Evolving Habitus and Gender Identity: A Bourdieusian Analysis of Bina Shah's Nonfiction Narratives

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ABSTRACT: *This research paper unfolds the agency of women developed by and experienced in patriarchal Pakistani society as depicted in Bina Shah's nonfiction narratives. Shah offers a counternarrative to the Euro-American portrayal of Pakistani women by debunking the stereotypical narratives about their suppression and exploitation. Pierre Bourdieu's 'Cultural Field' (1993) and Glynis Breakwell's Identity Process (1986) theories have been used to understand what habitus women manifest in the 'cultural field' and how it evolves in Shah's nonfiction narratives that underscore women's nontraditional 'positions and identity development in the same field. This research also attempts to evaluate the identity threats posed to women when they are deprived of 'symbolic capital' in a patriarchal society. Thematic analysis of Shah's articles published in Dawn and posted on her blog Bina Shah, Feministani will be done to elucidate the identity formation of Pakistani women. This interdisciplinary research which embraces the domains of literature, journalism, sociology, and gender studies will also clarify the significant role of literary writers in re/shaping perceptions of gender identity prevalent in Pakistani society.*

Keywords: Agency, Position, Identity, Cultural Field, Identity Process Theory (IPT), Symbolic capital

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Introduction

The tale of women's experiences in Pakistani society is multifold, replete with the shades of rigid, conservative, liberal, moderate, challenging, and progressive environments. After 9/11, Pakistani Anglophone literature and media represented various aspects of the lives of Pakistani women which resulted in unending debates on the status of Pakistani women. The Orientalist representation of Muslim women and criticism of the patriarchal oppression of Pakistani women through the Western media generated discourses and research on these issues. The miseries often associated with Muslim women in general, and Pakistani women, in particular, include but are not limited to deprivation of education, lack of choice in marriage, violence, and less acceptability or exclusion from certain professional fields, among many others. In this study, Bina Shah's nonfiction narratives will be examined to understand the agency and identity formation of Pakistani women and the 'symbolic capital' they gain in this process (Bourdieu,7). Bourdieu introduced the concept of symbolic capital in contrast to material capital. It refers to respect, entitlements, awards, fame, and honor for which every individual strives in society. Unfortunately, as it has always been, women are objectified by men to gain and strengthen their symbolic capital.

Fiction writers and poets have written nonfiction works in the form of newspaper articles. In contemporary Pakistani literature, Mohsin Hamid published his book *Discontent and its Civilization* of his essays which previously appeared in the *New York Times*. Bina Shah's articles, taken as nonfiction writings in this research, are considered under the overarching title of literary journalism, a blend of literary and journalistic elements. Although Shah's narratives revolve around Pakistani women, she criticizes gender constructs and perceptions in a male dominant society at the

transnational level by referring to the same issues found in other countries as well. She also engages with the agency of Pakistani women depicted and exercised in several ways through literature, media, and social activism by debunking misperceptions of international readers about the former's supposed fundamentalism and subjugation in the Western media. Shah's nonfiction narratives also indicate the power exercised by women in the 'field' of legislation which gave them a new position to redefine gender roles of both men and women. In her article "Nothing is Wrong with Pakistani Feminists", she refers to various bills presented for women's rights such as the 'Honour Killing Bill', the 'Sexual Harassment Bill', the 'Domestic Violence Bill', and the 'Acid Attack Bill' (Shah).

The objectives of the research are to examine how Shah's narratives expose the stereotypical gender roles which define women's cultural habitus in Pakistani society and promote patriarchy. It will also be argued how Shah's nonfiction narratives represent women's position in the 'cultural field' of Pakistan indicating an evolving habitus and its role in identity formation. The present research contributes to the domain of the non-fictional field by exploring the comingling of different institutions in subjugating women in Pakistani society and the counternarrative that Bina Shah builds against the biased propaganda instigated by the Western media. Her narratives suggest an ambivalence of female existence and experience in Pakistani society so that the change in the habitus may be imparted to global readers.

2. Field Theory and Identity Process: Conceptualizing Female in the Cultural Field of Pakistan

This qualitative research will be done through a thematic analysis of Bina Shah's selected articles published in *Dawn* and posted on her blog *Bina Shah Feministani*. Pierre Bourdieu's Field Theory from *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993) and Glynis Breakwell's Identity Process Theory from "Coping with threatened identities" (1986) (henceforth IPT) will be used to provide a theoretical underpinning to the texts examined in this paper. By 'field' Bourdieu suggests an arena in which different agents take positions against each other by making or breaking power relations that exist between them. In the cultural field, he considers habits, norms, and accepted practices related to genders as principles of the cultural field which provide a critical understanding of how patriarchy performs in Pakistani society. Another key term is 'habitus' which signifies the disposition that an individual develops in society due to cultural training, experiences, and absorption of social norms (Bourdieu 52). His concept of habitus will help us understand the personality development and transformation of women in a patriarchal society. Symbolic capital is a modified version of Karl Marx's concept of material capital by Bourdieu, through which agents struggle to gain the nontangible assets associated with the field which determines the trajectory of their identity. He used the term 'symbolic violence' to indicate the indirect suppression against agents which others cannot notice. Symbolic violence against women is manifested in the form of restricted career options, payments, and exclusion from executive posts. It reveals the contrived intersection of patriarchy and professional fields to undermine the position of women. Habitus consists of various features manifesting association with group, profession, nation, and gender, therefore it is pertinent to define the characteristics of habitus formation which formulate identity in the

initial stages. For this purpose, IPT principles i.e. 'continuity', 'self-efficacy', 'self-esteem', and 'distinctiveness' will be studied to show how Pakistani women go through the identity formation process thus ending in habitus formation or change in habitus. Continuity relates to the idea of following practices with continuity which can be belief, tradition, ritual, daily activities, etc. Distinctiveness highlights how an individual or a group is distinct from others such as the distinctiveness of women from men, veiled women from unveiled, and Pakistani women from European women in the present research. Distinctiveness can have both negative and positive impacts on the individual. Self-efficacy relates to the feeling of confidence in oneself. It plays an important role in making decisions. Self-esteem means value and respect associated with oneself and it is a significant symbolic capital. The functioning of identity principles will help to understand the development of an individual's habitus. The next step will be to analyze the 'habitus' in combination with the 'capital', 'field', and 'position' of the agent. IPT helps in defining habitus more precisely in terms of self-efficacy, self-esteem, continuity, and distinctiveness of women in Pakistani society.

To study the relation between the change in the habitus and re/construction of gender identity in the context of sociopolitical happenings in the new millennium, Shah's articles have been selected through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling has been done to exclude the articles which were written about particular works, personalities, or events so that the analysis should be focused on gender roles in the Pakistani context. The selected articles for this research are:

1. No more victims (2019)
2. Women on the verge of writing (2019)

3. Woman as giving tree (2018)
4. The Purdah in our minds (2017)
5. Patriarchy, the World's Most Popular Religion (2016)
6. Here comes the burqa avenger! (2013)
7. Nudity, the Niqab, and the Illusion of Free Choice (2012)

3. Literature Review

A History of Pakistani Literature in English (1991) by Tariq Rehman, and *Hybrid Tapestries* (2017) by Muneeza Shamsie are the only seminal works that place Pakistani nonfiction with other genres of Pakistani literature. Pakistani fiction has remained the focus of literary research since the event of 9/11. Maryam Khalid, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Sunaina Maira produced seminal research on the Oriental representation of Muslim women in the Western media. Similarly, Nahed Mohamed Atef Eltantawy in her PhD thesis explored the media representation of Muslim and Afghan women in the selective articles published in the US newspapers. She suggests that "Many of these images portray Arab and Muslim women for the American audience as an Other: different, sometimes exotically mysterious, sometimes backward and oppressed compared to American women" (1). Tehmeena Yasmeen in her research article explores the struggle of female characters against the established norms of patriarchy in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*. In addition to that, Zia Ahmed, Rehan Muhammad, and Muhammad Saeed Nasir analyze Mohammad Hanif's effort of presenting the struggles of Western and third-world women in *Red Birds*. They evaluate women's experiences of agency and subjection. The quest for the identity of Pakistani-American Muslim women was researched in diasporic literature in Shaila Abdullah*'s Saffron Dreams* by Nur Asiyah. Fariha Chaudary in her doctoral thesis analyzed the struggle of female characters in English and Urdu Pakistani novels by comparing Bapsi Sidhwa, Qaisra Shahraz, and Umera Ahmed. In a similar vein, Nibedita Mukherjee

in *Gendering the Narrative* (2015) gives a diachronic analysis of the gender discourse developed by Indian fiction writers who present women's problems and suggest solutions to the same in the Indo-Pak context.

Sara Prieto García-Cañedo enhanced the significance of the contributions of many Spanish fiction writers in the form of Literary Journalism in "Literary Journalism in Spain: where it came from and Where it is headed". She traces how Spanish fiction writers remain engaged with the encounter of the real world in their nonfiction supplemented with a literary style brought from their experience of fiction writings. Novia Pagone highlights the influence of Spanish women columnists in developing public discourses during twenty-first century.

Sadia Slimani in her master's degree dissertation analyzes the female quest for selfhood in Virginia Woolf's fiction and nonfiction works including her pioneering nonfiction, *A Room of One's Own*. She brings forth that Woolf endorsed the construction of the female identity of British women through the self-destruction of male domination and union of the souls regardless of gender differences which breaks hegemonic barriers and develops the universal consciousness. Similarly, Anne Z. Benenhaley in her PhD thesis discusses fiction and nonfiction discourses of Middle Eastern and Arab American women writers to learn about their ways of rebelling against the religious and ethical roles assigned to the female gender in their respective cultures. They expressed their individuality by challenging these restrictions.

The review of relevant literature indicates that fiction writers have been producing valuable nonfiction works to criticize social wrongs, but researchers focused on their fiction writings.

Sufficient research has not been done on Pakistani nonfiction writings that project lived experiences of Pakistanis to international readers.

4. Stereotyped Gender Roles

The expected cultural capital for men and women is based on discrimination in the Pakistani cultural field. Men are supposed to have and showcase authority, while women are expected to have the cultural capital characterized by obedience and compromise. This, in turn, to a great extent, is associated with the symbolic capital in their possession such as care, respect, modesty, etc. On the other hand, men enjoy symbolic capital of respect due to the obedience of the women in their families. The cultural field of Pakistan reflects less decision-making of women and more righteousness of men. The first theme of 'stereotypes of gender roles will unfold what clichéd position women take in a 'cultural field'. It is further divided into subthemes of 'inequality between men and women', 'woman as a perpetual victim', and 'forms of suffering' to study the formation of the functioning of the cultural field in Pakistan.

Furthermore, 'cultural capital' will be studied by analyzing the complex intersection of different fields in her nonfiction narratives presented through subthemes of 'capitalism', 'religiosity' and, 'illusion of alliance' under the second theme of 'propagation of patriarchy'. Subthemes of 'new position taking of Pakistani women', 'emerging nontraditional traits', and 'developing nontraditional narratives will merge into the third and last theme, i.e., of 'evolving habitus. The matrix of codes leading to subthemes and themes according to the thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) is given below.

Codes	Subthemes	Themes
Female dependence and male vigor Male as superhero Men's entitlement to authority Women's obligations to serve	Inequality between men and women	
The painful experience of women gaining repute Women's acceptance of suffering Women's glory in suffering Illusion of Women's choice	Perpetual victim	Stereotypes of gender roles (Cultural field)
Emotional suffering Physical suffering Suppressed female voice against exploitation	Forms of suffering	

Denial of rights to women		
Female objectification Tropes of praise for women Sellable portrayal of women in media Fetishizing women's pain through media Inequality in professional fields	Patriarchy as a capitalist system	Propagation of patriarchy through other systems (cultural capital)
Labeling women as good or bad Patriarchy as a religion Tropes of Purdah	Religiosity	
Hijacking female struggle	Illusion of alliance	
Women as silent heroes	New position taking of Pakistani women	
Chasing dreams Resisting Making choices Challenging the label of perfection as a	Emerging nontraditional traits of women	

benchmark for women		Evolving Habitus
Representation of women's struggle through Pakistani Media Writer's Repulsive narrative of stereotypes Through examples of successful women Through the promotion of education Positioning children as learners and strugglers against any form of patriarchy Public narratives on burqa as a fighting costume Social media narratives through blogs, Twitter	Developing nontraditional narratives	

Shah analyses the cultural training of men and women in Pakistani society to endorse that women themselves adopt a sacrificial nature thus creating a cultural habitus that may end in their persistent suffering. She refers to Kate Manne's book *The Logic of Misogyny* in her article "Woman as giving tree" to explain the two distinctive power groups emerging in the 'cultural field', emphasizing women's acceptance of the sacrificial role in society. The man holds a powerful position by being entitled to "social positions of leadership, authority, influence, money, other forms of power, social status, prestige, rank, reputation, standing, pride, freedom from shame and lack of public humiliation" (Shah). While the woman projects "affection, adoration, indulgence, simple respect, love, acceptance, nurturing, safety, security, haven, kindness, compassion, moral attention, concern, care, and soothing" (Shah). According to IPT, 'distinctiveness' may generate specific behavior toward a group which develops identity threats (Breakwell 64). The discriminatory behavior of women in Pakistani society is an example of distinctiveness due to gender and hurts women. It harms their self-esteem and places them in a distinctive group of perpetual victims. The ontological transformation of women demands them to become another self for the sake of 'giving' which deprives them of self-efficacy and decision-making. On the other hand, men who occupy an unflinching powerful position remain entitled to certain rights due to the recognition of their social acceptance. This conflict between being and becoming in society always compels women to accommodate, assimilate or evaluate values for defining their identity. Being is the individual self of a woman while becoming is her social self which is crafted by social norms. Women are aware of this rift whenever they make a compromise. By following the 'habitus' of giving disposition, women dehumanize themselves. It

is against the human essence to surrender before others' wishes and expectations without experiencing any negative emotions which are defined as identity threats by IPT.

In this article, Shah amalgamates the narratives from a literary text; the short story "Giving Tree", the life of a Western celebrity and that of an ordinary Pakistani woman to elaborate on the existing polarities based on gender power roles in the eastern and the western societies. She compares "Giving Tree" a sad incident in the life of American actress Jennifer Garner with the day-to-day sufferings of many women from the lower class of Pakistani society. Garner had to take her estranged drunk husband to rehab. In Pakistani society, many poor women work extra hours to earn a livelihood because their addicted husbands do not offer any helping hand to them. The actress and the poor house help belong to two different social strata but represent an apt example of the 'giving' nature for which they are often exploited. The giving tree in the short story always keeps giving its fruits, branches, and trunk to the boy he loves. In the end, it is left broken, but it still feels happy when it offers its leftover stump to the boy, who has grown old now, for sitting quietly on it. Shah has brought readers' attention to the transnational issue of women's objectification which forces women to have a giving habitus like a giving tree by desensitizing themselves and disclaiming humane treatment. Her communication with an American novelist, Carolyn Cohagen revealed the tales of women's exploitation in the West. Cohagen surprised Shah by talking about non-Muslim communities such as Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, and fundamental Christian communities, namely evangelical and Mormon in the USA that are known for rigidity towards women through polygamy, forced marriages, and restricted rights. By sharing Cohagen's remarks, Shah develops a

counternarrative to the Western criticism of the suppression of
Pakistani women. Pakistan is known for having rigidity against
women, but Shah indicates that other communities with the same
attitude do not trigger the same criticism in the Western media. Her
article counter-narrates the over-generalization of Pakistani society
in the West. Women's acceptance of suffering, their glory in
suffering, and the illusion of their choice that they do all this
willingly make them perpetual victims. They cannot carry on the
continuity of their identity as an individual – the continuity of those
actions which support their worth, choice, and existence. Women
without any self-efficacy and self-esteem strengthen the cultural
patterns of patriarchal suppression.

5. Propagation of patriarchy through other systems (Cultural capital)

Shah's narratives provide an insight into the intersection of
various systems for the propagation of patriarchy which further
generates cultural capital of male domination. TV is a very strong
medium and Pakistani dramas are watched and liked in various
countries. They show a microcosm of society. Shah objects to this
distorted picture portrayed in media and she condemns how
Pakistani audience is "glued" to "unimaginative, frustrating,
stereotypical" media representation of women (Shah). Her article
"no more victims" begins with a compelling narrative in a drama of
a disappointed, frustrated wife whose husband ditched her. She
admits that she could have never stopped him from the second
marriage. Her dialogue with her mother presented her as a
"perpetual victim" in the 'cultural field' of stereotypical norms
(Shah). She has learned to feel glorified in accepting sufferings, as
presented as "resplendent in her martyrdom" (Shah). She lacks self-
efficacy, and self-esteem and only pleases other agents in the
cultural field including her parents. Her distinctiveness as a

perpetual victim is also accepted by other women in society. Besides criticizing explicit media representations, Shah reveals the implicit efforts done by political powerful agents in the field of power to propagate patriarchy.

Bina Shah alludes to foreign aid to support women in a few countries where interference by an external power needed legitimization. Such interferences first define the situation to be critical by highlighting women's suppression and then take political decisions in the name of liberating women from suppression. Her narrative reveals that in the cultural field of a patriarchal country, sometimes men's domination is challenged by an external political agent which is a replica of the initial male domination. In "Patriarchy, the World's most popular religion" (2016), Shah refers to "allies" and calls them "false friends" for using the façade of women's struggle to conceal their political strategy: "They lionize certain spokespeople while demonizing others" (Shah). Moreover, she unfolds the contrived strategy of politics in which support for Muslim women is dexterously implanted. Considering her debate, it can be concluded that internal masculine and external power groups are patriarchal in their approach. Both powerful agents deprive women of their self-efficacy and inculcate a habitus of subjugation to strengthen their power positions. Therefore, Shah defines patriarchy as a religion,

> … patriarchy is a powerful religion. Powerful because it can subsume so many of our established religions, whether Abrahamic or polytheistic, nontheistic and subvert the roles of women to its agenda, which is to establish a world order in which women are a type of slave class in servitude to men. (Shah)

She suggests that patriarchy functions like capitalism; both need subaltern, deprived, inferior, and marginalized people to substantiate the powerful systematic structure. Men and capitalists hold control over resources and means of production. Women are projected as commodities in media that highlight their body traits and fetishize their pain. Moreover, Shah's narratives decipher that women become subject to power politics and offer support to the vested interest of others unknowingly, thus generating symbolic capital for others. Therefore, she suggests that women and only women should be heard for knowing about their problems and their demands. Women are expected to perform in a socially approved manner, and simultaneously they are not expected to demand any acknowledgment for the same.

Shah has discussed the current sensitive issue of the veil which remains a focus of the Western media. She has pointed out that veiled Muslim women in Pakistan differentiate themselves from unveiled Muslim women based on modesty and this is how the culture of observing purdah develops 'distinctiveness' within women and eventually invigorates patriarchy (Breakwell). Modesty is a form of symbolic capital which women are supposed to attain for the sake of family. Veiled women autonomize themselves in the cultural field to assess other women, thus controlling habitus and cultural capital of modesty for women in the cultural field. Shah writes about the protests in Egypt in her article, "Nudity, the niqab, and the Illusion of free choice" against an Egyptian young blogger who posted her nude picture as a resistance against conservative patriarchal forces. Shah argues that women have always been objectified both in times of peace and war. Bodies of women are tortured, mutilated, insulted, and destroyed as if they were only public property, and "instead of believing that women have moral agency, we are seen as morally inferior in every way to men" (Shah). Her narrative exemplifies Egyptian bloggers to emphasize

that women's identity principles do not function in a society where they are objectified and, they may resist to gain liberty from physical modes of suppression such as the imposition of a veil. In short, women are convinced through moral appeal that hijab will please God and win them the label of a good Muslim. She reminds the reader of the fact that, in Pakistan, prostitutes also use the veil for hiding their identity. How can the same garment be the symbol of modesty and contrivance at the same time in the same context? She rejects the veil as a benchmark to judge modesty because it defines the dominant position of masculine narrative through religiosity. Therefore, patriarchy does not represent only male dominance, rather it is a mindset against the agency of women and is also being supported by women in society. This distinctiveness between veiled and unveiled women is an obstacle to achieving self-esteem and self-efficacy for those who do not veil.

6. Evolving Habitus of Pakistani women

Shah's articles celebrate the intellectual, academic, and economic growth of women to voice the changing habitus of Pakistani women in the new millennium of globalization. She uses the trope of purdah which is not of physical appearance but the one that exists in our minds. By doing so, she indicates the contrivance of power which women have to resist for making their place. Set patterns of dos and don'ts reflect the purdah which is used for manipulation to impede the growth of women in different fields of life. She has used purdah as a metaphor of oblivion or manipulation which ranges from daily conversation to institutionalization. Purdah, in her narrative, does not carry religious connotations, rather it symbolizes all modes of men's camouflage to hide their insecurities apprehending women's self-efficacy. It is no more a medium of covering the face, rather it manifests the fabricated

boundaries (fields) designed for women. It implies that women can be forced to stop pursuing education, stabilize themselves by earning, compete for higher posts, demand equal wages, etc.

In Pakistan, women are now advocating their rights to education, job opportunities, political representation, etc. which indicates that they have become aware of 'symbolic violence' done to them in the past. The collaborative change in the economic, political, academic, professional, intellectual, legal, cultural, literary, and aesthetic fields will bring social change. All these fields are interlinked and resistance in them will be a collaborative phenomenon for women to develop their identity as an individual in society. IPT suggests that social happenings affect agents' thinking and actions, therefore discrimination against women has become the reason for their awakening. They cannot continue their beliefs and practices and express their opinions and demand change when they are dissatisfied with identity principles in the accepted social setup. Shah, in her article "Women on the Verge of Writing" published in *Dawn,* talks about the multifaceted challenges women face as writers which shows that they are taking positions in literary and intellectual fields against hostilities from other agents. Their habitus becomes vulnerable when they enter the intellectual 'field' and takes the position of a writer. Shah uses the metaphor of "embryo" to convey the journey of evolving habitus leading to identity formation. She has also shared her disgust for calling a woman "woman writer", "female doctor", or "lady policeman" which puts gender first (Shah). To embrace the demands of time, she suggests a break from the old habitus and the need for a new one that can facilitate women in their new position within the cultural field: "A writer of any gender has to be an outsider of some sort, refuse to accept what society says, on so many levels" (Shah). She mentions the names of women economists, academicians, writers, intellectuals, religious scholars, and activists and suggests

including them in the executive decision-making discourses and discussion panels because reason and intellect should not be gender-biased traits.

Shah introduces the evolving habitus of Pakistani women by showcasing their efforts made in various fields such as economics, academia, journalism, feminist activism, law, and media. In contrast to stereotypical drama representation, she appreciates a few Pakistani dramas which support women's struggle against oppression regardless of the pressing commercial needs of the field. She also hints at the unrecognized position of "silent heroes" among Pakistani women in various fields of education, health, management, and social activism (Shah).

In the age of media discourse on the veil, Bina Shah finds the animated series, *Burqa Avengers*, a challenging trendsetter. She suggests that the cartoon series has censured the habitus of Pakistani women in the cultural field. This media effort can educate young children about the identity of a woman as an active agent in society because it promotes the image of an educated, self-reliant woman who exercises her self-efficacy to change the practices of the field. That is why in her article "Here Comes the Burqa Avengers!", Shah indicates that the fighting burqa avenger demystifies children's image of men as superheroes. It was telecast on a private channel and the story is of a superwoman in the disguise of an ordinary schoolteacher in a village in Pakistan. The burqa-clad girl, Jiya, is an inspiring schoolteacher who has the potential to fight when the villain and his allies want to close the school. She shows resistance and fights when she is subjected to aggression. All identity principles such as continuity, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and distinctiveness in her case were lost and caused threats to her identity. She fights with the villains as a coping

strategy. Her continuity of career pursuit and trust in herself was shaken by believing that women being weak cannot fight with men. Moreover, the burqa avenger fights by throwing books and pens at enemies which implies support for female education. Shah raises questions about the empowerment of a burqa-clad Muslim woman in her article, "Here comes the burqa avenger!" by indicating the confusion of the audience either to consider power due to the burqa or power regardless of the burqa. She has appreciated the media's role in showing an ordinary girl turned into a superhero. Since the cartoon series is meant for children when they see a superwoman, their acceptance of women in society changes. The cartoon series shocks the habitus that is transferred from generation to generation since the inception of Pakistani society. When Jiya becomes a superhero, she wears a traditional costume, a burqa which is a symbol of convention, restriction, suppression, rigidity, and lack of choice. Shah has complimented the effort of the director Haroon at a time when "Malala Yousafzai and education activists … are trying to prove that Pakistan is a more fertile ground for education than for terrorism" (Shah). The series has provoked viewers to think that a burqa-clad woman can be ahead of men in the cultural field through her unwavering potential. Moreover, the veil does not hinder the progress of a woman.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of Bina Shah's articles reveals the complexity of women's struggle in positioning themselves against different hostile forces in the 'cultural field' dominated by patriarchy within Pakistan. Pakistani Anglophone nonfiction narratives are less acknowledged as compared to literary fiction for their endeavors of presenting real stories and experiences of Pakistani people, especially to global readers. The current research attempts to investigate patriarchy as a system that grows in close alliance with

other systems to suppress the identity formation of women. Conventional practices of displaying men's superiority by denying decision-making to women suppress them as individuals and resultantly they experience deprivation of any of the identity principles, i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy, and continuity of their belief in themselves as an existing individual. A woman's distinctiveness from others based on gender and among other women based on religious and social standards of goodness makes her more vulnerable to different forms of social atrocities. Moreover, patriarchal domination is amplified in society by religious exploitation of women and media representation of them as a commodity. Woman appears to be a servant, sufferer, and fallible creature and the display of her sufferings on media attracts patriarchal consumers, both men and women. Therefore, patriarchy grows as a capitalist system that sustains the continuous consumption of the inferior and the less powerful. Bourdieu believes that the dynamics of a field re/shaped due to power roles. It is argued that women's resistance in different forms manifests their agency and reformation of habitus against the powerful positions occupied by pro-patriarchal elements. It has also been elaborated in this research that Shah's narratives elucidate nontraditional traits of Pakistani women for global readers by rejecting labels of "good" woman, "bad" woman, or the "perfect" woman in the context of cultural norms and religiosity (Shah). Her nonfiction reveals the emergence of a Pakistani woman who is "doing anything" to "chase a dream" (Shah). It not only shares stories of women's sufferings but also uncovers the noticeable struggles done by female intellectuals, women activists, and media in Pakistani society. This change in women's habitus will give them a new powerful position owing to their acquired symbolic capital of self-efficacy and self-esteem which symbolize their identity

formation. In Shah's narratives, if a Pakistani woman is a victim, then she is also a fighter; if she is a caregiver then she is also an organizer; if she loves her family then she loves her intellect as well. Bina Shah's narratives encapsulate the struggles of women as rape victims, writers, religious scholars, feminist activists, economists, businesswomen, and homemakers.

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