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Gender Role Subversion in Charlotte Bronte's *The Professor*

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By

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## Gender Role Subversion in Bronte's *The Professor*

### Abstract

*This thesis entitled "Gender Role Subversion in Bronte's The Professor" focuses female character, Henry Frances, who struggles hard for her identity, equality and rights as a human being in her society. The research argues women's courage and emotional awakening of female to dismantle patriarchy construction of gender. It examines how women are dominated in the patriarchal mechanism and opposed through her action in the society. Frances Henri struggles for search of the self identity and how she gets success to make her own way into the patriarchal world is the central idea of this research. The research found Frances as weak but resisted woman in each system of society though she was interpreted differently by various persons. She shows her masculine power being financially secured. Finally, William Crimsworth shows male chauvinists are defeated from their own ego. Frances struggles hard against conventional and male dominated society and is able to discover a new world for her identity. She carves a role of her own in the traditional Victorian society. This research is based on different feminist mainly Kate Milletto emancipate the human by expressing aggressive feeling to convert into rules.*

**Kew words:** Gender Role, Suppression, Identity, Patriarchy, Victorian Period

The present research explores the issues related to the experiences of Frances Henri's revolution against patriarchy norms, courage and biological awakening in Charles Bronte's *The Professor*. Charlotte Bronte, a European novelist evokes the female resistance against social construction in Victorian society of the 1980s. Like all other women who are excluded from society, the protagonist, Mrs. Frances Henri also struggles from both her paternal home and the society for equal rights.

*The Professor* deals with socio-political issues. This research particularly focuses on female masculinity. The researcher not only sees women's oppression but also records how oppressed women respond to a society. In the novel, Frances Henri is objectified. Her husband gives a bungalow. She denies accepting to stand on foot. Next character William Crimsworth and Mr. Hunsden and Mr. Pellet are exploiter. The activity reflects how these women can break social norms and values. The novelist presents the sexuality of woman is the social problem to define as she paves space in the society. Bronte internalizes the growing rebellious narration. She narrates the problem in third person multiple narration to include all women because most of women were suppressed by certain criteria and bound in male made norms.

Society has been formed by the male oriented notion which has kept woman in the inferior position. This research shows social norms and values, behaviour and all other aspects the society are controlled and guided by the male novelist. This research finds in the novel narration visualizes as a victim. Later on the protagonist has covered the time as an experience to encounter the social practices. She has got the society and traps into her lap as junior and unmatured concept of patriarchy. This research clarifies a woman has also a level of understanding to catch each mechanism of society. This paper evaluates Henri's courage to break social norms and finds her able to handle social institution.

Many critics and reviewers have examined this novel from different perspectives. The problem identifies from this socio-political and sexual activities are that everything are perceived through a warped lens that exaggerates the virtue of the individual over the evil totalitarianism where Bronte challenges man made norms through her different writing. She claims that a woman is not a non human being.

Phyllis Bentley views from realistic point of view. He internalizes, "*The Professor* holds a triple interest for the modern reader: its intrinsic merit as a work of art, its relation to the incidents of Charlotte's life and its position as a transition stage from the An grain writing to the real novel" (39).

Kathleen Tilston studied this novel from stylistic point of view who thinks Bronte avoids extravagant in situation and style to lower the social tone. She internalizes:

*The Professor* represents an imperfect victory over 'The World Below. Bronte was perhaps deceived into thinking it complete because of her strenuous and indeed successful effort to avoid extravagance in situation and style, to lower the social tone into congruity with the scenes and characters she knew at first hand (28).

Tilston presents novel's narrative presentation. She gives a scenario of background and narrative of novelist. Bronte includes the hardship of life's domination, suffering and difficulties of woman.

Rebeca Roth reveals this novel and other novels. She has not found any differences between Bronte's An grain novels. Characters and subject matters are somehow unique but with slight variation in presentation. She praises her voice against patriarchal norms and values to establish their identity and selfhood in the society. She internalizes:

The Angrain stories, written mostly in the 1830s provided an extensive training in the art of fiction: the young author acquired technical skills and a sizeable store of subject matter by writing again and again about the same , and similar Angrain characters and sometimes retelling the same stories with variations. (37)

There is ample evidence that term is fine, artistic, beautiful, and even classical. It is economical, controlled, and disciplined, refined and fastidious, clear and sharp. Her style is never an end in itself, but always fitting implement.

Similarly, M.M. Brammer emphasizes on the Bronte's style which has irregular intervals. He internalizes:

The novel lends one to expect that stylistic change will be away from the ornamental and redundant and towards the plain and homely. But one or two instances of an opposite tendency occur, and it is interesting to speculate the motives for these"(18).

Brammer highlights the motives and tendency of plain presentation. He organizes inclusive views. Mrs. Henri against patriarchy seems so courageous; it shows she must be a complex character.

Although all these above mentions critics and reviewers examined this story collection from different points of view and then arrived at several findings and conclusions, none of them notice the issue of Victorian issue in *The Professor*. If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, a gender cannot be said to follow from sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of men will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or

that women will interpret only female bodies. Further, even if the sexes appear to be unproblematically binary in their morphology and constitution there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two. The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculinity might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and femininity a male body as easily as a female one.

The question, however, of what qualifies as “gender” is itself already a question that attests to a pervasively normative operation of power, a fugitive operation of “what the case will be” under the rubric of “what the case is.” Thus, the very description of the field of gender is in no sense prior to, or separable from, the question of its normative operation. The researcher is not interested in delivering judgments on what distinguishes the subversive from the unsubversive. Not only do the researchers believe that such judgments cannot be made out of context, but that they cannot be made in ways that endure through time. Just as metaphors lose their metaphoricity as they congeal through time into concepts, so subversive performances always run the risk of becoming deadening clichés through their repetition and, most importantly, through their repetition within commodity culture where “subversion” carries market value. The effort to name the criterion for undermining will always fail, and ought to. So what is at stake in using the term at all?

No society is genderly homogenous and there are no two cultures that are entirely similar. Gender differences can be conceptualized in terms of gender dichotomies. The notion of gender in-between’s therefore is when one is caught in-

between cultures; the home culture and the new culture to which he is a stranger, neither belonging to the original nor to the present. The individual suffers from culture war and is unable to take a stand.

Bronte is the female writer, she has written many novels with similar like issue. In *The Professor*, Bronte is concerned with the female issues of contemporary Victorian society. William experiences the superficial and deceptive nature of the Catholic educational system. Mile Reuter is characterized as duplicitous and manipulative and stands in sharp contrast to the honest Protestant Frances Henry. Often viewed as the mouthpiece for Bronte's own views, Crimsworth offers a scornful account of Romish wizard craft and its effect on the schoolgirls, who are portrayed as deceitful and shallow. Crimsworth's sexuality is explored as he is both fascinated and repulsed by the girls he teaches. Additionally, the novel focuses on the relationship between sexual dominance and social identity. Millet favors power as an inevitable matter to change the society. In her "Sexual Politics" (1996), she points the fact that power is exercise in the society subjugating women. She emphasizes that women should be given power to develop their status and career. She expresses, "Patriarchy dominates and subordinates the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male. Power is exercised directly or indirectly in the civil and domestic life, to constrain women" (131).

As a dependent without any fortune or social stature of his own, Crimsworth is acutely aware of his unattractiveness to young women. Frances is also orphaned, poor, and meek in manner a characterization that stresses the connection between inferiority of social status and the enforced repression of emotion. Through Frances, Bronte explores her concern for the predicament of women who lack wealth and social connections. Both Frances and Crimsworth combat their lack of social

advantage by working hard and exhibiting self-restraint, characteristics that are ultimately rewarded with financial and domestic security.

Kate Millet further argues, "In the large canvas of male literary works women are presented just as sexual objects, whose roles are subservient to those of the central male protagonist. Violence and domination seemed to be the main idea by which the unequal power relations in the area of sexual politics are maintained" (25). Brontë, through this novel, protests the exploitation and domination of males over females. Federico asserts that *The Professor*, with its descriptions of male dominance, voyeurism, and sexual suppression, reproduces Victorian masculinity. Federico further maintains that the novel is not concerned with attaining power but outgrowing the need for power. Brontë raises a voice against men through Frances Henri whom she has made her mouthpiece. Certain stereotypes are secured for females as discussed above which are actually wrong interpretations of females. So, in *The Professor*, Frances Henri fights against the similarly created stereotypes. The novel challenges the expectations of the time by its brevity and realism, and by its portrayal of the heroine's insistence on a working career after her marriage, Catherine Malone, a prominent critic of 20<sup>th</sup> century, observes that appraisal of *The Professor* is typically informed by the biography published soon after Brontë's death.

Surveying the criticism of the novel, Malone notes that the unappealing nature of Crimsworth's character has been attributed to Brontë's immaturity as a writer. In her assessment of Crimsworth's characterization, Malone contends that Brontë does not fail to create a convincing male protagonist, but that a male protagonist is unable to tell the story that Brontë desired to write, that is, a history of suffering. Criticism is frequently tied to the well-known life of *The Professor's* novelist, which has led Malone to argue that we have come to love Brontë more than her books.



William Crimsworth, the representative of patriarchy in the novel, follows Victorian norms and values and he wants to impose it upon Frances. On the contrary, Frances Challenges Victorian Patriarchal social norms and d<sup>t</sup> values. She has proved that females are not weak rather stronger than males. She keeps on fighting though there are many dominating male characters like William Crimsworth, Edward, Hunsden, Mr. Pelet who try to be obstacle in her way. But she is determined to overcome the injustices of society. Before her determination, insistence and courage, patriarch has to knell down. So, she is a strong female character.

Females are regarded only as a means to fulfill the lust of male. They always interpret female in relation to physicality. So, female's worth, space and identity depend upon male's wish. From the very beginning of human history, females were taught to be passive, helper and subordinate which not only affects males but also females. Women, too think they inferior and accept the injustice. Some women act as men because of the constructed truth of patriarchy. Millet also internalizes, "Women began to understand that patriarchy had its origin not in the realm of public politics but only in men's control over women's bodies, particularly their sexually and their generative capacities. Millet analyzes the "Sexual Politics" of literature in her work" (26).

Their mentality is so empowered by the practice of society that they even start to dominate their own womenfolk. The voice of William Crimsworth, far from sounding "curiously androgynous" (Gilbert & Gubar 319), is aggressively masculine throughout his narrative, locked into socially sanctioned tone of superiority. There is no feminine apologizing, no womanly code of docility. His voice approximates the literary qualities assigned to men, which Showalter has identified as "Power, breadth, distinctness, clarity, learning . . . shrewdness, knowledge of life, and humor,"

alongwith "masculine faults," such as "coarseness and passion" (Double Standard 340).

This is not their fault but the practice of society which automatically affects each and every member of society. Gilbert and Gubar assert a similar argument about the male. "In a male-dominated society by defining herself as the Other" (476). In *The Professor* too Zoraide Renter tries to dominate Frances Henri. They don't want Frances to get success which happens because of the male centred mentality created by patriarchy.

The novel *The Professor* shows the struggle of Frances, the protagonist of the novel to create her independent identity. Frances does not care for the society what it interprets her actions, she only cares her target to be free, to get justice and to establish her own female identity as other male members of the society despite the difficulties. So, this novel can be interpreted as 'a feminist text where this research tries to dig out the burning traces of feminism.

*The Professor* depicts many glimpses of feminism. When a man meets a woman, he always becomes conscious about her physicality and structure of the body not about her inner intellectual qualities. William Crimsworth studies the face of women from the patriarchal point of view. When his own wife enters into the room, he expresses; "She looked well, dressed in white, her face and her attire shining in morning and bridal freshness" (13). He talks about her dress, face, structure which shows the pleasure to his wife.

In Victorian society, every kind of human affair is influenced by patriarchal norms and values. There is not a single sphere which is kept itself outside from this concept. Economic, political and educational institutions are affected by patriarchal system. Even at school, there are different views towards boys and girls. Close

friendships between girls are forbidden by the rules of the school. School administration tries to keep girls ignorant. William Crimsworth finds similar, environment at school when he reaches there as a teacher. He claims, "All understood the art of speaking fair when a point was to be gained, and could shoulder the instant civility ceased to be profitable. Very little open quarrelling ever took place amongst them, but backbiting and tale bearing were universal"(71). As a teacher, William studies his students and observes them from patriarchal point of view so that he finds certain lack in girl's mental status.

As William expresses, "These girls belonged to what are called the respectable ranks of society. They had all been carefully brought up, yet was the mass of them mentally depraved" (71).Millet in "Body Politics"internalizes:

politics an institution through which power is exercised in the society. Her work paved way for the readers to reconsider their evaluation fundamentally about some male writers after that "sexual politics" because the catch term of many writers. She expresses "The essence of politics is power. (205)

William eventually becomes a schoolmaster, or professor for a boy's school in Belgium under the headmaster Monsieur Pelet, an" through that connection, is also hired as an English teacher for a girl's school next door. He teaches with severity, at first, and the boys respect him for it, but when he comes into the classroom of girls, he finds that many of them are young ladies only a few years younger than him and he is momentarily bashful and tongue-tied. He has only seen young women at a distance, has no sisters or mother, and is astonished at their angelic appearance. But then he hears a few crude whispers in French from the leader of girls and suddenly he is all confidence again. Their halos are now tarnished and he can gird his mind to steel against flirtation, pouts, sheep's eyes, and tantrums, which he soon receives in

abundance.

William Crimsworth hears voices, and sees the schoolmistress below his window in the garden speaking with Pelet, the head schoolmaster of the boy's school. He judges by their words and manner that they are engaged, and that the schoolmaster is hotly jealous of her attentions to William. Whatever admiration William has for the lady is now gone. She is sly, manipulating, and dishonest, and William has no taste for a woman like her. In the days following he is distant and ignores her, and she does all she can to get him back. His aloofness challenges her and she is more determined than ever, but he is aware of her subtle tricks of speech and expression, and has no trouble ignoring her.

William Crimsworth seems to be modeled after Joseph of the Bible: he exemplifies moral, upright faithful living. At this time, a young woman named Frances Henri comes to the school to teach a few of the schoolgirls to sew, embroider, and mend lace. William, who is alert as ever and accustomed to read character in people's faces, soon notices that she is shy, but intelligent; timid, but determined; eager to learn, but reticent to lead or show novelist. She does not stand out to him more than any of his other students, for she is also his pupil, and he does not think anything of her until one day during the girls' recitation of English. The girls' Belgium tongues usually slaughters the English sentences William has the girl's recite, but when the young sewing teacher read her portion, she pronounces the words crisply and in true English fashion. William is astonished and glanced up to see if she realizes what miracle has just come out of her mouth, but she is humble and unaware, and the recitation passes to the next person.

In the patriarchal society, all women are taught to be subordinate wives. All men want a keep female as his wife not as his equal. He wants her to serve him

properly as a conventional wife. William expresses, "I should like my wife to be my wife" (67). Male expects that female's organs should attract him.

Millet raises further gender, "violence and suppression upon women by patriarchy is the main issue. She considers that patriarchy is the main cause which suppressed and dominated women from freedom" (29). They want to be attracted and delight from her each and every organ. William describes his pupil's Caroline passionately, "Ah, there is beauty-beauty in perfection! What a cloud of sable Girls about the face of a hour! What fascinating lips! What glorious black eyes! Your Byron would have worshipped her, and you-you cold, frigid islander! You played the ancestor, the insensible in the presence of an Aphrodite so exquisite?" (69).

In patriarchal society, a man claims everything of women as his possession. He declares his possession like in heart, hand and the property she owns. As William expresses: "Each of those three beautiful girls will have a handsome fortune, and with a little address, a gentleman like, intelligent young fellow like you might make himself master of the hand, heart and purse of any one of the trio" (69). Women are regarded as secondary and made only for men. They command female to do whatever they like or do the things that matches their taste and desire. When William meets Frances Henri for the first time, he studies and observes her according to his taste and desire. He expresses: "Her brown hair, her blue eye, the freshness of her cheek, the whiteness of her neck. All suit my taste" (79).

In Victorian society, women are treated as sub-human, inferior to men and non-intelligent. So, it is said that they were inferior and not competent like men. They are regarded as another race. They differentiate not only biologically but also intellectually. But, in the Victorian society there are not only men but women also are exploiters of female. They are jealous towards others' success. These so-called

females support male-Chauvinism. They couldn't find out the actual reality, their eyes are covered by patriarchal norms and values. They themselves want to survive first.

In this regard, Zoraide Reuter, another female expresses her jealousy and tries to dominate Frances. She supports male-Chauvinism. Her views about Frances is:

Henri has not received a regular education. Perhaps her natural talents are not of highest order, but I can assure you of the excellence of her intentions, and even of the availability of her disposition - I venture to add that what I have just said is of importance to the poor girl. (85)

As in the novel, the narrator William finds differences between two types of females. In this regard he finds that Frances is something different from other common Victorian women, William expresses Frances is a strange woman and she is peculiar from an ordinary woman not only in facial expression but also in her behaviour as well "Her complexion, her countenance, her countenance, her figure were all distinct from her, and evidently the type of another race of a race less gifted with fullness of flesh and plenitude of blood, less jocund, material, unthinking" (89).

From the beginning, William thought Henri as his possession and he always keeps on studying her every behavior. But he finds differences between other women and Frances. He knows from her eyes' expression that she cannot follow him. It means from the very beginning, Frances shows her rebellious and challenging behaviour to William. William expresses, "But having once yielded it to my possession. She composed her anxious face. Then she was not ready when the others were; she could not write her phrases as fast as they did. I would not help her; I went on relentless. She looked at me: her eye said most plainly 'I cannot follow you'" (90).

Millet presents, "patriarchy does not give the equal status for women. It always keeps women in the marginalized space. Women's place in patriarchal society

is deplorable and pathetic" (36). Frances challenges Williams, when he wants and tries to impose his desires upon her. She clearly states that she cannot depend upon his opinion but her opinions are much more important than others for her. She expresses:

You will observe, monsieur, and tell me what you think; I could so much better rely on your opinion than on my own. Women cannot judge of these things as men can; and excuse my pertinacity, but it is natural I should feel interested about this poor little girl. She has scarcely any relations, her own efforts are all she has to look to; her acquisitions must be her sole fortune. (93)

William is here the representative of whole patriarchy. He thinks Frances as a subordinate, passive, submissive woman like others in his society but quite contrary to it. She remains herself very strict and determined to fight with such male-dominated society. She is determined to win over patriarchy, wipe out worse, injustice things. So, she expresses to William:

Take care, young man' she continues 'that you fasten the door well after us; and above all, open to none in our absence. Whatever sound you hear, stir not, and look not out. The night will soon fall; this forest is most wild and lonely; strange noises are often heard there in after sunset; wolves haunt these glades, and Danish warriors infest the country. (97)

She is certain in her expression. So she determines to fly the white dove which symbolically means peace and justice between men and women, strong and weak.

Though, Frances is the woman in the eyes of society. she is so strong and determined that she doesn't care about what others say or what society thinks of her, she only cares to achieve and create female's self identity, separate identity like men.

Elaine Showalter expresses, ". . . women's literature must go beyond these scenarios of compromise madness and death . . . its purpose to discover the new world" (219). It

is called "Gynocriticism". She expresses that women are different in terms of nature, race, culture and nation so they cannot be studied universally. So, she keeps on fighting against tyranny, injustice imposed by males. She seems too much rebellious and determined here in her words. Frances expresses:

I like, monsieur, to take my knitting in my hands, and to sit quietly down in my chair. Circumstances defile past me. I watch their march. So long as they follow to course I wish, I say nothing and do nothing. I don't clap my hands, and cry out "Bravo! How lucky I am!" to attract the attention and envy of my neighbors. I am merely passive; but when events fall out ill when circumstances become adverse - I watch very vigilantly. I knit on still, and still I hold my tongue; but every now and then, monsieur. I just put my toe out-so-and give the rebellious circumstances a little secret push, without noise, which sends it the way I wish, and I am successful after all, and nobody has seen my expedients. (115)

Frances Henri wants to survive in her own income for that she teaches sewing. It is a minor job but she is devoted for that and fulfilled task with her all capacities. But, William takes her incapable and criticizes her work.

He expresses, "You purpose to devote your life to teaching, and you are a most unsuccessful teacher: you can't keep your pupils in order" (106). Frances accepts her weakness; and more than that she blames the social system which was responsible for women's success. In her views, patriarchal system keeps women aside from good job.

Showalter internalizes, "woman texts should have specific style of reading. The next written by the female writers should be read from the gynocritical point of view to justify the womanless in the next. Gynocriticism is an attempt to establish



feminist tradition" (69). She is still hopeful and ready to cross even, obstacles created by patriarchal system. Admitting William's blame, she expresses:

I am not a skilful teacher, it is time, but practice improves: besides. I work under difficulties. Here I only teach sewing. I can show no power in sewing, no superiority; it is a sub-ordinate art. Then I have no associates in this house; I am isolated. I am too a heretic, which deprive me of influences. (106)

William always takes women as passive, inferior and secondary who are not complete and perfect within themselves. When men come in their life, date, address, their identity is fulfilled. His view is the product of patriarchy. He expresses: "Women are women that is certain, and always do business like women. Men mechanically put a date and address to their communications" (120).

In patriarchal society, men regard women as characters of sympathy and love because they think that they are not self sufficient to stand on themselves, so they need males' help and sympathy. As here in the novel *The Professor*, the narrator, William Loves Frances because she is guardian less, penniless and helpless. So, he is over protective about women and expresses:

I loved the movement with which she confided her hand to my hand. I loved her as she stood there, penniless and parentless; for a sensualist charmless, for me a treasure my best object of sympathy on earth thinking such thoughts as I thought, feeling such feelings as I felt; my ideal of the shrine in which to seat my stores of love; personification of discretion and fore thought of diligence and perseverance, of self denial and self control those guardians, those trusty keepers of the gift I longed to confer on her. (124)

In Victorian society patriarchal system flourished very much. Being a cruel and selfish system, no one can wipe it out fully. The cause behind it was that there were

some women who supported it and pleased with their sub-ordination. They play negative role and try to hide the reality. Zoraide Reuter is such type of a woman who supports patriarchy. 'She tries her best to dominate Frances. She is Jealous towards her effort and her for independence. For that, she excludes Frances from her job. She tells several lies to William about Frances and her address. William expresses:

I laughed inwardly; all this was so like the directress--so like what I had expected and guessed of her conduct; and then the exposure and proof of her lie, unconsciously afforded by Frances. 'She had frequently applied for Mlle Henri's address' forsooth. 'Mlle Henri had always evaded giving it,' etc. . . . and here I found her a visitor at the very house of whose locality she had professed absolute ignorance. (126)

Frances Henri works in Renter's school. There, she teaches her pupils lace mending work. Being a teacher, she spends a miserable life under the control of her directress, Zoraide Renter. Zoraide always suppresses her and treats her badly. Zoraide was the sensuously beguiling, manipulative and self-centered woman.

She takes Frances as her enemy. Her cruel behaviors are exposed in Frances words:

I consider she acted neither justly nor honourably toward me. She used underhand means to set my pupils against me, and thereby render me unhappy while I held my place in her establishment; and she eventually deprived me of it by a masked and hypocritical manoeuvre, pretending that she was acting for my good, by really snatching from me my chief means of subsistence, at a crisis when not only my own life, but that of another depended on my exertions. Of her I will never more ask a favour. (13)

Each and every male member of society wants a wife to be wife not an equal

individual but as a submissive and subordinate female to serve and act according to his desires. And all men think each woman need a master or guardian and they want to fulfill that place being a master not as a husband, equal partner. At last, Williams too desires Frances as his pupil and he wants to be her master. As he expresses, "I knew Frances would be equally released from occupation. I thought she might possibly be wishing for her master. I knew I wished for my pupil. Imagination began with her low whispers, infusing into my soul the soft tale of pleasures that might be" (147). He thinks that Frances now is self dependent but he realizes that she needs a master like him to control, to order and as on the whole to dominate. Again William expresses his desires to be master and Frances as his own pupil and wife. He talks about her as an object to own so he wants to have a possession of her. He wants to rule her. In this regard, he expresses:

I have one object before me now to set that Genevese girl for my wife; and my wife she shall be that is, provided she has as much.half as much, regard for her master as he has for her. And would she be so docile, so smiling, so happy under my instructions if she had not? Would she sit at my side, when I dictate or correct, with such a still, contented halcyon mean? (131)

In Victorian period, women were suffered very much. They had faced several problems. They worked very hard forgetting their life but they earned nothing. Frances Henri describes her physical condition; her experiences are real experiences of Victorian women. She works all day and night but she can not improve her economic status. This all happen because of biased behavior of patriarchal system to women. About her condition, she expresses, "I feel thankful for it, especially as my sight was beginning to be injured by constant working at fine lace; and I was getting, too, very weary of sitting up late at nights, and yet not being able to find time for

reading or study" (141). In patriarchal society, because of the difficult situation women could not give time for studies. So, they were always in backward position and spent miserable life.

Zoraide Reuter suggests William to win her heart for marriage. She carefully expresses that she would never surrender before him rather she is read), to leave or break her relationship instead of accepting the tyranny or injustice. Later, being a male supporter. Zoraide understand Frances desires and determination. She suggests him to guide her affection of female which is really soft. Zoraide is a woman but her belief and attitude is totally masculine. She follows patriarchal norms and values. Being a typical male-chauvinist, she expresses:

She is not all monotonous mildness: you have seen, with a sort of strange pleasure,,revolt, scorn, austerity, bitterness, lay energetic claim to a place in her feelings and physiognomy. You know that few could rule her as you do; you know she might break but never bend under the hand of Tyranny and Injustice but Reason and Affection can guide her by a sign. Try their influence now. Go they are not passions; you may handle them safely. (147)

In a male dominated society, women are taken as treasure or possession. They are regarded as objects that give pleasure to men. Their smile, body or anything can give them pleasure. When the men happen to be in touch with women, they feel themselves happy. As Hunsdenexpresses: "There are sensible as well as handsome women in ex- women it is worth any man's to talk to, and with whom I can talk with pleasure" (151).

Williams expresses his wish to marry Frances, she objects to it and she expresses her feelings and desires to be free to work outside. She doesn't want to stay at home just doing household works as solitary earning nothing. As she expresses:

However, it must be so for the present; and monsieur. Were you not saying something about my giving up my place? Oh no! I shall hold it fast, and her little fingers emphatically tightened on mine. Think of my marrying you to be kept by you, monsieur! I couldn't do it: and how dull my days would be! You would be away teaching in close; noisy schoolrooms from morning an evening and I should be lingering at home, unemployed and solitary. (168)

Frances expresses that if she married, then the married life would be boring. She would be depressed and sullen, and Williams would be soon tired of her. So, she desires complete freedom, independence, employed life where both husband and wife work together and suffers together.

It means Bronte wants to come in the open out of her house and wants to struggle. Bronte is even ready to suffer. Bronte expresses:

I like a contemplative life, but I like an active life better. I must act in some way, and act with you. I have taken notice, monsieur, that people who are only in each other's company for amusement never really like each other so well, or esteem each other so highly, as those who work together and perhaps suffer together. (168)

Actually, Williams is attracted because of her beauty. But, after listening to Frances's words, he is totally changed and comes to the surface of reality. Then, he starts to see Frances very differently. He sees her sad face, eyes, and pale cheeks instead of just physical attraction. He believes in physical charms before but now he believes in her inner beauty. So, he realizes his mistake in evaluating Frances and he expresses:

Tonight my eyes opened on the mistake I had made, I began to suspect that it was only my tastes which were unique, not my power of discovering and appreciating the superiority of moral worth over physical charms. For me

Frances had physical charms. In her there was no deformity to get over, none of those prominent defects of eyes, teeth, complexion, shape, which hold at bay the admiration of the boldest male champions of intellect (for women can love a downright ugly man if he be but talented). (168-69)

In a male dominated society, men are pleased with women's sub-ordination. They are happy with their ignorance. In male's perspectives, lack of education and fortune are their natural qualities and they furnished in their natural qualities. In male's view, if women got education, they would raise voice against patriarchy.

YorkeHunsdenhassimilar views about Frances. He supports Frances as William's wife because Bronte is penniless, parentless and helpless. Women's weakness is happiness for men. About Frances, he expresses:

You are the best judge of your own affairs. A lace-mender may make a good wife as well as a lady; but, of course, you have taken care to as certain thoroughly that since Bronte has not education, fortune, or station, Bronte is well furnished with such natural qualities as you think most likely to conduce to your happiness. (173)

YorkeHunsden, a male-chauvinist does not respect women's capacity. He behaves them as a non-human being. Hunsden thinks that women can't think, they can't do judgement because they don't have logic. He expresses to Frances, "You cannot reason at all there is no logic in you" (178). Frances never loses her confidence, Bronte becomes bolder. In her view, not only Shakespeare's Othello killed Desdemona, if husband mistook their wife, they killed their husband. Here, Bronte not only challenges Hunsden, but challenges whole patriarchy. Bronte expresses:

Well, whenever you marry, don't take a wife out of Switzerland: for you being blaspheming Helvetia and cursing the cantons above all, if you mention the

word ass in the same breath with the name Tell-your mountain maid will some night smother her Breton-bretonnant, even as your own Shakespeare's Othello smothered Desdemona. (180)

Now Williams changes completely. He accepts everything whatever Frances expresses and desires. He accepts her all compromises before marriage as he is ready to do or act according to her plans after marriage. He is ready to be her life partner and also accepts her as his partner in happiness as well as sufferings and not as his submissive wife. He gives her full and free consent. As he expresses: "You have conceived a plan. Frances and a good plan execute it. You have my free consent, and wherever and whenever my assistance is wanted, ask and you shall have" (185). This shows complete submission of his 'maleness', the so called superiority complex of being men. He expresses:

What was her plan? A natural one - the next step to be mounted by us, or at least by her, if Bronte wanted to rise in her profession. Bronte proposed to begin a school we already had the means for commencing on a careful scale, having lived greatly within our income. We possessed, too, by this time, an extensive and eligible connection, in the sense advantageous to our business; for though our circle of visiting acquaintance continued as limited as ever, we were now widely known in schools and families as teachers. (184-85)

We can see a complete changed life style and changed attitude of Williams towards the end of the novel *The Professor*. As they get married he feels himself lucky and satisfied. He sees everywhere satisfaction, liberty, comforts and his home as a heaven. As he expresses:

It was to their besides Bronte came at night to tuck them warmly in: it was after them Bronte looked in winter to see that they always had a comfortable

seat by the stove; it was they who by turns were summoned to the `Salon' to receive some little do of -lake or fruit. to sit on a footstool at the fireside to enjoy home comforts, and almost home liberty, for an evening together - to be spoken to gently and softly, comforted, encouraged, cherished, and when bedtime came dismissed with a kiss of true tenderness. (187)

Both Frances and Williams start their life as happily as two lively doves in the sky. Both of them are satisfied because both of them exchange their equal feelings, emotions, happiness and sorrows together. That's the actual fruit of each individual. Nobody is the master and pupil of other or nobody is under other's control. Williams improves and gets rid of his evil attitudes under the reflection of Frances. As he himself expresses:

Frances was, then, a good and dear wife to me, because I was to her a good, just, and faithful husband. What Bronte would have been had Bronte married a harsh, envious- careless man a profligate, a prodigal, a drunkard, or a tyrant is another question, and one which I once propounded to her. Her answer, given after some reflection, was, I should have tried to endure the evil or cure it for awhile: and when I found it in tolerate and incurable, I should have left very to torturer suddenly and silently. (189)

Even towards the end, Frances has strong determination and courage to fight and resist the injustices of society upon females. Freedom is indispensable for all so Bronte fights for the same birth right that is freedom. Bronte is ready to fight even up to the end of her life. As Frances expresses to her husband:

Monsieur, if a wife's nature loathes that of the man Bronte is wedded to, marriage must be slavery. Against slavery all right thinkers revolt, and though torture be the price of resistance, torture must be dared. Though the only road



to freedom lie through the gates of death, those gates must be passed, for freedom is indispensable. (190)

She again expresses that the maid's life passes in slavery and under control who has life, or as a whole, empty life because there is no freedom and self identity. Frances - fights for her separate identity throughout the novel and last achieves her own identity in society where Bronte was dominated before. So, Bronte talks about the life of a maid who spent their life in; control of their master and compares herself with the old maid who bears domination and injustices. Bronte expresses in this regard:

Not much, certainly, An old maid's life must doubtless be void and rapid, her heart strained and empty. Had I been an old maid, I should have spent existence in efforts to fill the void and ease the aching. I should have probably failed, and died weary and disappointed, despised and of no account, like other single women. But I'm not an old maid. (190)

The narrator of this novel, William has already accepted females are independent and an individual rather than the part of male's body. So, we can analyze his realization and respect of women. William and Frances both have business terrain with two well skilled counselors named Venhuten and Hunsden. When they are at Hunsden's house, William talks about Hunsden's ideal bride and asks him when Bronte would come and graft her foreign beauty on the old Hunsden. Hunsden suddenly answers, "you call her ideal; but see, here is her shadow, and there cannot be a shadow without a substance" (193). In Hunsden's words, there seem male chauvinism.

Frances and William both observe the portrait of Hunsden's lost lover, Lucia. Bronte sacrificed her love against male domination. Frances first examines closely and gives it to William. As William expresses: "I thought it represented a very handsome and very individual looking female face, with, as he had once said `straight

and harmonious features" (194).

Similarly, Virginia Woolf advocates for the radical change in the conception of family and social life. Bronte refutes the traditional view about women that they are submissive and cried for a separate space for woman in literature and society because they are also independent human beings like men. Hazard Adams presents Woolf's view about women, " Women are supposed to be very calm generally, but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation . . ." (822). These words show that William is completely changed. His attitude towards females is drastically changed. He has started to think female as an individual, independent and determined like male.

Lucia is another female's shadowy figure who also fights for freedom, equality or as a whole against social chain, which tied only females. Such social chains and restrictions shallow female's self-reliance. As Frances expresses that Lucia also breaks social chains. As Bronte reports:

I am sure Lucia once wore chains and broke them,' was the strange answer. `I do not mean matrimonial chains,' Bronte added, correcting herself, as if Bronte feared misinterpretation `but social chains of some sort. The face is that of one who has made an effort, and a successful and triumphant effort, to wrest some vigorous and valued faculty from insupportable constraint; and when Lucia's faculty got free, I am certain it spread wide opinions and carried her higher than ...(194)

Frances not only fights for her freedom but for the whole society. In Frances word there seems the attitude and nature of a man who always praise the male dominated society when Bronte talks about Lucia. Bronte expresses these words to Hunsden:

Lucia has trodden the stage. You never seriously thought of marrying her. You never admired her originality, her fearlessness, her energy of body and mind: you never delighted in her talent, whatever that was, whether song, dance, or dramatic representation; you worshiped her beauty, which was of the sort after your own heart; but I am sure Bronte filled a sphere from where you would never have thought of taking a wife. (194-195)

Frances, by her constant struggle or her determination able to establish herself as an identified woman. The Victorian society and its patriarchal norms and values knell down before her. Through her actions Bronte gives a great lesson to all the dominated women of society that nothing is impossible. The women's freedom or independence is good for both men and women. The narrator of this novel, Williams, expresses such types of feeling in his words, he expresses; "We have realized an independency" (191). This proves that women's struggle for identity is not only for females, but it is for natural balance which provides universal equality.

This novel, *The Professor*, raises the issues of marginality; tries to revolt against the contemporary male domination through these figures: Frances. Lucia and at last supported by William. This means, the society is progressive and needs to be changed like William.

Indeed, Frances changes William's thought, attitude and his whole life style. Bronte plays the role of truth finder and conductor who are in illusion. So, now in the end of the novel, William finds himself lucky, fresh and pleasant in her presence. His life became very pleasant and amazing. As he expresses, "Her presence is as pleasant to my mind as the perfume of the fresh hay and spicy flowers, as the glow of the peering such, as the repose of the midsummer eve are to my senses" (199).

At last, the very determined and courageous heroine Frances is able to create

her original self-identity even in the patriarchal society. Additionally, the novel focuses on the relationship between sexual dominance and social identity. Here in the novel, William is the mouthpiece for Bronte's own, opinions. Both Frances and William combat their lack of social advantages who are orphan and poor and ultimately rewarded with financial and domestic security by working hard together and exhibiting self-restraint. Finally, both of them respect one another's self-dependence which actually gives them happy life. It means, male and female are equal and are the two parts of the same coin. It is proved at the end of the novel. After all, William's acceptance of female's self-identity is of society's acceptance.

In a nutshell, the novel raises the voice against the dominating nature of patriarchy. It challenges the so-called position of male-dominated society and through Frances, the protagonist of the novel creates the female's separate identity and it also encourages all other women to fight like Frances for the creation of separate identity. Thus, the novel is a feminist text which raises the voice for females and resists the patriarchy through the character Frances.

This research work critically examines the status of women in English society. Although women are living in patriarchal society, they are facing against the male dominated culture. So this research has an effort to make a critical study on *The Professor* from the feminist point of view.

We find different kinds of clash, fighting, quarrels in the name of culture, caste, religion, gender and politics in the patriarchal society. In every kind of clash or fighting their ultimate aim is to restore identity. The word "identity" plays an important role in human life. Life can be meaningful if we are introduced by our own identity: It has become a crucial part of life: everyone likes to be 'identified' in one way or the other. Identity is not a fixed term. It is associated with the desire of human

beings: the desire for recognition in the society. In a society when a new idea emerges, the powerful novelist always tries to suppress it with the forces of power. But identity is often raised when it suppressed. Identity implies a situation of an individual who finds himself or herself occupying a space with certain effect.

From the very beginning of human civilization as the big fish eats the small ones, so the powerful people dominate the powerless ones. Females are regarded as the part of male's body, secondary and sub-ordinate. Women are treated as the other and marginalized in every sector of life. The position of a woman is low, inferior and unrefined. Woman's consciousness of identity makes them define human in equal term and stress on self-dependence. As a result of women's awakening consciousness, they always find their identity in crisis in this male dominated society. Patriarchal society plays the role of William Crimsworth to exploit especially female characters in the society like Frances by constructing and imposing the so-called truth of femininity. The certain orientation of feminism is to empower women is search of their identity in the hazardous patriarchal system. It is the society and its tyrannical behaviour that makes female identity submerged and subordinated. However, society does place restrictions on the search of self-identity either on the basis of gender or on the basis of race, which leave the quest frustrating and sometimes unfulfilling too. But, in front of determination for independence, all kinds of domination and restriction surrender itself.

In *The Professor*, there are some female figures who are exploited and suppressed by males but almost all of them resist the domination and fight for their right. Women are forced to tolerate the exploitation and suppression by the hazardous patriarchy. Frances, Lucia are freedom fighter, they fight for their rights and liberty by risking their lives. In *The Professor* Bronte has placed Frances' rebellions actively and

courageously who resists the domination of male members in the novel. In the patriarchal society marriage is one of the complexities which sometimes minimizes the effect of a self-identity of female. Lucia is that shadowy figure who breaks her affair with Hunsden for her self-identity.

In the novel *The Professor*, Bronte presents the situations in which female characters search for their identity but they are kept aside by the patriarchal society until they revolt against it and finally manage to make a self of her own. This novel is based on Victorian society where women are dominated and suppressed by the patriarchal society. It is the society and its tyrannical behaviour that has made females submerge and subordinated. The woman, who tries to be free, becomes an outsider as Bronte is kicked out from the society. No one supports her. But, ignoring all constraints and breaking all barriers. Bronte's *The Professor* presents a woman's search for identity. Frances, the female protagonist of this novel, a poor and helpless woman is victimized physically and mentally by male characters', but through her determination and consistent efforts. Her selfhood is regained ultimately. Her efforts are worth for both male and female and then Frances and her husband make their ideal world. They establish their happy life.

Frances in this novel seems to be against women's dependence on male so that Bronte could establish her identity. For this, Bronte works hard and faces all sorts of hardships and obstacles. Bronte wants to establish herself as an economically independent, for that Bronte works hard Bronte did not care her health. In this novel there are some male characters who always try to dominate her. They are William Crimsworth, Mr. Hunsden, Mr. Pelet, they cannot respect her feelings and her desires. They always mistreat her. They stand as obstacles on her path. Not only that even her over as well as husband, William tries to confine her within the four walls of the

house like other Victorian women. William Crimsworth, as a narrator of this novel, in the beginning always describes Frances Henry's physicality and beauty, but he never addresses her capacity or her talent. He objectifies woman's desire to be an independent in the patriarchal society where William Crimsworth follows evil patriarchal concept over the women rights. They are merely puppet in the male's hand. Frances insistence for job and her career is a proof of her longing for freedom. Bronte wants to develop her career and make herself independent. Victorian men thought that women should be dependent on their income. But, Frances is totally against this thought. Bronte thinks its a kind of slavery. If women can't become economically independent, they will never get freedom. The heroine of this novel wants economical, gender, academic behavioral freedom in every sectors of human life, which Bronte ultimately achieves and makes herself an identified woman in the Victorian society. Her husband, William masculinity at last surrenders in front of her desires and follows ideas. *The Professor* deals with the masculine voice of as the representation of Victorian masculinity.

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