



Mapping out Gender Power: A Bourdieuan Approach to Tehmina Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*

Ume Kulsoom Rind*, Muhammad Khan Sangi**

ABSTRACT: *The present study analyses gender powers in Tehmina Durrani's autobiographical novel My Feudal Lord in Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) notion of "habitus" which is a part of his Theory of Practice. Habitus as a critical approach is used to understand the behavior and habits of individuals. According to Bourdieu (1977) structuring of individual's habitus starts from the very childhood and is strengthened throughout the life. Keeping in view this approach, the present study aims to analyse and interpret the habitus of a feudal man (Mustafa Khar) and a woman (Tehmina Durrani) in a feudal and patriarchal Pakistani society. In close reading analysis method, the qualitative study focuses on function of habitus in making gender roles in different ways viz. how habitus of an individual is developed and re/structured in a feudal society. The study examines the struggle of the two main characters i.e. Tehmina and Mustafa to maintain or break their socially made habitus. Finally, the paper achieves that although habitus of individuals is continuously structured into their minds, yet it is broken in certain circumstances and situations.*

Keywords: Gender power, theory of practice, feudal, patriarchal society

Introduction

Historically in this part of the world and in a feudal cum patriarchal culture a woman is considered as inferior and the property of men. It does not accept to give woman any right of her own. In a feudal culture, woman as a woman has no place (Zaidi & Qureshi, 2013). She can only survive in terms of her relation with someone else, like as a mother, daughter, wife and sister. From the very early age, a woman is reared to be bound for total submission and subjected to live her life under several traditional roles which were always subservient (Deepak, 2011) to men. This nurture is so deeply structured in the minds that women incessantly maintain it in their daily life dealings. There is no fixed and close term for a woman and her position is fixed as an object (Shree, 2002). Men, be her father, brother, husband or son, are the makers of those rules. For men traditionally their wives are less important even than their cattle. Their daughters are not counted in answer to the

* Lecturer, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Campus, Dadu University of Sindh, Jamshoro.
(Corresponding author E-mail address: uk_rind2009@yahoo.com)

** Professor, Institute of English Language and Literature University of Sindh, Jamshoro.

question: how many children do you have? (Gneezy, Leonard & List, 2009; Khan, 2006) As a property of man, a woman has no will-power and thinking of her own and no right to raise voice against the proprietor (Manderson & Bennet, 2003).

Drawing upon these structured and deeply rooted behaviours for men and women, this study aims to analyse power dichotomy, men's hegemonic power and oppression of women in Tehmina Durrani's autobiographical novel *My Feudal Lord* (1995).

To carry out this study, Pierre Bourdieu's notion "*habitus*" (1977, 1989, 1990) is applied as a theoretical framework in the context of Pakistani feudal society. The *habitus* is one of Bourdieu's most popular notions which will help in this study to understand a of number divisions in our social order.

Literature Review

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was a French sociologist and philosopher of varied talent whose works left an unending mark on the fields of educational and cultural sociology in the second half of the twentieth century. In his first major book *Outline of Theory of Practice* (1977), he introduced his major theoretical framework named Theory of Practice to present a critical account of the mainstream perspectives on society and culture.

Bourdieu's (1977) Theory of Practice contains three main elements, namely *field*, *capital* and *habitus*. According to Walther (2014) the interplay of these elements leads to strategy or practice of agents. In Bourdieu's view (cited in Walther, 2014) human practices (actions) are the result of social structures or context (Field) where certain rules apply, and also of one's disposition (*habitus* and agency), i.e. which is our system of thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving, which depends on relative amount, and structure of possessions (capital). Thus, through his theory, Bourdieu proposes a methodological and epistemological way to overcome the dualities between structure and agents (Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2005; Gouanvic, 2005).

In order to understand the behavior and practices of individuals and to illuminate feudal society in Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*, the present study focuses only on one element of the theory that is "*habitus*" (the word *habitus* is italicized because Bourdieu has used it in this way). The concept of *habitus* is discussed in detail in following sections.

Habitus

According to Bourdieu (1992, p.53) *habitus* is a “scheme of perception, thought and action” which is powerfully documented in regular practices. The regular practices cause the “disposition” of agents and dispositions are “the experience of social agents” (1988, p.782). The perceptions and actions which Bourdieu relate with *habitus* are “lasting and transposable dispositions” (1977, p.72) which integrate with past experiences and actions, and “functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions” (p.95). It enables agents to cope with unforeseen and ever changing situations.

Agent’s dispositions are not just the product of personal perceptions but these are produced by the amalgamation of individual and social *habitus*. Jenkins (1992) and Reay (1995) note that Individual *habitus* is attained from personal experiences and from early life socialisation, which is further strengthened with the consequent experiences of life. It is also sum total history of family and class of the agents. Bourdieu (1990) asserts that in the formation of individual *habitus*, it is not only the self which makes *habitus* but the trace of an entire collective history of family also matters a lot.

For making social *habitus*, the social surroundings of agents play an important role. Social *habitus* is the product of collective history of social class of society, where agents of same social class perform, experience and comprehend things in identical way with members of other class (Jenkins, 1992). Hence, there is an accordance and conformity in the *habitus* of each agent belonging to the same social class. In Bourdieu’s (1992) view the practices of the members of same group and class in a society are at greater accordance than the agents recognize. There is huge consistency in the practices of agents from same group with same social *habitus*. Even agents in different societies having same social status and social class possess similar *habitus*. Nevertheless, there are many differences in the practices of same group sharing same social *habitus* depending on the agent’s personal *habitus*, which depends on the degree of his acceptance of each characteristic of social *habitus* (Reay, 1995). Therefore, in order to understand the individual grasp in agent’s present and past position, it is very necessary to comprehend collective *habitus* of agent (Bourdieu, 1990).

Gender based habitus

In a feudal cum patriarchal system, the *habitus* of agents is recognized on the basis of their gender (Sultana, 2011). The studies on gendered based *habitus* (Gaddis, 2013; Krais, 2006; Mickelson, 2003) reveal that the classification of *habitus* is an outcome of different possibilities that women

and men perceive which are available to them. In this view, Kraus (2006) writes “the gender classification, with its rigorous male/female dichotomy, comes to life via the *habitus*. The *habitus* is the practical operator, the principle that generates the regular improvisation” (p. 121). The practice of this gendered *habitus* does not come abruptly. The studies (Kraus, 2006; Mickelson, 2003; Papacharissi & Easton, 2013) show that it develops from the very early age. Even at the birth of a child, the first question normally asked is about the gender: is it a boy or a girl? (Crespi, 2003; Leaper, 2013; Martin, 2013).

From the early age, agents grow to understand their place in the social structure related with their gender- male or female. Later on their *habitus* is socialised and molded accordingly. This socialisation is so slow and durable that for the most part it is unnoticed by the agent himself/herself (Bourdieu, 2000).

Moreover, the social structure is a big motivation for the practice of gender base *habitus*. Agents come across with infinite amount of interactions, discussions or conflicts in their daily life which determine their dominant and dominated disposition (Accardo 2006 cited in Walther, 2014). And they are appreciated for internalizing one's place in the social structure. This perspective in Mickelson's (2003) view implies that men and women's social actions take place in different gendered contexts. Various dispositions like perception, thinking, feeling, speaking and acting are the product of agent's gender base *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984; Kraus, 1993; Walther, 2014).

Thus, the internalisation of *habitus* becomes a social made body which not only produces practices structured in social order but also appreciates the prevailing practices in the society. With its continuous practice, the socialised *habitus* becomes agent's temperament, an integral part of body affecting every aspect of human embodiment (Ernste, 2006; Shilling, 1993).

Alteration of habitus

Socialisation and experiences are essential parts of one's *habitus* which are affected by the family background, parents, friends and surrounding which build an individual's thinking (Swartz, 2002). Yet for Bourdieu (1977) *habitus* keeps on changing and developing throughout one's life in order to go in pace with fresh modes of doing. Change and break from the practices of the past enable for switching over to practices of the present and future. Because change and choice (Shahriar, 2015) are important aspects of *habitus* even though choice is limited by the social structure. “Change requires both processes of interruption and continuity in order to advance newer modes of doing” (Papacharissi & Easton, 2013, p. 04).

According to Husu (2013) the alteration of *habitus* also represents its compliance to the established social order leading to the rejection of that type of social reality which is denied in any case to certain individuals and groups. For Bourdieu (1992) *habitus* “structures new experiences in accordance with the structures produced by the past experiences” (p.60), which means that “early experiences have a particular weight because the *habitus* tends to ensure its own constancy and its defence against change” (p.60). Therefore, individuals tend to adapt to the possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions according to their *habitus* and dispositions, which further explains why social relations are reproduced.

Thus, *habitus* keeps re-structuring and altering consciously and unconsciously. Nevertheless this altering is very slow and imperceptible but then it becomes perdurable and long lasting in agent’s life. The slow and unconscious process shapes the basis of individual’s thinking, perceptions and actions (Bourdieu, 1977). Therefore, *habitus* does not remain stagnant rather it develops with the passage of time from restructuring to restructure (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Shi, 2001).

Research Methodology

In order to unmask the social reality and its many inflections in Pakistani feudal society, this qualitative study is analysed with the help of close reading method. Close reading, in view of Cuddon (1999) is a suitable method to obtain textual meaning. This method helps to understand, analyse and evaluate some specific ideas, words and sentences of the characters and the narrator with their tone of speaking in Tehmina Durrani’s novel *My Feudal Lord* (1995).

To carry out this study, researchers follow Bourdieu’s (1977, 1989, 1990) theoretical concept “*habitus*”, which has been employed to examine and interpret the life of a feudal man and the life of a woman in male jingoistic society. According to Ozbilgin and Tatli (2005) Bourdieu’s framework proposes a methodological and epistemological way to overcome the dualities between structure and agency and objectivism and subjectivism. Hence, it relates with our study. In this overall process of analysis, researchers strived to evaluate and illustrate the predicament of women being demoralized and browbeaten by men on the basis of feudal-cum-patriarchal concepts which are constructed around the power of men-folk.

Data Analysis

For women writers autobiography has been an ideal vehicle to convey their issues and experiences. Autobiographical writing in Pakistani English context is still a new body of work because to a greater extent most

of the Pakistani English writers are motivated to write fiction. Durrani's autobiography though is not the first of its kind, yet it attracts lots of public attention. Before her there have been well known autobiographies in Pakistan like Ikramullah (1998), Bhutto (1989) and Suleri (1991). But Durrani's narrative achieved broad recognition and readership at national and international levels. Its uniqueness lies in a fact that she discloses her personal life just to reveal tyrannical feudal traditions (Zaidi & Qureshi, 2013). She dedicates her autobiography to the people of Pakistan and tells the purpose of writing *My Feudal Lord* (1995):

to the people of Pakistan, who have repeatedly trusted and supported their leaders- leaders who have, in return, used the hungry, oppressed, miserable, multitudes to further their personal interest...to the five other ex-wives of Mustafa Khar, who have silently suffered pain and dishonor...to my beloved children who, in our closed society, shall have to suffer the trials of the family exposed....may my son never oppress the weak, may my daughters learn to fight oppression. (p.07)

Thus, by selecting this genre she expresses her deference and resistance. Depicting her personal life, she throws light on the institution of marriage and family which are thoroughly embedded in cultural practices. She portrays her perturbing marital life with a renowned feudal, namely Ghulam Mustafa Khar. Who is a well-known politician in the record of Pakistani politics as ex-chief minister and ex-governor of Punjab.

My Feudal Lord is divided into three parts named as Lion of Punjab, Law of Jungle and Lioness. This trio evidently marks the development of Durrani from an ordinary and unimportant house wife to an emancipated and unbound woman who fights for equal rights. She was mocked and suffered in her life with Khar but then she refuses to obey the structured *habitus* and combats against patriarchal and feudal societal formation.

Formation of Habitus in a Feudal Culture

Habitus is individual's devised perception which is the product of long and ongoing processes of socialisation (Bourdieu, 1989; Papacharissi & Easton, 2013; Ghica, 2013) in agent's culture. Culture is ingrained in the personality of agents and every agent represents his/her culture (Zaidi & Qureshi, 2013) which he/she learns and understands from family and friends who share the same cultural values (Gopang & Bughio, 2015). In Bourdieu's (1990) view the socialisation of *habitus* for the particular culture strengthens its impacts. While Gadamer (1976) notes "since one's consciousness is defined by one's culture, one cannot step outside of the culture one inhabits" (p.302).

In this view, Mustafa Khar represents his feudal culture. The feudal system of Khar not only generates and nurtures different scheme of perceptions, thoughts and actions for men and different for women, but also maintains men's power and hegemony over women. The common and established perception of this system is that a man is supreme being, owner and proprietor of a woman.

To define a woman's position in a feudal system, Tehmina presents her personal experiences as an example of a Pakistani feudal life. She illustrates that Khar's *habitus* was developed in a particular feudal system which he inherited from his forefathers. Thus, his *habitus* in words of Ozbilgin and Tatli (2005) may be called "embodied history" (p.864) which is "the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product" (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 56). Khar's family roots belong to Neli Bar region of India. When his ancestors moved from this area they "slaughtered their women" (Durrani, 1995, p. 39) so that they may not interrupt their journey. A feudal lord is such an authoritative and an absolute ruler who could justify his actions on the basis of his own, even slaughtering his women. This brutal nature and domination over women, Khar inherited from his ancestors as an element of their *habitus*, and then in turn, he adopted it as an integral part of his *habitus*. Thus, his *habitus* according to Lo and Stacey's (2008) perspective "functions below consciousness, it is structured yet improvisatory, generative but context-bound" (p.745).

A wife in a feudal system is honour-bound. She has to construct her *habitus* according to her husband's whims. She is just an instrument of her man's carnal pleasure, a producer of his generations. The feudal *habitus* does not allow her to think independently and the man had the right to punish her. Her value is like that of a land. The feudal lord "loves his land only in functional terms. He encloses it and protects it. If it is barren, he neglects it" (Durrani, 1995, p.107). Thus, the land for a feudal is his "power, prestige and property" (p.107). It is argued to this structured feudal *habitus* that "land had to be tended and cultivated. Only then it produces in abundance otherwise it would be barren" (p. 107).

My Feudal Lord is an open description of *habitus* formation of Pakistani feudal society which develops what Spivak calls an "ideological construction of gender" (1995, p. 281), where man is reared as dominant and a woman as dominated. Since a woman is disadvantaged being therefore, she is subjected to stereotypes that imply that authority belongs to only dominant individuals (Croizet & Claire, 1998; Good, Aronson & Inzlicht, 2003; Gaddis, 2013; Steele & Aronson, 1995). In Pakistani feudal *habitus* as Figes (1986) writes "women have been largely man-made" (p. 09). They are the property of the relatives or her husband (Zaidi & Quereshi 2013).

Structuring and Restructuring of Habitus

Habitus formation of a feudal starts from an early age and it continues throughout the life. It keeps on structuring and restructuring (Bourdieu, 1977; Swartz, 2002). It is witnessed in Khar's upbringing that his *habitus* started to develop from his childhood as an authoritarian, conservative and overpowering. He adopts this *habitus* during his primary and secondary socialisation (Bonnewitz, 2005). Primary socialisation is acquired from parents and family during childhood (Bourdieu, 1984). While the secondary socialisation is built on the primary socialisation and especially results from an individual *habitus*-one's own life experiences (Walther, 2014).

Thus, based on his primary and secondary socialization, the structured *habitus* of Khar restructures with the passage of time only for the sake of his own pleasure and choice. He altered certain rules of his feudal heritage though these were part of his primary socialization. For example he left his cousin-wife named Wazir just few months after their marriage. For a feudal, leaving a wife who belongs to the same family heritage, is a big dishonor. But Khar does not want to live with an illiterate wife, who is many years older than him. Tehmina states that women in his life entered speedily and left quickly. After Wazir, he married a flight attendant girl Safia. He plucked her from sky and locked her in a cage, which is part of his feudal structured *habitus*. Thus, he altered his structured *habitus* for his choice and to exercise his power on women.

From the very childhood Khar was fond of "*shikaar*"-the hunt (Durrani, 1995, p.41) and then this *habitus* of *shikaar* continues in his coming age. Tehmina metaphorically relates his art of *shikaar* with women. From hunting, he skilled many tricks which he later applies on women such as how to wait, lure, entice, chase, entrap, catch and kill the *shikaar*. These tricks he applies on marrying seven women one after the other, and exploiting many other women coming in his life. Women were always *shikaar* and simulate dolls in his hands. He played tricks to trap and entice them and after exploiting he flings them away. This *habitus* was reasonable and acceptable in his feudal laws. Bourdieu deems that being the product of a particular class of objective regularities, the *habitus* tends to generate all the "reasonable, commonplace behaviours" (cited in Papacharissi & Easton, 2013) which provide a comforting homogeneity for the individual.

Gender Based Formation and Classification of Habitus

Agent's *habitus* is the social made behavior, second nature or more specifically it is socialised subjectivity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) which makes him/her conscious about his/her social position in society. In our social system expectations, behaviours and habits are mainly based on one's

gender. Bourdieu (1989) notes that *habitus* is agent's mental structure which helps to understand the social world. Thus, it produces practices based on agents' gender. In feudal-cum-patriarchal system certain behaviours are classically gender bound such as faithfulness, loyalty and fidelity are regarded as marks of a woman. A woman has to be attached to a man whosoever, it be. Society considers a woman great, as Zaidi and Qureshi (2013) mention, when she endures man and practices self-negation.

Man on the other hand is exempted from these burdens. He does not have to be faithful with any woman. Especially he cannot bear an unfaithful wife "feudal law allows a man to act in such a manner, but for a wife to betray a husband is the supreme sin" (Durrani, 1995, p. 51). Tehmina elucidates this feudal moral scheme which even allows a man "to kill his unfaithful wife in a fit of passion" (p.52). When Mustafa found his wife Safia in love with his (Khar's) brother he beat her "without any mercy and broken several of her ribs" (p. 94). Though, his brother who was equally involved with Safia, was forgiven. Just because he is a man and man can be forgiven. This practice in view of Papacharissi and Easton (2013) has its meaning because it is enacted within community of practice. According to Khan (2006):

Feudals have high sense of masculinity and power and therefore, women's defiance and rebellion is considered a monstrous act that can shake the foundations of respect and esteem of the men of the family... Men of the family from each strata of society ... do not hesitate to soak their hands in the blood of their own female blood relatives. (p.53)

Thus, Khar wants absolute submission from his women. He cannot bear even the idea of his wife with another man even if it was her past husband. He used Tehmina's first marriage (with Anees Khan) as a stick to beat her. For Khar her divorce and second marriage (with Khar) were proofs that she was capable of adultery. He demanded Tehmina to remain faithful to him even if he dies. He inquires her "If I am assassinated like Bhutto [Zulfqar Ali Bhutto] would you remain loyal and faithful to me? Can you swear to dedicate your life to my cause and never remarry?" (Durrani, 1995, p. 251).

According to Khar, women who have affairs with men are "sluts" (Durrani, 1995, p.78). In his village a married woman named Ayesha elopes with another married man. As the owner of his villagers, Khar beats her severely. As a punishment he made her *dai*-a household slave at his home. In this view Khan writes that "when it comes to keeping the women in a disadvantage social position, the men employ any weapon available to them" (cited in Zaidi & Qureshi, 2013, p. 14). This rule applies only to women.

There was no punishment for Mustafa himself when he had a long term affair with his sister-in-law Adila (real sister of Tehmina) and he never think of himself a slut. Thus, he had one criteria and for himself, and other for women.

Habitus Formation of Women

A feudal demands total submission from every woman, not only from elder women, but he also want his innocent daughter to follow the same. Khar presents the best example for this. He demands complete submission from his one and half year old daughter Naseeba. He never shows affection towards his daughter. Once, Naseeba was playing with water in a tub in bathroom. During her play she started crying. Hearing her cries Tehmina rushes in bathroom to take her out. But he ordered "Leave her there...You can't take her out. I've ordered her to stay there... she'd better learn to obey from this age" (Durrani, 1995, p.142). Thus, he wanted to develop his daughter's *habitus* as an obedient and acquiescent at the age of half and one year and wanted to make her conscious of her subordinate gender.

It is embedded in feudal and patriarchal upbringing of a woman that she stands for obedience and compliance "without question" (Durrani, 1995, p. 107) even if she is beaten, humiliated and rebuked. A woman has always been at men's target. Men humiliate and defile her because they think that a woman is insignificant creature who always has to sacrifice and surrender. The feudal social setup always expects a woman to be good and to do good with men, no matter how great pains she has to bear. In her primary and secondary *habitus*, a woman is socialised, from very early age like that of Naseeba, for the practice that it is only a woman's duty to keep good terms and relations with her men, be it father, husband, brother or even son (Gneezy, Leonard & List 2009; Khan, 2006; Manderson & Bennet, 2003) and by this way her individual and collective *habitus* is molded to be faithful and obedient without question.

In this regard, the women who have internalised the dominated *habitus* play an important role. Tehmina's mother, as Zaidi and Qureshi note, is a "part of the hegemonic block, which produced patriarchal norms (2013, p. 15). When Tehmina complains to her mother about Khar's behaviour, mother advises her "if husband behaves in a strange or unreasonable manner you should treat him like a sick human being, like someone who needs medical care and treatment" (Durrani, 1995, p. 130). Her suggestion indicates that she knows the demands of men's social *habitus* and of society, where a woman cannot keep herself as an entirely unique entity. As an elderly member of society, having her established *habitus*, she is aware of how a woman is defined as a woman, and in a feudal culture "woman as a woman

has no place” (Rowbotham cited in Zaidi & Qureshi, 2013, p.9, 12). This confirms with the view of Jasam (2001) who explains woman’s position related to men “it is always the father, brothers, husbands, sons who provide them protection and women in general submit to this male dominated social arrangement” (p.08).

First two parts of the autobiography show that Tehmina tolerates every kind of humiliation and oppression from her husband. She spends a life of total subordination. She says “I had no power, no right, no will of my own” (Durrani, 1995, p.100). She practices the social *habitus* of women: being obedient, subordinate and a “household slave” (p.46). With the passage of time, she learns to adjust with impulsive and abusive nature of her husband. This confirms the view of Zaidi and Qureshi (2013) in saying that with the passage of time “women become quite vulnerable to customs and conventions of the society” (p.14). It is only Tehmina who tries to maintain her matrimonial life despite her extreme humiliation. She explains that “a Pakistani woman will endure almost anything in order to hold a marriage together” (Durrani, 1995, p. 77). She knows the “social practice” (Sallaz, 2010, p. 296) that a woman has to maintain her marriage on the cost of her life. She has to leave her husband’s house only in coffin, similar as Sidhwa’s (1993) women are taught.

Maintaining the Habitus

Bourdieu asserts that individual’s structured *habitus* is maintained or broken slowly and unconsciously throughout the life. It develops and changes with the passage of time (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This is true in the case of Khar who maintains his structured vile *habitus* throughout the novel. In order to fulfill his desired intentions though he would change his dominant *habitus* for some time, but as soon as he achieves his goal he would come to the same *habitus*. Lo and Stacey (2008) note that practices are never fully predictable, even when the social actors’ *habitus* remain more or less the same, given that the unfolding of the practice is highly situational. When Khar was in jail he promises Tehmina “to be the ideal husband” (Durrani, 1995, p. 250). He swears in *Khana-e-Kabba* (the holy place for Muslims, where they perform pilgrim) that he “would never look at another woman in his entire life” (p. 121) and will never betray Tehmina. But compelled and accustomed by his deeply rooted patriarchal *habitus* he breaks all promises and repeats tortures on her. He marries another woman after Tehmina and develops an illegal relation with Tehmina’s sister Adeela. For him “It was a pattern: apologize, be forgiven and begin again with a clean slate” (p. 367).

Nevertheless, Tehmina firmly stood by him in crucial times of his life. This is socialized *habitus* of woman: she has to stand by husband in every situation. For example Khar being an active politician faces jail. In these

times Tehmina plays her role as that of a politician, to release him out of jail. He confesses many times that it was she who brought him out of jail otherwise he would have been executed like Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. But his *habitus* as usual proves to be what Lo and Stacey (2008) call “highly situational and improvisatory” (p. 745). When he comes out of jail he starts same practice of abusing and beating her. Thus, his goal-oriented situational *habitus* does not affect his socialised *habitus* which in words of Gaddis (2013) serves in Khar’s life “as a barrier to upward mobility” (p.03). Therefore, he maintains his gender based violent and dominant *habitus* in any case.

Breaking the Habitus

The third part of the autobiography “Lioness” depicts Tehmina’s resistance to male dominant and conventionally designed *habitus*. She starts to develop her “personal *habitus*” (Papacharissi & Easton, 2013) and stands to come across male-centered thought of the society. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) agents have a certain degree of liberty in their choice of strategies and practices to fight for relative positions (cited in Walther, 2014). Tehmina knows that this social order sets right of choice only for a man who is an absolute ruler, he could practice any form of power and subjugation, but it is not deemed for a woman to resist. When she mentions to leave Khar, he threatens her that if she ever mentions leaving him he will fling acid on her face. Jasam (2001) argues that “no matter how dominant the powerful structures are, resistances do happen... independent revolutions which are not always successful but have a positive effect” (p.55).

Tehmina’s daring decision to go for divorce creates problems for her in the beginning. She knows the consequences “a divorcee in Pakistani society is always a prime target for malicious gossip. Wagging tongues and leering glances” (Durrani, 1995, p. 85). Through her audacious decision she proves that she has the agency to resist the system, the society and her family. Though she faces lots of pressure from Khar but she pledges “It will never work, not for one day” (p.364). This confirms what Rowbotham believes, women have shattered the distorting identities imposed by culture (cited in Zaidi & Qureshi, 2013). Khan (2006) also maintains in her work that women do have an agency despite their vulnerability and poverty.

Moreover, Tehmina also breaks away with her earlier internalised *habitus*. Among her siblings, she was regarded as the most weak and irresponsible but she breaks this structured point of view about her and proved as a responsible, confident and powerful lady. During Khar’s jail days she worked day and night to release him from jail. She met with different officials, generals, politicians, socialist and journalists. She held many confident talks with them. It was something unconventional for a woman in

her society. People said to Khar that had Tehmina not strived when he was in jail he would have been killed. It was her continuous struggle and sacrifice that he was released from jail.

Tehmina alters many expectations and norms which she had practiced earlier. She started to pose question from Khar, she resists against his beatings. Noticing this change in Tehmina he asked her “what have you become?” she replied “I have become you” (Durrani, 1995, p. 361-62). She challenges Khar “I am not your kind of women any more. I am not a victim anymore” (p. 364). Thus, recognizing the structured vicious *habitus* of feudal society, Tehmina started to empower herself. She realizes “nobody can help you unless you help yourself” (p. 156).

She had to pay extremely high price to break the cage of conventions and constraint which for a woman in a feudal society was almost impossible. When she left Khar she was subdued, repressed and thwarted. She was left homeless, destitute and scared. She lost her property, custody of her children and was alienated from society. Despite all this, she remains unyielding then. This transformation relates with the idea of Ozbilgin and Tatli (2005) they believe that bearers transform and reproduce by their conscious and unconscious actions.

After this break up Tehmina feels as if a great burden has lifted from her shoulders. She is no longer Tehmina Khar but Tehmina Durrani, the one who has her own name and identity. She breaks away with her internalised *habitus* which taught her to be silent and patient on every injustice and oppression. She believes “silence condones injustice, breeds subservience and fosters a malignant hypocrisy” (Durrani, 1995, p. 374). Therefore, she became a voice for women. Explaining Pakistani people’s *habitus* she states that people have developed a system to exploit those “who are already exploited” (p. 375). Thus, she breaks the traditional silence by writing an autobiography *My Feudal Lord*, which is a greatest breakthrough to her structured *habitus*.

Findings

The analysis of the novel shows that a Pakistani woman has conventional existence and her *habitus* is brought up according to it. In a feudal structured *habitus* a woman is synonym of obedience, subordination and compliance regardless of her age (even if she is one and half year old like Naseeba). The socialisation for this dominated *habitus* of a woman starts from her early childhood. Man’s *habitus* is also build up in childhood, but unlike to a woman, his individual and social *habitus* is structured as dominant, overpowering and proprietor.

The study also finds out that in the maintenance of such structured *habitus*, individuals' parents, family and society play an important role. At home and outside individuals are treated according to their genders. Man, as dominant one demands absolute submission from all women in his life (be it wife, mother, daughter or sister) and a woman as dominated being is expected to be absolutely subordinate without raising any question.

The study achieves that although *habitus* of individuals is continuously structured into their minds, yet it is broken in certain circumstances and situations i.e. Tehmina breaks away with her structured *habitus* and builds her personal *habitus*. Tehmina's autobiography throws light on the lives of men and women affected by feudal patriarchal society (i.e. Aisha, Sophia, Anees). Hence, believing in voice of women she condemns silence on violence which condones injustice. Thus, depicting the structured *habitus* of aristocratic, socio-political feudal, Mustafa Khar she breaks away the silence of women.

Conclusion

From the analysis of Tehmina Durrani's *My Feudal Lord* in Pierre Bourdieu notion *habitus*, it is concluded that *habitus* of Tehmina and Khar started developing from their very early age. In case of Khar it is even inherited from ancestors. Their *habitus* structured with the passage of time. Certain times they maintain it, while at other times alter it according to needs and situation. An early age adopted dominant *habitus* enables Khar to practice hegemonic power to oppress and humiliate women, which further re/structured according to his needs and demands and become stronger. Throughout the life he humiliates, abuses and oppresses Tehmina. But he eulogizes her when she endeavours to release him from Jail. As soon as he comes out of jail he subdues her. Thus, he maintains his structured *habitus* throughout the novel.

Following close reading method of the text together with Bourdieu's theoretical insights, the study also analyses the change in Tehmina's *habitus* from a conventional silent wife of a feudal to an unconventional and challenging strong woman. She breaks away with her structured *habitus* which taught her to bear all the pains, humiliation and oppression in silence. She was brought up according to prevailing social *habitus* that a woman has no identity of her own. She is known with the name of her father or husband. She has to maintain her marriage on the cost of her life. Altering this social made *habitus* Tehmina builds up her own identity and break up all the relations which tied her in constraints of conventions. She divorces her well

reputed and gigantic political figure husband. She breaks the silence by writing an autobiography to draw attention to the established *habitus* of man.

Tehmina has to be applauded for her courage to expose feudal by sharing experiences of her private marital life. For this, she cast away her personal considerations for revealing the details of her private life in favour of the greater good. By this she proves that a woman can bring change in the structured dominated *habitus* if she has will-power.

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