improvement of the race was a fine physic, and man's a highly developed intellect" (128). However, the reason Roger Hamley, a landowner's son, has a close relationship with Molly is not that he is attracted to her as his future spouse, but that of considering her a masculinized friend that has the ability to help him in his task. "He only looked upon Molly as a badly-dressed, and rather awkward girl, with black hair and an intelligent face, who might help him in the task he had set himself of keeping up a bright general conversation during the rest of the evening" (Gaskell 131).

Actually, in the patriarchal society of the Victorian period, marriage principles were consistent with "the sexual division of labour" (Bourdieu, Outline 44) and the "very strict distribution of the activities assigned to each sex" (Bourdieu, Masculine 9), which caused women to be limited to "the domestic universe and the activities associated with the biological and social reproduction of the lineage" (Bourdieu, Masculine 97). Regarding marriage and domesticity as their ultimate goal, a "huge number of young Victorian women wished or at least expected to marry and nurture families in the sphere of the home" (Livingstone 69) since the "collective expectations" from the Victorian women tended to "inscribe themselves in bodies in the form of permanent dispositions" through "the subjective expectations that they impose[d]" (Bourdieu, Masculine 61). These collective expectations formed Victorian women's habitus because habitus is "history turned into nature" (Bourdieu, Outline 78), and thus "the internalization and embodiment of one's history, encompassing all circumstances and experiences that shape the individual's way of being and acting within and perceiving the social world" (Beckman et al. 3).

There are two female characters in the novel that clarify the relationship between marriage principles and the sexual division of labor. Molly's stepmother, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, is the one who teaches Molly that "marriage is the natural thing" (Gaskell 149) and that "the husband has all that

kind of dirty work to do, and his wife sits in the drawing-room like a lady" (Gaskell 149). Mrs. Kirkpatrick's marriage attitudes point to Victorian women's habitus that it "falls to men, who belong on the side of all things external, official, public … to perform all the brief, dangerous and spectacular acts" while women are assigned to "all domestic labour, in other words, the tasks that are private and hidden. Women are the ones who perform the long, thankless, tedious tasks" (Bourdieu, Masculine 30). Mrs. Kirkpatrick changed and reshaped Molly's habitus and therefore restored her to the feminized realm of the domestic sphere by converting Molly's old-fashioned bedroom into a fashionable one, and then forbidding her from roaming in nature and confining her to the domestic bounds of "her own smart new room, which hardly yet seemed a familiar place" (Gaskell 293). Bettero states, "the operation of the habitus, and its intersection with field, is partly a question of the interactional properties of networks, in which our practice is subject to the contingently variable characteristics and dispositions of the people around us" (20). Thus, Molly unwillingly accepts Mrs. Gibson's definition of her gender and her duties as well as her social position, which relocates her body to the territory of the middle-class domestic lady.

Mrs. Hamley, an upper-class woman and a wife of a landowner in the neighborhood, also causes Molly to submit to the Victorian patriarchal cultural principles in the field of marriage. According to Oulton, "successful women who represented themselves as proper ladies defined their lives in terms of their friendship with women which were thought to help prepare a woman for marriage" (73). It was believed that these friendships "foster practices that would come to be important in marriage like attention to others and self-sacrifice" (Livingstone 60). Molly has a friendly relationship with Mrs. Hamley and becomes responsible for her housework chores. She organizes Mrs. Hamley's servants: "it was well that Molly was such a favorite with the old servants; for she had frequently to restrain and to control … they were aware that where her own comfort, ease, or pleasure was concerned she never interfered, but submitted to their will" (Gaskell 909). She also sacrifices herself to others' needs and dedicates herself to watch carefully for the Hamley's family members after the death of the oldest son, Osborn. Molly eventually adapts herself to her culturally predetermined feminine attributes by creating a connection to the domestic sphere of the home, which was considered as a feminine capital, and thus transforms into an ideal Victorian woman in the field of marriage. In fact, the logic of the domestic activities encompasses "the effect of

producing harmonious encounters between dispositions and positions in which the victims of symbolic domination can perform the subaltern or subordinated tasks that are assigned to their virtue of submission, gentleness, docility and self-denial" (Bourdieu, Masculine 57).

Molly Gibson is not the only female character in the novel who has to succumb to the heterosexual cultural capital of Victorian society. Mrs. Kirkpatrick and Cynthia, Molly's stepsister, are two other female characters that are influenced by that culture. For women, Bourdieu writes, heterosexual marriage "remains the prime means of acquiring a social position" and is "the product of an unconscious adjustment to the probabilities associated with an objective structure domination, the submissive dispositions that are expressed in these preferences produced the equivalent of what could be a calculation of enlightened self-interest" (Masculine 37).

After her first husband's death, Mrs. Kirkpatrick has to work and earn a living. This is difficult for her who was just a housewife before. She has to think about "how to get the most pleasure out of [every penny]" and says, "I wonder if I am to go on all my life toiling and moiling for money? It's not natural … It's a sad thing to be a widow" (Gaskell 149). Therefore, it can be inferred that her main reason to remarry Mr. Gibson is to keep her social position as a middle-class woman and to be financially secure and be able to protect herself and her daughter, Cynthia, economically. Bourdieu declares that this action tends to "confirm that contrary to the romantic representation of love, choice of partner is not exempt from a form of rationality" that "owes nothing to rational calculation or, to put it another way, that love is often partly amor fati, love of one's social destiny" (Masculine 37).

If we consider marriage as an economic necessity, it is possible to understand the reason for Cynthia's numerous engagements throughout the novel. For example, Cynthia's first engagement with Mr. Preston is because of borrowing a small amount of money from him to buy new clothes: "all thanks to his twenty pounds" that should be "repaid to him as soon as possible, though I turned sick at the thought of telling mama … how very difficult it would be to muster up the money … mama had come home, and the old daily pressure and plaint of poverty had come on" (Gaskell 738). Therefore, she decides to engage with him because of her "unlucky debt, which was to be a debt no longer, only an advance of the money to be hereafter [hers]" (Gaskell 738). Rich states that "women have married because it was necessary, in order to survive economically, in order to

have children who would not suffer economic deprivation or social ostracism, in order to remain respectable, in order to do what was expected of women" because "heterosexual romance has been represented as the great female adventure, duty, and fulfillment" (654).

It can be inferred that all female characters of the novel finally submit to the heterosexual cultural capital of the marriage field. Molly Gibson, whose dispositions initially challenged the marriage field's doxa, changes her habitus since habitus can be modified by "an individual's experiences and circumstances, which are constantly changing" (Beckman et al. 3). She is, eventually, recognized as an acceptable member of the marriage field, and her value as an ideal marriageable woman is accepted, and she can marry Roger. Mrs. Kirkpatrick and Cynthia also submit to the Victorian heterosexual cultural capital as the only way to keep their financial and social status since "economic capital is a commodity" that can enhance an "individual's power" (Sayce 474), but the industrial field is "gendered and therefore can feel exclusionary for outsiders such as women" (Sayce 475). This allows one to consider how women's "inferior social conditions and lesser ranking in relation to [this] capital in conjunction with [gender] segregation, make it more difficult for women to visualize progress and move forward" (Sayce 473). Women's submissiveness in the marriage field is not only limited to a particular historical period and a specific nation. It has continued to exist at any time in different nations and cultures, including Iran.

4. Cultural Capital and the Field of Marriage in The Book of Fate by Parinoush Saniee

In Iran's patriarchal society and especially within its traditional families, men also use culture as capital to establish the rules, doxa, of the marriage field. One important rule in this field is men's right to choose Iranian women's future spouse, regardless of women's will and propensity. Zamiri mentions that "women's will, decision, and desire will be ignored in the process of choosing a husband, and their resistance to play a role in their own destiny is considered as a kind of disobedience and disrespect to parents." Therefore, the marriage field in Iran provides a "patterned set of practices which suggests competent action in conformity with rules and roles" (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer 23). In such circumstances, Iranian women participate in "domination via a process of somatization, which incorporates the disciplinary apparatus into bodily practices, and via

adoption of the dominant categories to judge themselves and the world" (Silva 89). Thus, Iranian women have to submit to forced marriages since this doxa is internalized in their minds and is turned into their habitus. This point has many implications in the female protagonist's fate in the novel The Book of Fate by Parinoush Saniee. In order to examine the role of the cultural capital in the marriage field in the patriarchal society of Iran, the life of the novel's female protagonist, Masoumeh, will be divided into two time periods, namely the time she lived in her father's house and the time of her married life and widowhood.

When Masoumeh lives in her father's house, the marriage field is "endowed with specific principles of evaluation of practice and works" (Bourdieu, Cultural Production 163) in which the pure love of a teenage girl for a boy is unacceptable, and therefore, if seen, the girls will be left in miserable and defenseless conditions. Bourdieu explains that "the more legitimate a given area, the more necessary and profitable it is to be competent in it, and the more damaging and costly to be incompetent" (Distinction 86). After the discovery of her romantic feeling towards Saiid, a pharmacy student, as well as her daily visits to him on her way to school, Masoumeh suffers from severe physical and verbal violence. "Ali clawed at my hair and dragged me into the house" (Saniee 51). Her brother, Ahmad, beats her black and blue: "Ahmad struck me in the mouth with the back of his hand so hard that my mouth filled with blood … made me dizzy. For an instant, I thought I had gone blind … Two consecutive slaps made my ears ring" (Saniee 52-53).

Even Iranian women themselves take part in violence against each other instead of having the role of being a supporter because their habitus is formed based on "an ensemble of schemata of perception, thinking, feeling, evaluating, speaking, and acting that pre-formats all [their] expressive, verbal, and practical manifestations and utterances" (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer 23). As Bourdieu writes, this occurs because "the conditions in which the individuals live generate dispositions compatible with these conditions and in a sense pre-adapted to their demands" (Logic 54) and because the produced dispositions and the individuals' schemes of habitus "owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny and control of will" (Distinction 466). Masoumeh's mother cooperates with Masoumeh's brothers and even abuses Masoumeh physically and verbally since her habitus causes her to act based on the socially reinforced doxa of the marriage field.

Therefore, her habitus leads her to "naturally choose things that fit with [her] class position and thus with [her] cultural capital" (Silva 87). This shows the circular relationship between field and habitus: "involvement in a field shapes the habitus, which, in turn, shapes the actions that reproduce the field" (Crossley 87). "Mother walked in and while cursing and cussing me she pinched my arm really hard" (Saniee 51). She also says that "girl, I pray you suffer. I pray you get torn into pieces" (Saniee 53). Moreover, Masoumeh's mother takes Masoumeh's freedom away at once by imprisoning her at home and depriving her of seeing her only friend, Parvaneh. "Femininity is a symbolic capital exclusive to the female sex" and is demonstrated in "maternal delicacy" (Gol Moradi 183). This symbolic capital is, however, strongly challenged in the times in which Masoumeh lives. Masoumeh discovers that having a husband is the only way of liberation. "By then I knew that the only way I could ever leave that house was as someone's wife" (Saniee 67). Yet, she does not have the right to choose her future spouse because Iran's patriarchal culture causes men to "consider the imposition of their will in choosing their daughter's or sister's husband as their own inalienable right and perceive any opposition to that as girls' insolence" (Zamiri). Masoumeh's future husband must be chosen at the discretion of her father and brothers. "No one cared what I thought" (Saniee 72). Therefore, as soon as the desired suitor arrived, the wedding was scheduled, and Masoumeh had to marry him. Masoumeh's mother informs Masoumeh that "this time, your brother will cut you into tiny pieces … She clawed at me, grabbed me by the hair, and dragged me out … I don't remember saying yes during the marriage ceremony" (Saniee 86-87).

In the second period of her life, her marriage to her father's and brothers' selected suitor, Hamid, "positions are 'objectively' defined in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation in the structure of distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 97). Hamid, who occupies a higher position in the family hierarchy based on the culture of the patriarchal society of Iran, seeks to preserve his power over the field of marriage by establishing rules, legitimacy, and boundaries of the field of marriage. In fact, Hamid's power is the outcome of "the degree to which men and women are unequal in their access to the scarce and valued resources and opportunities" (Chafetz

10), like education. Hamid is a Marxist intellectual who wants to take advantage of his own established doxa to make himself free from the shackle of the family and to obviate Masoumeh who can prevent him from achieving his political aspirations. Therefore, “it is a very powerful thing to have the privilege of self-description, the ability to be an expert about the facts of your own life” (Suarez 362). Hamid believes that “being married doesn’t mean impeding your spouse’s interests. On the contrary, it means supporting them” (Saniee 105), and that men and women “have equal and clearly defined rights, and neither has the right to fetter the hands and feet of the other or to force them to do things they don’t like. And they don’t have the right to cross-examine each other either” (Saniee 107).

Therefore, Masoumeh, who has a lower position in the family hierarchy, is “less likely to be considered an expert about anything, even [her] own life” (Suarez 362). Thus, she has no right to ask questions such as why, when, and where. Instead, she has to take on the full responsibility for her married life due to her husband’s long absence at home and then his death as the result of his activities and raise her children alone. Masoumeh’s conformity to these rules is the result of her unconscious acceptance of her marriage field’s doxa and her habitus. These rules, doxa, seem natural because they have a connection to “what is taken for granted,” to “the reality that goes unanimously unquestioned because it lies beyond any notion of enquiry” (Grenfell, Key Concepts 120).

After many years of living as a widow and devoting herself to do all her motherhood duties well and to regulate all the affairs related to her children and make them prosperous, Masoumeh decides to remarry Saiid, her adolescent suitor, at the age of forty-eight. Her children’s reactions and views prevent her from marrying him since the patriarchal society of Iran has provided a “space in which cultural competence or knowledge of particular tastes, dispositions, or norms is produced and given a price” (Winkle-Wanger 7). Therefore, it is not desirable for a widow to remarry, and thus she is condemned to stay alone for the rest of her life. Siamak, her first son, excuses the magnitude of his father’s greatness and honor and announces that he “can’t stand by and allow the memory of [his] martyred father to be mired in muck” (Saniee 389). Massoud, her second son, is also concerned about his own reputation for his wife and his father-in-law.

5. Conclusion

According to Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical concepts, cultural capital is recognized as the most significant factor to offer an explanation for how men within the patriarchal societies are able to reproduce their power and maintain their domination as well as how this kind of capital contributes to women's subjugation and subordination in the field of marriage. Bourdieu believes that culture is regarded "as a form of capital with specific laws of accumulation, exchange, and exercise of power' (Swartz 8). Men as powerful agents take advantage of the cultural capital to introduce heterosexual marriages as the norm of the society and set its related rules based upon their own desires and then try to internalize these rules by establishing specific cultural values and principles that form women's dispositions and habitus and thus contribute to the perpetuation of women's submissiveness in the field of marriage. Bourdieu states that "the principle of practice has to be sought … in the relationship between external constraints which have a very variable margin for choice, and dispositions which are the product of social processes that are more or less reducible to these constraints" (Logic 60).

The function of Bourdieu's theoretical concepts in the field of marriage can be summarized into the following formula: "[(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice" (Bourdieu, Distinction 101). This formula shows that "practice results from relations between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field)" (Grenfell, Key Concepts 51). This can point to a sort of symbolic domination exerted "not in the pure logic of knowing consciousness" but through "the schemes of perception, appreciation, and action that are constitutive of habitus and which, below the level of the decisions of consciousness and the controls of the will, set up a cognitive relationship that is profoundly obscure to itself" (Bourdieu, Masculine 37).

Female novelists from around the world utilized the novel genre to depict women's status and conditions in the field of marriage in patriarchal societies. Two novels have been selected from two different historical periods in two different countries, the Victorian era and contemporary Iran, to encompass the totality of women's experiences among the various parts of the world. The selected novels provide objective evidence and make it possible to trace the interrelationship between

culture as a form of capital at men's service in patriarchal societies and women's submissiveness and their subjugation to the established patriarchal cultural principles and norms in the field of marriage.

The conclusion in this paper is in accordance with the contextual analysis of the selected novels and Bourdieu's theoretical concepts. In these novels, the importance of cultural capital in the creation of women's dispositions and habitus that can lead to their submissiveness in the field of marriage is manifested through the female characters. Actually, the way that the female characters in these novels act in the field of marriage reflects the fact that they "learn to want what conditions make possible for them … The most improbable practices are therefore excluded by a kind of immediate submission to order that inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is categorically denied and to will the inevitable" (Bourdieu, Logic 54).

Elizabeth Gaskell in Wives and Daughters demonstrates that Victorian men used cultural capital to establish a set of rules for Victorian women in order to be considered as a desirable and ideal wife in the field of marriage and then internalized them in Victorian women by turning them into their habitus. Molly initially fails to depict the propagated ideal gendered cultural principles and norms and therefore is socially evaluated as an undesirable and improper wife and cannot marry Roger whom she is in love with. Molly finally succumbs and conforms to her female gender role established through accepted social and cultural norms penetrated into females' minds, labeling her as marriageable and attractive to the opposite sex, and society ultimately accepts her as beautiful, desirable, and eligible for marriage. Gaskell also, through Mrs. Kirkpatrick and Cynthia, points out that heterosexual marriages were embedded in women's minds as the cultural norm of the society and the only way to enhance their social standing and economic welfare.

Parinoush Saniee in The Book of Fate shows that the cultural principles of Iran allow men to give themselves the right to choose their daughter's or sister's future husband ignoring her idea in such an important matter that is closely related to her fate. Masoumeh cannot marry the man she loves in neither period of her life and succumbs to the patriarchal cultural values of Iran: "I often ask myself, What is my share in this life? Did I ever have an independent fate of my own? Or was I always part of the destiny that ruled the lives of the men in my life, all of whom somehow sacrificed me at the altar of their beliefs and objectives?" (Saniee 392). Her submission to the patriarchal

cultural values makes her wonder: “it is as if I never existed, never had any rights … When did I have the right to choose and to decide? When did they ever ask me, ‘What do you want?’” (Saniee 392).

Therefore, the logic of masculine domination and feminine submissiveness, “which can be described as both spontaneous and extorted, cannot be understood until one takes account of the durable effects that the social order exerts on women (and men), that is to say, the dispositions spontaneously attuned to that order which it imposes on them” (Bourdieu, Masculine 38).

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