

SYMBOLIC POWER AND MALE SUPREMACY: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF TARIQ ALI “THE STONE WOMAN”

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the ideology behind Tariq Ali’s novel *The Stone Woman* through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), utilising Pierre Bourdieu’s (1991) theory of symbolic power. The analysis focuses on maintaining and legitimising male supremacy within familial and societal institutions. Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power explains how cultural norms and practices become internalised, particularly through the institutions of marriage, family, customs, and traditions. The novel reveals how male dominance is not merely imposed through force or explicit control. Still, it is perpetuated symbolically, as male authority is naturalised and accepted as a given within the social structure. The study also examines Bourdieu’s ideas of habitus and social capital, demonstrating how male family members use their social positioning and cultural capital to exert dominance, reinforcing their superior status. This analysis shows how male supremacy becomes embedded within everyday practices, making it appear as a natural and unchallengeable part of society. By the end of the novel, it is evident that this dominance is not only institutionalized but also reinforced through subtle, symbolic means, ensuring its continuity across generations. This paper concludes that *The Stone Woman* illustrates how symbolic power functions to reproduce male dominance in ways that are both overt and covert, making it a critical reflection of gendered power dynamics in society.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Male Supremacy, Pierre Bourdieu, Symbolic Power.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, the intersection of symbolic power and masculinity is explored in depth because it is important for illuminating how social order in all of its gendered forms is achieved and sustained. Feminist scholars examine this issue with the recourse to the work of Bourdieu, most prominently Bourdieu’s sociological approach to understanding the internalization of cultural norms and practices in his (1991) theory of symbolic power. It is in this context that Bourdieu has also focused on the concept of symbolic power where he argues that unlike physical coercion, it is soft and embedded within the mundane interactions in day-to-day life making it one of the most powerful types of oppression. This paper seeks to use

Bourdieu’s apparatus of analysis on Tariq Ali’s novel *The Stone Woman* and show how male dominance is achieved not only through direct action but also symbolically.

“Male power in a patriarchal context can be normalized and legitimized through marriage, family, and traditions among others (Walby 1989). Marital conflicts if unresolved impacts quality of life (Ali et al., 2024). These structures operate as ISAs (Althusser, 2006) that propagate male domination. While healing coercive power also referred to by Althusser as RSAs has a part to play, endurance in male supremacy is majorly found in the indefinable ways in which the supremacy is not only realized but embedded culturally in a society

(Althusser, 2006). In *The Stone Woman*, Ali tells a story that interrogates these structures of power, and how male power is symbolically transmitted through the family system and across generations. In analyzing such, the concepts of habitus and social capital by Bourdieu (2020) are also very vital. Habitus means the way of living, the marked ways of doing and perceiving things that result from the effects of the social sphere of an individual, while social capital means the connections and associations through which a person gains societal benefits. Within this patriarchal context, men within the family use their cultural and social capital to enforce their position (Bourdieu 2020). A more thorough and concrete microscopic view of this practice is given by Connell's (2005) theory of hegemonic masculinity which is rather a complimentary approach as it shows how dominant masculinities are established and maintained through institutional practices." Thanks to the conceptualization assisted by Norman Fairclough (2013), consecutive critical discourse analysis techniques are effective in analyzing issues such as the ways language and discourse are used to reinforce and legitimize an unacceptable imbalance in gender division. In this regard, the author focuses on *The Stone Woman* in CDA's fashion to identify the sophisticated level of symbolic discursive strategies contributing to male dominance. It shall be demonstrated that male power is not only physically coercive but one sustained by cultural artefact and practices which are culturally embedded augmentation of male power.

Therefore, the present research aims to investigate the role of symbolic power in the legitimization and further entrenchment of male dominance in the story of *The Stone Woman* in terms of gender, power relations and discourse. Writing about the hidden and open forms of male domination in the novel, this paper aims to clarify the mechanisms of literature and the social persistence of masculine order.

Research Questions

- I. How does Tariq Ali's *The Stone Woman* utilize symbolic power to naturalize and legitimize male supremacy within familial and societal institutions?
- II. In what ways do Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and social capital manifest in *The Stone Woman*,

reinforcing male dominance and ensuring its continuity across generations?

Literature Review

By analyzing literary works through CDA, it becomes possible to focus on new aspects regarding the power relations, ideologies, and social and political discourses in them. In the case of Tariq Ali's *The Stone Woman*, many scholars have resorted to CDA to investigate how the novel appropriates the themes of patriarchy, dominance, and cultural oppression. The current literature review aims at integrating and assessing available studies on CDA, Feminism and symbolic power as theorists of Ali within a wider political framework. Amir and Mehmood (2018) performed a CDA analysis on a literary work: *The Stone Woman*, in which they described how Ali harnesses discourse to express the relationship between the power structures in Ottoman society. Their study shows how patriarchal dominance is discursively reproduced in the form of domestic and societal institutions, in line with Bourdieu's (1991) theory on the effectiveness of domination. This research helps to establish the idea that the use of linguistic and cultural conventions also has power relations in the novel under analysis. In the same vein, Amir, Ali, and Qadri (2020) conducted an FCDA analysis on *The Stone Woman* to study how gender is represented in the novel. The study is concerned with male domination over women and its counter structure, tracing the process of the social degradation of women represented symbolically by men. This argument is useful in looking at the institutionalization of male domination as well as the packaging of male supremacy in the mind of the society as advanced by Walby (1989) and Connell (2005).

In terms of how and why cultural and social phenomena are accepted and how power relations become organized to normalize male dominance, Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power (1991) is specifically useful. For *Stone Woman*, which features Bourdieu's notion of habitus, Ahmed's understanding of social capital (Bourdieu, 2020) explains the social 'strategies' utilized by male characters to maintain their power. Similarly, in his doctoral thesis, Azeez (2024) looks at sexism and ethnic discrimination in some English novels which were the other topics Azeez studied. Azeez's effort exemplifies also how cultural, rather than

just political, oppression reinforces the feminization of certain social practices, which conform to the paradigmatic structure of symbolic power to which Azeez's work relates.

Iqbal et al. (2022) analyze the details of the Ottoman Empire and the socio-political environment, which is the background of the story of *The Stone Woman*. They also provide an understanding of the foreign policies of the Ottoman males from the analysis of the fall of the Ottoman to the present feelings of gender, power, and control bias, which Ali disparages in his book. The historical background that Iqbal and other authors provide, helps show how male dominance is exerted by both political and cultural means, further featuring the dominance of males within institutions.

Tariq Ali's interaction with, particularly feminist theories as in *The Stone Woman*, has raised questions among academics. *The Stone Woman's* (2014) *Islam Quintet*, provided by Ali, depicts the convergence of imperialism, religion and patriarchy in its several forms. Tariq Ali (2003) also engages himself in this criticism, in his book, *The Clash of Fundamentalism: Whither Islam?*, where he illustrates 'the marriage of patriarchy and modernity' as exemplified in several discourses, including colonial and Islamic ones. These works offer a valuable context for the analysis of the feminist aspects of Ali's novels, especially about the images of women and their struggle against male domination.

Ilyas and Afzal (2021) examined the narrative structure in which women are situated in immigrant families in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* to engage the dynamic of gender identity construction and negotiation. How family setups can sustain but also subvert social constructs is insightful in *The Stone Woman*, which centralizes the family as a fortress of male dominance. In his paper, Ali (2020), including *The Protocols of the Elders of Sodom*, offers approaches to the discourse of gender-political power and how it is upheld in other forms, which also contributes towards the understanding of this issue of symbolic power and male dominance.

Ali's examination of the relationship of imperialism with the concept of patriarchy is given through the book *Bush in Babylon, Iraq's Recolonization*, of 2004. This applies well to Ali's concern about the Central Powers and how they

strengthen inner powers, although centred on a different context, that of the socio-political milieu of *The Stone Woman*. Certain issues where Ali's support and opposition of imperialism and patriarchy were influenced come from Barsamian (2004) in *Louder than Bombs* – a collection of interviews with Ali. These ideas provide the background that fills in the logic behind the political aspect of *The Stone Woman*. There are also flags plus imperialism which Yousef Anna points out in his 2017 work which deals with historical narratives, for example, those of the crusade, in helping explain the narrative of political power relations in modern times. Yousef's presenter Wahid's study places the concentration on the historical political landscape in which there is racism and class-based forms which Ali depicts and is experienced in *The Stone Woman*; elements Ari critiqued on Ottoman civilization.

The literature reviewed provides several examples of how CDA, feminist theory and the concept of symbolic power as developed by Bourdieu have been used to understand the gendered hierarchies in *The Stone Woman*. Past studies emphasize the depiction of men and masculine values within the novel as being privileged and protected by social systems as well as through actions. This review accentuates the necessity of examining why and how symbolic power should be addressed in the context of the novel, thus enhancing the analysis of the issues of gender relations and their politics in literature.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design and has used CDA to a discourse on male supremacy as presented in *The Stone Woman*. This method is effective in seeking to expose the subordination that exists within the texts, more so issues that concern social order and ideology (Fairclough, 2013). Attention is paid to how gendered power relations are overtly spelt out and when they are discretely performed through greater images in the story of the novel. The main source of data for this particular research is *The Stone Woman* focusing on its dominant themes and particular episodes that expose the power relation between the genders. These are comprised of the relationships between female and male individuals; as well as various structural arrangements in the society which support men's domination of others.

Introduction The study employed The Stone Woman through close reading as primary text to draw data. Primary data for this paper came from The Stone Woman, particularly through entailed key portions within it that closely relate to stated objectives. They are either dialogues or narrative accounts, which appear in the text to construe the theme of masculinity and justification of male power in the text. The choice of data is purposive and such interaction of data is on genders in their power relations and on symbolism related to family, culture, institutions of marriage and cultures involving people. The process of undertaking sampling depends on two major issues, symbolic power and male domination as seen from the literature reviews done. Pivotal in this study, CDA tools that are post-structural as advanced by Fairclough's 2013 framework are applied in an attempt to extract discursive patterns that help in diminishing masculinism. Focus was directed on linguistic aspects in a few sections of the text beginning with The Stone Woman highlighting how those in power and their rule are masked in positive language and perfect justification. In this culture, gender was seen as representing the male, dominators, and therefore collection aimed at understanding why males are dominant in society. These strategies may include regrettable language that disparages social masculinity.

The scope of Bourdieu's (1991) conceptualization of symbolic power is extended to the examination of the processes character-level culture is enacted, mainly via, marriage and family.

Theoretical Framework

Bourdieu's (1991) analysis of the phenomenon of symbolic power serves as the reference framework of this research. It is the capacity to create meaning and those through representation and other forms of circumspection. To achieve the venerable aim of this paper, Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and social capital are used to explore the ways male domination and its internalization are furthered within the society portrayed in the iron heels of the Ottoman Empire. Habitus is understood as the organized structures which serve by managing the practices of the group members including how male dominance is sustained (Bourdieu, 2020). As Connell (2005) has mentioned the Theory of hegemonic masculinity, which is a powerful masculine trait, the study also utilizes feminist approaches to expose power and gender relations, to understand the reasons behind maleness dominance in family settings and social demands.

Data Analysis

The research argues that through the employment of Language and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) blended with the concept of symbolic power by Pierre Bourdieu male superiority is maintained in language, cultural practices and social institutions in a novel by Tariq Ali 'The Stone Woman'. It depends on the explicit and implicit inner images of male authority powered within the novel, especially the naturalization of male authority as a familial and societal prerogative.

Table 1: The Symbolic Power and Male Supremacy in The Stone Woman

Themes	Analysis Based on Bourdieu's Theory	Supporting Quotes from The Stone Woman
Symbolic Power and Language	Male characters assert dominance through language, positioning themselves as natural leaders. This reflects Bourdieu's theory that symbolic power operates subtly through accepted social norms.	"It is not for you to decide what is best for this family. That responsibility rests on my shoulders, as it always has, and always will" (Ali, 2014, p. 42).

Habitus and Social Capital	Male characters embody their social roles, using inherited wealth and status to maintain dominance. Their authority is internalized, making male supremacy appear natural and unchallenged.	"We were born into this, molded by it. Our position, our wealth, gives us control over these lands and these people. It's just the way things are" (Ali, 2014, p. 110).
Marriage and Family as Institutions of Male Supremacy	Marriage is shown as an institution that upholds male control, particularly over women's choices. Women's compliance with these norms reflects how habitus reinforces male dominance.	"Marriage is not for love but for preserving family honor. What choice do I have? My father and brothers have already decided for me" (Ali, 2014, p. 78).
Generational Continuity of Male Supremacy	Male supremacy is passed down through generations, with sons inheriting both social capital and the duty to maintain the patriarchal hierarchy.	"One day, all of this will be yours, and you must ensure that it remains as it is—strong, unchallenged, and always in control" (Ali, 2014, p. 152).

Symbolic Power and Linguistic Discourse

Employing CDA as the framework devised by Fairclough (2013), the analysis begins by focusing on the textual strategies of *The Stone Woman* which serve to establish male power. Male characters in the novel are most of the time disordering dominating images. For example, men usually occupy the power roles in a male-female conversation while the female gender takes a minor role. These language patterns are correlated with the framework of Bourdieu's (1991) concept of 'social power', in which language serves purposes of social control. Masculine power is disguised in the form of 'it is just the way things are,' and cannot be argued with, which is indicative of how this form of power operates to conceal men's exploitation of women without exerting any physical effort.

For instance, the patriarch of the family in one of the examples commands languages and contradicts emphatic language to other women's family members as he is the uncontested head of the family. These language choices gently support the notion that male dominance within the hierarchy of social organization is essential. As Bourdieu (1991) observes, symbolic domination operates not through external violence but through the imposition of a social order which individuals internalize and come to believe.

Habitus and Social Capital

To comprehend the picture of male dominance in the novel, one cannot overlook the notion of habitus brought about by Bourdieu. The habitus consists of the behavioural patterns, behaviours and mindset developed by the demographic group as a result of their social experiences, habits and cultures within societies. In *The Stone Woman*, men also showcase their superiority in social settings without necessarily engaging in extreme features. The male characters in the story, courtesy of their upbringing and social capital, quickly secure and fit into leadership roles with no effort whatsoever. This demonstrates how branding and symbolic domination work in everyday life and how people self subtly and non-militarist accept the occupations assigned to them unquestioningly.

For instance, male family members in *The Stone Woman* hold the right to govern and control the household because it is within the family enabling power structures that they draw upon their social capital of money, education, and status. Their dominance is embraced by both male and female characters of the story which emphasizes Bourdieu (2020) that social structures are reinforced from within through people's acceptance of the order of things as opposed to the imposition of rule. The women in the novel, on the other hand, do not have much social capital and therefore cannot afford to challenge the status quo.

The Structure of Marriage and Family as a Forum of Patriarchy

The current study investigates the places of marital and family institutions as a form of symbolic power. Thus, in the book *The Stone Woman*, marriage is described as an institution that upholds the patriarchal order. Men’s control over marriage – including who women must marry and the circumstances under which they marry – is an example of how symbolic power is deployed in this social institution. Marriage acts as a medium through which women’s independence is limited and as a result, oppression in the domestic and general society is enhanced.

In the case of marriage, it is the rules of the game rather than the physical bodies of individuals that are used to maintain control. The females in the book accept many such expectations not because of external pressures but because those have been ingrained into their practices. This correlates well with Bourdieu when he argues that the most effective form of this sort of power is one that does not manifest itself because its function is to dictate people’s actions and ideas in a way that they do not fully understand.

Social Structures and Male Chauvinism without an End

The persistence of male supremacy across generations is a further important feature of *The Stone Woman*, family members conferring their influence and social status upon their sons. This generational transfer of authority poses new

evidence for Bourdieu’s theory which posits that symbolic power becomes institutionalized through forms of inheritance, education, and marriage among other practices. Male characters channel their social capital, which is in the form of wealth, status and education, to maintain their dominance and subvert any possible substitutes to existing power relations.

It intuitively follows from the analysis that male superiority is not merely wielded through concrete action but also, through implicit bicultural protocols that emanate from daily organizational structures. These are further so assimilated by the characters to the extent that they are considered normal and not subject to challenge thus strengthening the order of the symbolic power ‘structures.’

In the case of *The Stone Woman* analysis, the respondent handles Research Question 1, indicating how impotent masculine pride institutionalizes male dominance by a combination of language, social power capital and institutions like marriage and family. Incorporating Bourdieu’s theory on symbolic power, the research shows that fictional men’s violence in the novel is maintained by direct and overt ways as well as more indirect and symbolic means that camouflage it as natural within the society. This analysis brings out the notion of symbolic power and how it exists in texts, with the possibility of extending the relationship to power and gender in society.

Table 2: Institutionalization of Male Supremacy in The Stone Woman

Key Theme	Findings	Supporting Quote from the Novel
Marriage as a Tool for Male Supremacy	Marriage is depicted as a mechanism for male control, where women lack autonomy and are bound by decisions made by male family members.	“Marriage is not for love but for preserving family honor... My father and brothers have already made the decision for me” (Ali, 2014, p. 78).
Family as a Reinforcer of Male Authority	Family decisions and roles reflect unchallenged male dominance, where patriarchs control the future and assert their authority over women and younger family members.	"It is not for you to decide what is best for this family. That responsibility rests on my shoulders, as it always has, and always will" (Ali, 2014, p. 42).
Societal Customs and Traditions	Social customs and traditions reinforce gender hierarchies by	“We were born into this, molded by it. Our position, our wealth,

	normalizing male dominance, making it appear as an inherent and unchangeable aspect of society.	gives us control over these lands and these people” (Ali, 2014, p. 110).
Generational Transfer of Power	Male supremacy is transferred across generations, with male heirs expected to maintain their authority and control over family and society.	"One day, all of this will be yours, and you must ensure that it remains as it is—strong, unchallenged, and always in control" (Ali, 2014, p. 152).

The table analyzes Tariq Ali’s *The Stone Woman* in terms of how it represents marriage, family and societal norms as institutions of oppression against women. With the framework of CDA and Bourdieu’s theory of power, this analysis further points out that these institutions where power is exercised are used by man to perpetuate himself at the top and gain acceptance for the subjugation of women as normal.

Marriage as a Tool for Male Supremacy

Notably, marriage is a significant mechanism of male subjugation in *The Stone Woman*. The story indicates that marriage is a contract rather than an individual choice for love – the contract is meant for the protection of men’s power over women. Most women in the novel have arranged marriages, in which the female is only a pawn, for such choices are made by her men.

One quote from the novel demonstrates this control “Marriage is not for love but for preserving family honor... My father and brothers have already made the decision for me” (Ali, 2014, p. 78). This line captures how marriage serves a social significance, and women remain powerless. They participate in marriage, but the marriage is dictated by male characters and this is how much gender roles are inscribed in a family. This restriction on women’s choices constitutes what Bourdieu (1991) explains in terms of symbolic power where institutions such as marriage are used to perpetuate male power and make it seem normal and unavoidable.

The Function of Family in the Internalization of Male Norms

In *The Stone Woman*, the family is also another institution portrayed in the book as powerful in the oppression of women since there is male superiority. Male members of the family have power over women and little men glorify the

women as they make choices for the family’s social and economic development. Family decisions are constructed in a way that sociocultural acceptance of male dominance is already part of the picture and only a few voices can be heard. A quote reflecting the male dominance in the family is as follows:

"It is not for you to decide what is best for this family. That responsibility rests on my shoulders, as it always has, and always will" (Ali, 2014, p. 42). This statement illustrates how domestic male dominance is largely unquestioned and is explanatory of how gender power relations are perpetuated through symbolic power. By stressing that ‘responsibility rests on my shoulders,’ the father epitomizes how male authority is accepted as one of the important facets of family life. The perpetuity of such political power is pronounced by the expression ‘always has, and always will’ which means male domination will not cease across generations.

Customs and Traditions as Reinforcers of Male Supremacy

Apart from marriage and family, *The Stone Woman* depicts the role of customs and traditions in reinforcing men’s rule. Such practices, which are mostly hereditary, help to systematize the gender order by promoting the ideal feminine ideology. The women in the novel have standards they are expected to live up to that involve being submissive, while the men are portrayed as the obvious leaders of any establishment.

An instance of how customs are used to sustain male dominance is displayed in the following excerpt “We were born into this, molded by it. Our position, our wealth, gives us control over these lands and these people” (Ali, 2014, p. 110).

This illustrates the socialization of such approximations among many cultures and

bordering people- namely men rule. How the male archetype asserts that ‘this is how we were born’ shows a core idea of customs that are hardly recognized yet prolong the patriarchal system. This way, even if the recognition of male dependence is easily achieved, acceptance is quite another. Both men and women internalize these roles thus fostering male dominance.

The Intergenerational Continuity of Male Supremacism

The perpetuation of male dominance also facilitates horizontal power relations more so the ‘passing on’ of power from one generation to the next. Sons in the family not only learn how to rule but they are made to understand the importance of this rule and even prepare the way for a delegate to the coming generation. This ensures that male dominance is not a temporary policy in the marital home, but a state of affairs which cuts across the home and society at large.

"One day, all of this will be yours, and you must ensure that it remains as it is—strong, unchallenged, and always in control" (Ali, 2014, p. 152). In this case, a father teaches a son to uphold male superiority. The phrase, “ensure that it remains as it is,” epitomizes the position that male rule deserves attention that is fundamental to the extent of historical customs. This is central to the theory of sociology by Bourdieu (1977), where he explores that over time- new power structures may still emerge because of both material and social reproduction mechanisms in the family system.

The evaluation of *The Stone Woman* reveals the results in how marriage, family and society portray institutions that help to institutionalise patriarchy. These structures are controlled both directly as well as symbolically through the cultivation of patriarchy into the minds of the succeeding generation. The institution of marriage is presented as a tool for the maintenance of male dominance while any decision-making within a family is considered the absolute right of the patriarch. Contrary to orientation, customs and other practices in social hierarchy are further propagated by bath cultures because they assign roles that subjugate women. This system of passing down masculine supremacy from generation to generation is also what makes it difficult especially for women to fight these structures. Similar confirmations of the previous findings alongside

these new ones contribute further to understanding the formation and emergence of power relations among the genders more systematically through the symbols and structures.

Discussions and Findings

The findings of this research insight into how *The Stone Woman* written by Tariq Ali embodies the role of symbolic power in perpetuating patriarchy which is consistent with Pierre Bourdieu’s theory. As the novel contends, male superiority is not only militarized as an external emanation but it is also embedded in social institutions such as the family and the institution of marriage, which cuts across ages. These findings reinforce existing scholarship on the novel by shedding light on the less obvious ways in which symbolic power, in the form of language, culture and institutional practices, is exercised.

The language in *The Stone Woman*, as the findings indicate, is an effective means of perpetuating male dominance. The patriarchal father figure is shown as voiceful in, “It is not for you to decide what is best for this family” (Ali, 2014, p. 42) which also agrees with Bourdieu’s concept of ‘language as authority. Patronage as an institution in the novel is constructed through the use of language, in ways that legitimise the subordinate role of women as part of the status quo. This is consistent with the findings of Amir and Mehmood (2018), who contend that language in Ali’s works is frequently used in ways that reinforce power structures, for instance, patriarchy through subtler means. In *The Stone Woman*, the male characters’ authoritative language shows the workings of symbolic power. This encroaches on privacy, which normalizes oppression making women subordinate.

The examination brings to light the use of habitus, which is the egocentric and embodied stereotypical practices and mentalities in the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity. In *The Stone Woman*, male characters do not only inherit property but also the position to dominate other people and women in particular. “Our position, our wealth, gives us control over these lands and these people” (Ali, 2014, p. 110), where it is evident that the source of these dominant symbols is within social relations. The previous studies conducted by Amir, Ali, and Qadri in 2020 on Ali’s novels showed that social capital serves to reestablish male power. For feminine as this passage may sound, men are

pictured as dominating over plots of land, wealth and members of the family which is in line with Bourdieu's argument of social reproduction where social capital reinforces dominance through a transfer of power from parents to offspring. The results of the study also correlate with Ilyas and Afzal (2021), who argue that internal social roles and power relations need to be understood as important in literary depictions of social organization. Media sensitisation give more power (Iqbal et al., 2024) and leaders can influence social setup (Ramzan et al., 2023).

Marriage and family, along with their physical attributes, are, socially, the major defenders of male supremacy within the plot of *The Stone Woman*. As the female member of the family, and much less likely to engage in decision-making, the male members of the family make the marriage decisions and other decisions adding further literal authority to the social construct. The line "My father and brothers have already decided for me" (Ali, 2014, p. 78) depicts how low reading habits were in women because all decisions were made by male relatives thus limiting women's freedom and choice about marriage. The greatest deconstruction of marriage is in the case of women who lived within the works of Azeez (2024). This section analyzes sexism and power in English novels with marriage which is the most important aspect of women's audience control in the patriarchal society. That power outlines those institutions in which women with naturalized male superiority become the order of the day.

Generation after generation, male supremacy continues to remain amongst family members, as shown in the scene where "One day, all of this will be yours, and you must ensure that it remains as it is—strong, unchallenged, and always in control" (Ali, 2014, p. 152), which demonstrates how men's authority is transferred from one person to the other among sociocultural norms. This aspect underlines Bourdieu's contention that power is exercised not solely in overt forms but in covert ways as well to explore and maintain the system over time. The results were consistent with Iqbal et al. research (2022), which focused on power's historical aspects and looked at the compliment of the questions on how patriarchal order survives across generations in postcolonial societies. In *The Stone Woman*, power is maintained through other means though leeway is provided through *The Stone*

Woman for there to be variation. This mirrors Bourdieu (2020) whereby he states that the social order is maintained not only with physical capital but also with social order as well.

The study revealed that Tariq Ali in the novel *The Stone Woman* reinforces how symbolic power is used to justify and perpetuate male dominance in both the family and society. It also demonstrates that masculine power is not physically brutalised but tricked into being implanted into the people making it look and feel normal. Applying Critical Discourse Analysis and Bourdieu, this research demonstrates the articulate practices that reinforce gender hierarchy: language, habitus and social capital. These findings inform the continued discourse on how power operates in literature as well as society, complementing existing literature on gender, power and the symbolic nature of authority.

Amir, Ali and Qadri (2020) echo the same sentiments that in *The Stone Woman*, marriage is viewed as the ultimate patriarchal reality, which makes women's lives once more controllable by men and places women as objects in the family's honour and heritage quest. In this manner, the book opposes how the institution of marriage promotes male dominance. Iqbal et al. (2022) consider the functioning of gender power relations in the postcolonial states such as the settings in *The Stone Woman*, which also require locating history and family. 'Headship' is not the only form through which men hold power within the family setup. The patriarchal family system serves to elevate male power, not only through actual power exercising such as decision-making but also through the cultural and traditional capital, which render such power ever so impossible to upgrade. This finding is consistent with findings in the work of Azeez (2024) which captures how sexism and gender prejudice found in the literary works under review hasn't been divorced from the real society where customs and culture are employed to uphold the status quo. In *The Stone Woman*, these practices are not just tolerated but are viewed as normal and therefore terrain where male dominance cannot be challenged. In this regard, Amir and Mehmood (2018) remark that in *The Stone Woman*, male dominance is again described as being passed from one generation to the next, which is an indictment of the family and how it socializes people into patriarchal notions. The ululation of authority from

one male to the next not only promotes false patriarchal authority but also makes such myths appear so obvious and logical.

Conclusion

This study examined the institution of masculinity. Tariq Ali's *The Stone Woman* has been analysed in terms of the power of symbolism and its relation to the internalization of the institutionalized power of patriarchy within the exponents of marriage, family and social norms. Entering into CDA and the domain of Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power two primary questions were examined which brought forth novel insights into the representation of patriarchy in the novel in question. The first research question sought to know how power at the symbolic level in *The Stone Woman* is exercised and established that male control takes expression in the use of real authority but also subtle symbolic domination. The wording is also believed to be hidden in structures through positioning and commanding of speech and actions as dominance that soothingly reinforces beliefs in male superiority. The findings showed that they equally use their male social status to seek authority, in which case dominance in the family system becomes unquestionable as it is integrated into social life. This discreet reinforcement of males falls within the confines of Bourdieu's theory in which such stratifications are naturalised and legitimised into normal routines. The second research question focused on how institutions of marriage, family and societal regards, aid the preservation of male leadership domination over generations. It has been established from this analysis that marriage is advocated to protect men and their power, while very few life choices are left for women. The family unit headed by male authority figures is the most important institution for the stability of gender hierarchy and such a position is further buttressed by social practices. The vertical transmission of power, which this novel brings to the fore, ensures that male dominance is retained and increased in every generation bringing a challenge that becomes a needless effort. These developments, together, help to illustrate the position of *The Stone Woman* as a critique of the mechanisms whereby symbolic power is exercised and the interplay of gendered power relations and politics in patriarchal society. It shows that man

dominance is reproduced not only through physical means but social expectations, appreciation, practices and organizations that are deeply rooted in societies. Therefore, this text broadens our understanding that literature analyses and at the same time fights against established systems of sociopolitical relationships, concerning as always gender relations. *The Stone Woman* thus produces a radical critique of the mechanisms of symbolic oppression that have already been constructed so that it broadly serves to uphold masculine hegemony. This study underlines the idea that it is of great concern to dismantle gender-based power structures that exist and are often concealed among cultural, domestic and social settings.

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