

CULTURAL CAPITAL AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION: PIERRE BOURDIEU'S THEORY OF PRACTICE

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Abstract: Gender discrimination can be observed in all historical periods in diverse societies and cultures in all fields, especially in the field of education. Having chosen Parinoush Saniee's *The Book of Fate* and Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, the present paper attempts to plot complex connections between cultural capital, gender discrimination, and education. This paper scrutinizes and examines how cultural capital has engaged with and fostered gender discrimination in the field of education based on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice. The findings of this study represent that the individuals' culturally-created habitus renders gender discrimination seems natural and therefore contributes to the continuation of masculine domination and women's submissiveness in the field of education. This paper also demonstrates that women are ultimately submitted to the prevailing culture of the patriarchal society in which they live despite their efforts to resist the confinements imposed on them by that culture.

Keywords: Pierre Bourdieu, cultural capital, field, habitus, gender discrimination, education, *The Book of Fate*, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

1. Introduction

Culture is of great importance in understanding the perpetuation of gender discrimination and thus men's domination and women's submissiveness in the field of education. The notion of culture is used to refer to "forms of life and of social expression. The way people behave while [...] interacting at work, engaging in ritualized social behavior [...], and the like constitute a culture" (Rivkin and Ryan 1025). In fact, this definition contains the "regularities, procedures, and rituals of human life in communities" (Rivkin and Ryan 1025). Therefore, according to Rivkin and Ryan, culture can be considered as an "instrument of gender

domination” that contributes to the “reproduction of the social system by allowing only certain kinds of imagery and ideas to gain access to masses” (1025-26).

Bourdieu also believes that culture plays an important role in “the reproduction of social structures” and “the ways in which unequal power relations [...] are embedded in the systems of classification used to describe and discuss everyday life as well as cultural practices” (Bourdieu, *The Field* 2). Therefore, culture can maintain social, hierarchical orders and also “mediate practices by connecting individuals and groups to institutionalized hierarchies. Whether in the form of dispositions, objects, systems, or institutions, culture embodies power relations” (Swartz 1). Bourdieu demonstrates the “ontological complicity” (Grenfell 44) that exists between objective structures and internalized structures. This points to the fact that “everything we know about the world is both established and developed as a consequence of individual acts of perception” (Grenfell 45). It also represents that the objective structures have “defining principles which are both pre-constructed and evolving according to the logic of differentiation found within the social universe” (Grenfell 45). In other words, such principles are the product of “what already has-been-values which serve the status quo and/or emerging social form” (Grenfell 45). The purpose of this study is to show how culture can lead to gender discrimination and women’s submissiveness to men’s domination in the field of education through Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice as well as the detailed analysis of the selected novels.

2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice provides a distinctive perspective based on which gender discrimination in the field of education can be traced. His theory consists of three key concepts, namely capital, field, and habitus that contribute to clarify the process of stratification between men and women, leading to social inequality and gender inequality in the field of education.

2.1. Bourdieu’s Concept of Capital

Bourdieu believes that “it is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms” (Grenfell 101). Bourdieu used the concept of capital to conceptualize the relationships between culture and social structure and to consider culture as an important aspect of capital. Cultural capital is “long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body in the form of cultural goods” (Bourdieu and Jean-Claude 84). According to

Swartz, Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital suggests that "culture can become a power resource" (75). Therefore, culture as a form of capital can be a tool of power. Moreover, men as powerful agents in patriarchal societies are able to determine legitimate and valued capitals through cultural formats and, thus, reproduce their power while women are "*capital bearing objects*, whose value accrues to the primary groups to which they belong (for him, the family), rather than as capital-accumulating subjects in social space" (Skeggs 28-29).

2.2. Bourdieu's Concept of Field

Bourdieu defines field as "a separate social universe" that "is endowed with specific principles of evaluation of practice and works" (Bourdieu, *The Field* 162). Each field has its particular rules, which Bourdieu referred to them 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 120)

Therefore, the individual whose habitus conforms to the rules of a specific field has the greatest power and can both define the members of that particular field and establish legitimacy as well as the boundaries of that field. In the field of education in patriarchal societies, men are agents who "seek to preserve their power over that field" while women as "challengers will strive to overtake them, turning the field into an arena of struggle for power" (Swartz 136-37).

2.3. Bourdieu's Concept of Habitus

Habitus is responsible for the continuities and regularities observable in the social world (Bourdieu, "The Three" 73). Bourdieu refers to habitus as a "structured and structuring structure" (Bourdieu, *In Other* 170). Habitus is structured by both "past and present conditions of an individual like family upbringing or education" (Grenfell 51). Habitus is structuring, too. It implies that the individuals' habitus "helps to shape [their] present and future practices" (Grenfell 51). It is also a structure because every established order appears to be natural to the members of that order (Bourdieu, *Outline* 164). Therefore, it can be inferred that the most important characteristic of habitus is its embodiment. McNay states that gendered habitus includes a "layer of embodied experience that is not immediately amenable to self-fashioning" (103). In his book *Masculine Domination*, Bourdieu considers a little room for change or resisting gender norms and

describes women as “condemned to give at every moment the appearances of a natural foundation to the diminished identity that is socially bestowed on them” (30). Therefore, it is obvious that women are forced to take part in the symbolic violence of gender and to adhere to structures and agents of domination.

Bourdieu concludes that there is a reciprocal relationship between habitus and field and summarizes his discussion as such: “[habitus (capital)] + field = practice” (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 101). This equation means “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 51). Therefore, practices are not merely the product of one’s habitus but are the outcome of relations between one’s habitus and one’s current circumstances.

3. The Field of Education and Power Relations in *The Book of Fate* by Parinoush Saniee

Education is one of the most important aspects of cultural capital. Bourdieu’s investigation of educational institutions is in parallel with his survey of the Kabyle in Algeria in that he pays particular attention to “the ways in which the structured and structuring habitus of agents are positioned within the fields in which they strategize and act” (Grenfell 187). In order to investigate education as a form of cultural capital in the life of the female protagonist of the novel, Masoumeh, and her reaction(s) from the viewpoint of Bourdieu’s theory of practice, her educational field will be subdivided into two subfields including the subfield of her celibacy period and the subfield of her marital period.

3.1. The Subfield of Masoumeh’s Celibacy Period

A significant form of cultural capital is its institutionalization. Institutionalized cultural capital is “a form of objectification which [...] confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee” (Bourdieu, “The Forms” 243). The home is recognized as the primary institution in which the acquisition of cultural capital takes place, and individuals learn their specific attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms. In fact, the family is the initial source for “the systematic cultivation of a sensibility in which principles of selection implicit within the environment translate into physical and cognitive propensities expressed in dispositions to acts of particular kinds” (Grenfell 111). Cultural capital “requires the investment of time by parents, other family members, or hired professionals to sensitize the child to cultural dispositions” (Swartz 76). Therefore, the home is

considered as a site of social reproduction that replicates and retains the cultural capital.

In this subfield, Masoumeh's parents and her brothers constitute the most important pole. Her parents are illiterate, and her brothers are not well-educated. Her brother Ahmad "didn't study and kept failing year eight until he finally dropped out of school" (Saniee 18). It points to the lack of education as cultural capital in her family. On the other hand, the preliminary discussion of the novel takes place in the city of Qom, signifying that her family is a religious and traditional one that is quite influenced by patriarchal thinking. In traditional Iranian families, men have a superior position in relation to women in the family hierarchy and, thus, have the power and authority to define and determine worthy and worthless norms. In such families, men try to keep and reproduce their power by ignoring the importance of girls' educational continuation, limiting their educational fields to certain types, and forbidding them from going to school. It is because education as a form of "symbolic capital" works together with "other capitals to advantage or disadvantage, and to position social agents in multiple fields" (Grenfell 76). Therefore, Masoumeh's brothers disagree with her going to school. "From the first, Ahmad had been against my going to school [...] he didn't want me to study more than he had" (Saniee 18). As Bourdieu represents, it can be inferred that education, as a sort of cultural capital, is at the service of those "social agents taking up dominant positions in the universal field of power" (Grenfell 76).

Moreover, to maintain and reproduce their power, men are able to classify education into various types due to their power in patriarchal societies and set specific forms of education for women. First, men consider it worthwhile to adhere to the notion that a successful woman should be well-educated in sewing and cooking classes, which make them ready for their roles as wives and housekeepers. Then, they force the individuals to internalize these attitudes and thoughts as accepted cultural norms and values, *doxa*, in such a way that these attitudes and thoughts shape the individuals' habitus and their practices. In fact, this embodiment constitutes the central aspect of the individuals' habitus.

Individuals learn to want what conditions make possible for them and not aspire to what is not available to them. The conditions in which the individuals live generate dispositions compatible with these conditions and in a sense pre-adapted to their demands. 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, *The Logic* 54)

Masoumeh's mother, Khanom Jan, and grandmother are examples of women in whom the established and widely-known cultural norms and values about women's education have penetrated their unconscious minds and transformed into their habitus. Khanom Jan believes that "Masoumeh has her year six certificate and even studied an extra year. It's time for her to get married" (Saniee 18). Her grandmother also complains about Masoumeh's going to school and repeatedly warns Masoumeh's mother, "your girl has no skills. When she gets married, they will send her back within a month" (Saniee 18). She notifies Masoumeh's father that "why do you keep spending money on the girl? Girls are useless. They belong to someone else. You work so hard and spend it on her and in the end you'll end up having to spend a lot more to give her away" (Saniee 19).

Using various techniques, Masoumeh does her best to resist the imposed attitudes of Iran's patriarchal society that filled up the unconscious minds of her family members. Her techniques include praying to God: "I went to Her Holiness Masoumeh's Shrine every day" (Saniee 19), crying and entreating her father: "I threw myself at father's feet and cried a bucketful of tears until he agreed" (Saniee 20), and taking self-care: "Ahmad was so angry he wanted to strangle me and used every excuse to beat me up [...] I would wrap my chador tightly around me and took care not to give him any excuse" (Saniee 20). As Masoumeh's techniques become effective, she is allowed to continue her education.

There are many factors that play important roles in learners' academic achievements or their decline in knowledge. "The most important factor is the family environment. Parents play a strategic role in the family, and this has a great impact on the emergence of children's talents and their intellectual maturity" (Alavi Aala 126). Therefore, the family and especially the parents are the most important factors in academic progress. Bourdieu also argues that education is "one of a series of strategies used by the families to perpetuate or advance their social position" (Bourdieu, *The State* 273). However, despite not having her family support in the field of education, Masoumeh attempts to attain the highest achievements in education at school. Although her progress and success at school are remarkable and highly commendable by everyone at school, her family members dismiss her achievements as worthless and try to discourage her. Masoumeh says, "at home, no one showed any reaction [...] Mahmood says [to her] so what? What do you think you've achieved" (Saniee 27)? In addition, her father says, "well, why didn't you become the top student in your class" (Saniee 27)? Also, in response to Masoumeh's friend, Parvaneh, praising Masoumeh's

scores, Masoumeh's mother says, "what's the use my girl? These things are not practical for a girl. She is wasting her time. Pretty soon she'll have to go to her husband's house and wash nappies" (Saniee 39).

These indicate that women's individual achievements in the field of education are viewed as worthless in Iran's patriarchal society. In other words, Iranian men first compare women's education with their household duties. Then, they try to keep and reproduce their power by embedding the trivialization of women's education and their success and improvement in this field in Iran's inhabitants especially women themselves. In fact, they attempt to turn this trivialization into women's habitus. This also points to the concept of *distinction*. What Bourdieu means by the term *distinction* is that "individuals in social space each develop cultural peculiarities which mark them out from one another [...] These differences can become a focus of symbolic struggles" in which "members of those clusters seek to establish both the superiority of their peculiarities and an official sanction for them" (Grenfell 96). Therefore, men in patriarchal societies establish different cultural norms and values and create a distinction between them as the proper habitus of males and females through internalizing them in individuals' unconscious minds. "The habituation of cultural differences and criteria for judging them higher or lower" (Grenfell 96) is an important aspect of this process. Bourdieu believes that habituation "allows differences and ultimately inequality between clusters of individuals to appear natural and thus both inevitable and just" (Grenfell 96). By overlooking education, viewing marriage as something prior to education, and regarding women's duties in tasks such as washing, sweeping up, caring for the husbands' needs, and reproducing, Masoumeh's mother ignores women's dignity. Also, by accepting the seemingly natural oppression as well as being submitted to men's orders, Masoumeh's mother not only promotes the superiority of men over women but also seeks to convey these unpleasant experiences and fundamental beliefs, *doxa*, to the next generation, her daughter. "The transmission of cultural capital" is undoubtedly "the best hidden form of hereditary transmission of capital" and, thus, it "receives disproportionately greater weight in the system of reproduction strategies as the direct, visible forms of transmission tend to be more strongly censored and controlled" (Bourdieu, "The Forms" 246).

Once again, Masoumeh becomes frustrated and feels worried by approaching the end of the school year because education as the cultural capital does not exist in her home. And also, her family members, underestimating women's education in comparison to their main duties of housekeeping, can prevent her from attending school.

“They don’t care whether I am doing well at school or not. They say anything beyond the first three years of secondary school doesn’t do a girl any good” (Saniee 31). However, by resorting to her father’s compassion and persuading him to speak with her school manager, Masoumeh succeeds in obtaining the right to continue her education despite all the difficulties and opposition of her family members. “Ali would kick my books aside” (Saniee 37). But her happiness and success do not last long because she is completely banned from going to school through Ali’s spying activities and finding Saïid’s love letters in her bag. Masoumeh is imprisoned at home and physically tortured, and her family members decide that she has to marry as soon as possible.

Since the pure love of a teenage girl for a boy is unacceptable, the girls will be left in miserable and defenseless conditions if seen. This means that women themselves participate in violence against their congeners instead of supporting them because of the existence of patriarchal cultural beliefs and norms in their unconscious minds. “Femininity is a symbolic capital exclusive to the female sex,” and this symbolic capital is manifested in “feminine beauty and elegance, maternal delicacy, and other similar characteristics” (Gol Moradi 183). Therefore, maternal delicacy is one of the symbolic capitals that is not noticeable in the field to which Masoumeh belongs. Instead of mediating and defending her daughter, Masoumeh’s mother lets Masoumeh’s brothers apply extreme violence against her. She also deprives Masoumeh of seeing her only friend, Parvaneh, and even does not send her to sewing classes that could have been a gleam of hope. Therefore, she takes her freedom away at once.

Masoumeh has turned into a submissive person who cannot resist. She tried to commit suicide several times, but there were in vain. She now discovers that all resisting ways are closed and decides to surrender herself. “By then, I knew that the only way I could ever leave that house was as someone’s wife” (Saniee 67).

3.2. The Subfield of Masoumeh’s Marital Period

After marriage, the cultural capital of education exists in the subfield to which Masoumeh belongs. But the question is whether the existence of this capital in Masoumeh’s current life can change her situation. When Masoumeh asks her husband’s idea about her education, he says,

I would rather be with an educated and intelligent person [...] Everyone should be able to pursue what they like and believe to be the right path for them. Being married doesn’t mean impeding your

spouse's interests. On the contrary, it means supporting them. (Saniee 104-105)

Masoumeh is very glad that her husband is not only an obstacle to her education but also a firm supporter for achieving her aspirations. However, in patriarchal societies, some rules are enacted that apparently refer to the equality of men and women, and women are convinced to accept them. But, in fact, men take advantage of these rules to advance their goals. Her husband, Hamid, believes 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). Although this unwritten law can endow Masoumeh with her human rights, it has some disadvantages, as well. Hamid is a Marxist intellectual and political activist who intends not only to take advantage of this law to make himself free from the shackle of the family but also to obviate Masoumeh, who can prevent him from achieving his political aspirations. This points to the existence of symbolic violence imposed on women. Symbolic violence is a form of "gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims" imposed through the "symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely, misrecognition), recognition or even feeling" (Bourdieu, *Masculine* 1-2). This relation, therefore, suggests an opportunity to "grasp the logic of the domination exerted in the name of a symbolic principle known and recognized by the dominant and the dominated [...] a lifestyle (or a way of thinking, speaking, and acting)" (Bourdieu, *Masculine* 2). Therefore, symbolic violence can be a more influential means of domination and also oppression because it is installed within social structures to contribute to the reproduction and maintenance of social hierarchies. Thus, those hierarchies are unquestioningly regarded by the dominant and dominated classes as natural and legitimate. Symbolic violence "is exerted whenever any power imposes meanings and imposes them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its ability to impose those meanings" (Mander 432).

Masoumeh gradually realizes that Hamid's intended support should only be unilaterally provided by herself. In fact, it is her husband who wants Masoumeh to support him in achieving his goals. He wants her not to hinder his activities. Masoumeh is only verbally supported by her husband and receives no practical assistance in this regard. By giving birth to a child, having new responsibilities of motherhood in addition to the wifehood duties, as well as finding a job and earning a living due

to her husband's absence, her education becomes even much more difficult. Masoumeh says, "the universities opened. But the last time on my mind was going to classes" (Saniee 202). Or she says elsewhere that "every day after work, I would do our shopping and then stop by to see Bibi" and then "the housework would start [...] I would collapse like a corpse and sleep. Given all that, I no longer thought I could continue my education. I had already lost one year, and it seemed I would have to lose many more" (Saniee 206).

Finally, when Masoumeh adjusts to her new circumstances and has the opportunity to continue her education, her father-in-law says, "you are under a lot of pressure. Don't you think managing both a job and the university will be too much for you" (Saniee 211)? Her mother-in-law also says, "you are at work from morning until late afternoon, and I guess you will then want to go to the university. But what about these boys" (Saniee 211)? From the words of her father-in-law and mother-in-law, it can be understood that in Iran's patriarchal society, the motherhood duties of a woman and her care for her children are recognized as cultural values and have precedence over her personal interests. By internalizing and accepting this culture, her father-in-law and mother-in-law also want Masoumeh to devote herself to her children first and then pursue her own personal interest, education. But Masoumeh does not give up again and tries to manage all her affairs by taking only a few courses. But this time, with the universities' closure due to the political and social disagreements, she is unable to continue her education. However, when the conditions are conducive to learning and universities are opened, Masoumeh does not have any eagerness to resume her education and eventually succumbs after much effort and resistance.

4. The Field of Education and Power Relations in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* by Anne Brontë

Using culture as a practical and strategic method, men in the patriarchal Victorian society also attempted to retain their superiority and reproduce their power. Actually, in the field of gender, "men have worked to establish a case for the superiority of men's essential nature in all of those domains" that "determine the real worth of a person- from superiority in the moral sense to superiority in [...] capacities of logic and rational argument" (White 167). Therefore, this is of significance to "the maintenance and extension of the inequitable arrangements between the genders, the justification of the oppression of women, and the support of male power, privilege, and violence" (White 167). Anne Brontë's novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* demonstrates that how the

established cultural norms and principles, created by men in the Victorian era, can impose limitations on women's education and induce them to be educated in particular fields. The female protagonist's reactions to the established cultural principles about women's education will also be scrutinized.

In the Victorian patriarchal society, there was a great and significant difference between girls and boys in education and training, which was absolutely influenced by the culture of that period. 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," and "if your life is marked by lower class, you are less likely to be considered an expert about anything, even your own life" (Suarez 362). Therefore, men who possessed a superior position in the hierarchical order of the Victorian society were able to determine the domain of women's educational fields and their peculiar cultural values and principles. Thus, they could form women's habitus in this way.

Therefore, in the Victorian patriarchal society, women's training and educational fields were confined to those that could accelerate men's achievement of their goals. One training that women had to be educated in was to stay at home like an angel and run their housework chores. This doctrine stemmed from the Victorian culture that emphasized the separation and division of spheres of activities: "man for the field and woman for the heart: / Man for the sword and for the needle she: / Man with the head and woman with the heart. / Man to command and woman to obey; / All else confusion" (Stoneman 131). This doctrine was embedded in the unconscious minds of the Victorian women, who not only did not see it as in conflict with their rights but also regarded it as a necessity. They strived to adapt to it and, therefore, turned it into their habitus. As Winkle-Wanger states, "cultural preferences are accepted without recognition of them as an exercise of power but rather are seen as normal cultural expressions that exist within the natural social order" (15). Bourdieu also mentions that "the schemes of habitus, the primary form of classification 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" (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 466). Because of being unconscious, habitus is resistant to change and evolution. "These dispositions or tendencies are durable in that they last over time, and transposable in being capable of becoming active within a wide variety of theatres of social action" (Bourdieu, *Sociology* 87).

This is evident when Gilbert's mother talks to his son about his marriage and the girl he has to choose. She believes that "you must fall

each into your proper place. You'll do your business, and she, if she's worthy of you, will do hers; but it's your business to please yourself, and hers to please you" (Brontë 54). She exemplifies her own life for her son to prove the truth of her belief: "your poor, dear father" never "put himself out of his way to pleasure me. He always said I was a good wife, and did my duty; and he always did his," and he "always did justice to my good dinner, and hardly ever spoiled my cookery by delay- and that's as much as any woman can expect of any man" (Brontë 54). This refers to the fact that habitus is a "structural structure that derives from the class-specific experiences of socialization in family and peer groups" (Swartz 102). In fact, the structuring characteristic of a given habitus "predisposes actors to select forms of conduct that are most likely to succeed in light of their resources and past experience" (Swartz 106). This reflects that habitus naturally forces an individual to deal with the present and anticipate the future according to past experiences. Therefore, individuals have to create "self-fulfilling prophecies according to different class opportunities" (Swartz 104). So, habitus involves a link between past, present, and future.

Gilbert's mother also tries to teach this doctrine to other women, including her own daughter. She tells Rose that "in all household matters, we have only two things to consider, first, what's proper to be done, and secondly, what's most agreeable to the gentlemen of the house- anything will do for the ladies" (Brontë 53). She tries to give some useful advice, necessary to be known by every respectable woman, to Mrs. Graham, as well. She does this because she thinks that Mrs. Graham may remarry although she is single now. She shares her information with Mrs. Graham about "household matters, and all the little niceties of cookery, and such things [...] and several excellent receipts" (Brontë 13). Mrs. Graham expresses her disagreement with these matters by ignoring them. This can be understood from Gilbert's mother's retelling of Mrs. Graham's reaction towards her advice. "I gave her some useful pieces of information [...] the value of which, she evidently could not appreciate, for she begged I would not trouble myself" (Brontë 13).

Gender discrimination in the education field in Brontë's novel can also be understood from the conversation between Mrs. Graham and Gilbert when talking about how boys and girls should be trained. Believing that little Arthur does not receive the suitable training, Gilbert says, "I only say that it is better to arm and strengthen your hero, than to disarm and enfeeble the foe" (Brontë 30). Gilbert brings an example for his belief:

If you were to rear an oak sapling in a hothouse, tending it carefully night and day [...] you could not expect it to become a hardy tree [...] exposed to all the action of the elements, and not even sheltered from the shock of the tempest. (Brontë 30)

But when Mrs. Graham asks him whether he has the same opinion about girls, she encounters Gilbert's *no* answer. Expressing the differences between boys' and girls' training, Mrs. Graham states that girls are believed to be

tenderly and delicately nurtured, like a hot-house plant- taught to cling to others for direction and support, and guarded [...] from the very knowledge of evil [...] A woman cannot be too little exposed to temptation, or too little acquainted with vice, or anything connected therewith. It must be, either, that you think she is essentially so vicious, or so feeble-minded that she cannot withstand temptation, and though she may be pure and innocent as long as she is kept in ignorance and restraint. (Brontë 30-31)

This means that women do not possess pure virtue and will be corrupted if they are exposed to sin. In fact, it was believed that "the greater her knowledge, the wider her liberty, the deeper will be her depravity" (Brontë 31). But on the other hand, in men, who are considered a superior and nobler sex, there is a "natural tendency to goodness, guarded by a superior fortitude, which, the more it is exercised by trials and dangers, is only the further developed" (Brontë 31).

It can be inferred that boys have to experience everything to understand themselves and acquire knowledge about who they are. These experiences help their training to be strengthened and embellished. But for the girls, the situation is different. The aim of their training is not to make them powerful but to provide shelter for them. In other words, girls are not permitted to experience things in the same way as boys. Girls can neither gain experience of various things by themselves nor benefit from the experience of others. Bourdieu believes that "the social relations of domination and exploitation" that exist between the sexes are the result of the "principles of vision and division," leading to the "classifying of all the things of the world and all practices according to distinctions that are reducible to the male/female opposition" (Bourdieu, *Masculine* 30). This distinction can also point to a form of symbolic violence. This symbolic violence reflects the fact that "the relationships within fields and their hierarchies of values are in reality purely arbitrary" and also represents "the arbitrary and

instrumental character of symbolic capitals as types of assets that bring social and cultural advantage or disadvantage” (Grenfell 104). In other words, “the legitimations of the system of social domination and subordination constituted within and through these symbolic relations are ultimately based on interest” (Grenfell 104).

However, Mrs. Graham insists on her own beliefs. She attempts not to succumb to the existing culture and attitudes of Victorian society. She states that “I would have both so to benefit by the experience of others, and the precepts of a higher authority, that they should know beforehand to refuse the evil and choose the good, and require no experimental proofs to teach them the evil of transgression” (Brontë 31). She continues to say that she can never let a poor girl enter the world “unarmed against her foes, and ignorant of the snares that beset her path” (Brontë 31). She does not also want to “watch and guard her deprived of self-respect and self-reliance” because she may lose “the power, or the will to watch and guard herself” (Brontë 31). Moreover, Mrs. Graham’s attitudes about training and experience are not merely limited to words and giving a speech about that. She does her best to pass on her own knowledge and experiences to others. The typical examples are her help to her friends Esther and Milicent. However, she has to return to Grassdale at the end of the novel. This means that the duties and training associated with being a spouse in the Victorian period run deep with Helen as if they are part of her unconscious mind and identity. She finally conforms to what the Victorian society expected her to be and has to yield to the Victorian patriarchal society’s demands, established through the accepted culture.

5. Conclusion

Based on Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice, cultural capital is the most important factor in the constitution of gender discrimination in the field of education. Deep in the education field are the cultural norms and principles that form individuals’ dispositions and habitus. According to the mentioned formula, [(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice, the relationship between field and habitus is a two-way one:

Individuals learn to want what conditions make possible for them and not to aspire to what is not available to them. The conditions in which the individual lives generate dispositions compatible with these conditions and in a sense pre-adapted to their demands. 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, *The Logic* 54)

Moreover, the embodied nature of habitus emphasizes that “the somatization of power relations involves the imposition of limits upon the body which simultaneously constitute the condition of possibility of agency” (McNay 104). Bettero also points that “the operation of habitus, and its interaction with field, is partly a question of the international properties of networks, in which our practice is subject to the contingently variable characteristics and dispositions of the people around us” (20). Therefore, men in patriarchal societies can establish dispositions about women’s education by creating common and accepted cultural norms and principles. These cultural principles are internalized and stored in women’s unconscious minds as ordinary matters. Thus, these internalized principles form women’s habitus without being recognized as an exertion of power. This can represent the symbolic violence that constitutes “the essential aspect of male domination” (Bourdieu, *Masculine* 11) in the field of education. This symbolic violence is “an invisible mode of dominating, a concealed form of violence- the realization of a world view or social order anchored in the habitus of the dominating as well as the dominated” (Krais and William 58).

Undoubtedly, literature, particularly novel, confronts us with numerous notable works that manifest gender discrimination, developed by the male-dominated society’s embodied culture, in the education field. Women writers have considered the literary genre of the novel superior to other literary genres. In other words, this literary form has become a preferred tool with which women have analyzed and published aspects of their life and their status and conditions in various fields, particularly the field of education. Good examples are the selected novels of Anne Brontë and Parinoush Saniee. The selected novels provide objective evidence to understand the relationship between the existence and continuation of gender discrimination in the education field and culture as a form of capital at the service of men in patriarchal societies.

In this investigation, the acquisition of conclusion is based on close reading and contextual analysis of the selected novels according to the raised concepts by Bourdieu’s theory of practice. The significance of culture as a form of capital and its impact on both creating individuals’ habitus, especially women’s, and constructing gender discrimination in the field of education are reflected and manifested by the characters in these selected novels. In both novels, the male characters in the patriarchal societies of Iran and the Victorian era establish a set of cultural principles and norms that restrict the female characters’ education to domestic education and give it precedence over scholarly

knowledge. These cultural principles are embedded in the unconscious minds of some female characters and turned into their habitus. Masoumeh's mother and mother-in-law and Gilbert's mother are examples of such women. They even try to transfer these cultural principles to the main female characters. Therefore, they contribute to the reproduction of men's power and superiority and, thus, women's submissiveness. However, the female protagonists in both novels first try to resist these false established cultural principles that imposed limitations on their field of education but are, finally, forced to submit to the established culture of the societies in which they live.

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KULTURNI KAPITAL I RODNA NERAVNOPRAVNOST U OBLASTI OBRAZOVANJA: TEORIJA PRAKSE PJERA BURDIJE

Rodna neravnopravnost može se posmatrati u svim istorijskim periodima u različitim društvima i kulturama, u svim oblastima, posebno u oblasti obrazovanja. U ovom se članku analiziraju *Knjiga moje sudbine* od Parinoush Saniee i *Stanar Wildfell Halla* od Anne Brontë i pokušavaju se utvrditi složene veze između kulturnog kapitala, rodne neravnopravnosti i obrazovanja. U članku se pomno razmatra i ispituje kako je kulturni kapital povezan i kako je

podsticao rodnu neravnopravnost u oblasti obrazovanja na osnovu teorije prakse Pjera Burdijea. Rezultati pokazuju da formirani kulturni habitus pojedinca opravdava rodnu diskriminaciju i doprinosi nastavku muške dominacije i inferiornosti žena u području obrazovanja. Na osnovu analiziranih djela u radu se takođe pokazuje da su žene podložne dominantnoj kulturi patrijarhalnog društva u kome žive uprkos svojim naporima da se odupru ograničenjima koja im nameće navedeni kulturni habitus.

Ključne riječi: Pjer Burdije, kulturni kapital, oblast, habitus, rodnadiskriminacija, obrazovanje, *Knjiga moje sudbine*, *Stanar Wildfell Halla*