

Tribhuban University

Resistance to Capitalist and Patriarchal Ideologies

in Charlotte Bronte's *The Professor*

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Letter of Recommendation

Menuka Ghimire has completed her thesis entitled “Resistance to Capitalist and Patriarchal Ideologies in Charlotte Bronte's *The Professor*” under my supervision. I hereby recommend her thesis to be submitted for the final viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Resistance to Capitalist and Patriarchal Ideologies in Charlotte Bronte's *The Professor*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Menuka Ghimire has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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## Abstract

This thesis entitled "Resistance to Capitalist and Patriarchal Ideologies in Charlotte Bronte's *The Professor*" is an analysis of the novel from the view point of Marxist Feminism. This work basically focuses on the domination of capitalists and patriarchs upon proletariat and females and resistance of proletariat and females to capitalists and patriarchal norms and values. The central characters William Crimsworth and Frances Henry are working as laborers under capitalist and patriarchal mode of society. Wherever they go they cannot be free from the claws of bourgeois and patriarchs that make their life deplorable and poverty. The whole situation of human degradation has been portrayed as an inevitable consequence of private accumulation of capital. Edward, Mr. Hunsden, M. Pelet, Zoraide Reuter belong to the upper class. They present their cruel behavior towards the workers in their factory, private schools and so on. William becomes the victim of their cruel behavior. So, he moves from one job to another job for the hope of getting a respectable social economic status. Frances also becomes the victim of her master as well as her husband. She does not remain silent but rather resists to capitalist and patriarchal ideologies.

## Table of Contents

	Page No.
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
I. Historical Background of <i>The Professor</i>	7
II. Resistance to Capitalist and Patriarchal Ideologies in Charlotte Bronte's <i>The Professor</i>	16
III. Reflection of Victorian Social Reality in Bronte's <i>The Professor</i>	41
Works Cited	44

## I. Historical Background of *The Professor*

This research focuses on a famous English novelist Charlotte Bronte's *The Professor*. The present research meets the crux or main idea that is entitled as "Resistance to Capitalist and Patriarchal Ideologies in Bronte's *The Professor*". It is a methodology of studying the relationship among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formations. That is to say, it seeks to examine how – various biological, social and cultural categories such as gender, race, class, and other axes of identity interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic social inequality.

Throughout the novel, Bronte tries to present the fragmentation in the contemporary society on the basis of class. The society is divided into two different hostile camps where people are struggling to get a good socio-economic status. William Crimsworth, the central character of the novel, represents the proletariat of the nineteenth century Victorian period. He belongs to the lower class in the sense that he is working as a clerk in the mill, though he does not get enough money for his labour. Instead of getting a good position in the bourgeois society he has been treated as an object in relation to bourgeois people like Edward and Hunsden. His human value has been turned into mere money relation in the society. Edward, Mr. Hunsden, Pelet, M. Vandenhuten are representing the upper class of society in the sense that they possess a lot of means of production. Edward treats William as an insignificant person because he does not think of the life of lower class people. But William, being aware of the social condition, wants to have a respectable status in the society. In order to upgrade himself to the desired social stratum, he works very hard.

Charlotte Bronte was born on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1816 in Thornton, Yorkshire. She was the eldest surviving daughter of Patrick and Maria Branwell. Her mother Maria died from cancer in 1821 at the age of thirty eight. So her aunt Elizabeth Branwell came to keep house and take care of the children. Two older sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, died of consumption in 1825. Her father, Patrick Bronte was a strict Yorkshire clergyman who forbade his offspring from socializing with other children in the village of Haworth, where he had been appointed perpetual curate. Instead, he promoted self-education and encouraged his children to read the Bible and the works of William Shakespeare, William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, and Sir Walter Scott, as well as newspapers and monthly magazine. Her father did all effort to promote the intellectual development of his children for their educational development. He had managed a good library in his own home to give knowledge. The death of her mother and her sister at her early age deeply affected Charlotte. Her miserable experience at school is presented in her novel *Jane Eyre*.

Charlotte Bronte expresses her personal compulsion and real scenario of her society in her work; *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, *Villette*, and posthumously published *The Professor*. *The Professor* is unique among her novel which is written from the point of view of a male narrator. It tells the story of William Crimsworth, who leaves his post as a clerk at his brother's mill in England to start a new life in Brussels, teaching English at a girls school. There he falls in love with the Catholic headmistress, eventually returning with his Belgian bride to England.

With her next novel, *Jane Eyre*, Bronte examines the position of women in society. *Jane Eyre* is the most popular and successful of Bronte's novels. The heroine, Jane Eyre is different from earlier nineteenth-century female characters: where most heroines were beautiful, ignorant and dependent, Jane is plain,



intelligent, and independent. The society treats cruelly to Jane who is an orphaned, deprive, a penniless child. At the orphanage the child forms a passionate attachment for an older and preciously intelligent girl, Helen Burns, because Helen is good to her. It is also so with the school superintendent, Miss Evans who treats Jane with justice and confidence in her ability to make good. Normal human relationships based on mutual trust and humanity take a disproportionate place in Jane`s affections, because of the traumatic experiences of her childhood. However, she seeks an appropriate marriage partner, she insists on an equal and mutually satisfying relationship, defying both the literary and social conventions of the time. The marriage of Jane and Rochester place Bronte on the vanguard of women`s issues.

*Shirly* is an important novel which was published in 1849. *Shirly* presents a powerful indictment of the position of women in nineteenth-century England. It is the portrait of a soul, and a picture of manners and character, but it has no particular plan. There is no marked crisis in it, either outward or spiritual; only a couple of love stories long drawn out and lumbering to a close that becomes obvious in advance. The episodes of machine-breaking and shooting are brilliantly told, but are soon over. They are, in substance, taken from the life. It is also an intensely regional novel, not only its setting, its character and its dialogue, but its plot depending as it does upon the native textile trade, spring direct from the Yorkshire soil. The novel has an especial importance too as being-together with Mrs.Gaskell`s novel *Mary Barton*, which was begun about the sometime though published earlier-the first industrial novel in English literature, the first novel to depict change in social conditions caused by the industrial revolution. In the novel, the emotional tension rises from the characters of the girls who become close friends and whose destines

are interwoven, the heiress Shirley Keeldar and the Rector's niece Caroline Helstone. Caroline Helstone is a more Victorian figure, but she is one of the subjects, truest, most delicate of Charlotte's fictitious conceptions.

Her fourth novel or the final novel *Villette* was published in 1853 three years after *Shirley*. It is her richest and most completely integrated of all her work, a masterpiece of sustained imagination and style. In this novel, Charlotte gathers together themes previously touched upon the earlier works but not fully realized. This novel is packed with characters and incidents with tense drama, with profound reflection of life, with uncanny penetration into human motives and conduct.

*The Professor* is a story about an orphan William Crimsworth. William Crimsworth is an orphan who moves from one place to another in search of bright future. He goes to a town he had never been to before to seek his brother. There he meets his brother, he had never seen, and applies for a work. He gets a job of a clerk for his older brother, mill owner in the North of England. But his brother treats him in a purely mercenary manner and without affection. Unable to endure his brother's tyrannical nature, Crimsworth departs for Brussels to pursue a career in education. Hired to teach English at a girls' school, Crimsworth falls in love with Frances Henri, a pupil teacher at the school. Crimsworth resists the manipulation of the deceitful Catholic headmistress, Zoraide Reuter, who later marries the headmaster of a nearby boys' school. After resigning his position at the school, Crimsworth finds a new post, enabling him to marry Frances. His bride refuses to give up her own career as a seamstress and together the two earn a respectable income and return to England.

Right from its first publication in 1857, Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor* draws the attention of various critics. They view this novel from different

perspectives. Phyllis Bentley views *The Professor* from the psychological point of view in which Charlotte expresses psychological horror of the Belgian girl students.

He writes:

The psychological horrors of the Belgian girl pupils would hardly be exposed more ruthlessly by the pen of Freud; the mother of M. Pelet and Mlle. Reuter are the unpleasing hags, Hunsden, Crimsworth's detestable Yorkshire friend, is psychopathic in the fierce incivility; even Crimsworth is disagreeably plain and Frances "Not striking" in appearance. (40)

Another critic, Annette R. Federico says that Brontë's *The Professor* is rich in authorship. The author tries to explore the authorial power through inside the system. She writes:

Brontë is no less intent on examining the encoding of gender in nineteenth century discourse. Specifically, the male voice provides an opening to confront a central issue for Brontë [...] Power [...] which is different from her explorations of powerlessness in her later heroine centered novels. In *The Professor*, she is learning what it is to have the power of authorship, and therefore it is consistent that she should go inside the system to attempt to represent the source of that power. (2)

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar compare Brontë's *The Professor* and George Eliot's *The Lifted Veil*. Both novelists use male narrator in their novel. In Gilbert and Gubar's view using male narrator in female's novel is an artistic error and an elision of their feminist voice. They write:

In both *The Professor* and *The Lifted Veil* then, the woman writer with the masculine pseudonym engages her own status as female other by assuming the voice, the authority, and the privileged position of the male subject. In this interpretation, Bronte and Eliot are not concerned with the experience of the narrator as a man or the representation of masculinity; authorial voice is still tied to female “Schizophrenia” a “disease with authority” self-hatred and internalization. (449)

M.M. Brammar emphasizes in Charlotte`s style which has irregular intervals. He writes:

“*The Professor* leads 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 on the motives for these” (166).

Winifred Gerin takes this novel as the author`s personal experience in Belgium. He writes, “What was entirely new in *The Professor* were the closely observed senses and characters, derived from author`s Belgian experiences, which mark a leap forward in judgment and mastery of her medium” (28).

Mrs. Gaskell comments the novel as attractive as she writes, “I found the beginning very feeble, the whole narrative deficient in incident and in general attractiveness” (290).

Kathleen Tilloston emphasizes on the departure of narrative and avoidance of extreme feeling. He states, “*The Professor* was a necessary stage; it set up a bare framework of ‘working one’s way through life’ with a ‘rational mind’, a framework

of ‘working one’s way through life’ with a ‘rational mind’, a framework unknown to Angria, and from which none of her later narratives seriously departs”(285).

Many critics have tried their best to unfold the various aspects of this text. The novel has been viewed on the theme of animosity, men and women relationship and reflection of the author. Most often the novel has been researched for its stylistic change in narrative technique and in the theme of freedom. But the prime concern of this research is different from the issue of other critics. It explores the struggle of the protagonists to get adjustment for the respectable status in the capitalistic society.

Marxist feminism is a sub-type of feminist theory which focuses on the dismantling of capitalism as a way to liberate women. Marxist feminism states that capitalism, which gives rise to economic inequality, dependency, political confusion and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women, is the root of women’s oppression. Marxism helps us to understand “how economic forces have been manipulated by patriarchal law and customs to keep women economically, politically, and socially oppressed as an underclass” (Tyson 93). Marxism, which is used to understand the feminist economical, political, and social issue is called Marxist feminism. Thus, the primary task of Marxist feminism “is to create the kind of world in which women will experience themselves as whole persons as integrated, rather than fragmented or splintered, beings”(Tang 45). Gender inequality is a product of capitalism and determined by the capitalistic mode of production. Capitalist social system is the main cause of women’s oppression in society and its way out is to dismantle this capitalistic social system.

According to Marxist theory, in capitalist societies the individual is shaped by class relations; that is, people’s capacities, needs and interests are seen to be determined by the mode of production that characterizes the society they inhabit.

Marxist feminists see gender inequality as determined ultimately by the capitalist mode of production. Gender oppression is class oppression and women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression which is maintained (like racism) because it serves the interests of capital and the ruling class.

A central tenet of Marxist feminism is the belief that women's situation cannot be understood in isolation from its socio-economic context, and that any meaningful improvement in the lives of women requires that this context be changed. We live in a, as Philips says, "Class society that is also structured by gender, which means that men and women experience class in different ways" (qtd. in Bryson 258). For Marxist feminist, gender oppression is class oppression and women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression. To analyze women's situation in society understanding its socio-economic context is the prime requisite. As the Marxists see the alienation of labour from work, self, human beings and nature women are also alienated from sex, self, human beings and from whole surroundings. In capitalism, labour is treated as a commodity which can be sold and bought.

Capitalism intensifies alienation and generalizes it throughout all levels of society. The end of alienation requires communism. So, in the society, the end of patriarchal domination requires communism. As the classless society emerges the class discrimination and gender discrimination will be diminished. Because when the classless society is established all people become equal and property will be in every bodies hand equally then only in such society women get their proper place and equality. In this context K.K. Ruthven writes:

Marxism identifies capitalism (and the modes of production which support it) as a material base of a class system which is the source of

all oppression, and holds that the specific subject of women will end necessarily in that general dismissal of oppression which is to follow the destruction of capitalism. (28)

The present research work has been divided into three chapters. First chapter is the introductory outline of the novel, writer and the methodology 'Marxist Feminism' as the theoretical tool. The second chapter will analyze the text as a considerable length with a critical summary. It will try to prove the hypothesis sorting out some evidences from the text. Last but not the list is the conclusion of this research. It is based on the textual analysis in the third chapter.

## II. Resistance to Capitalist and Patriarchal Ideologies in Charlotte Bronte's *The Professor*

*The Professor* by Charlotte Bronte is her first novel that deals with the unequal treatment between males and females in the capitalist society. In this respect Marxist feminists believe that capitalism is primarily responsible for class structure in the society. They further challenge the idea that equality is possible in capitalistic system. Under capitalism, the mode of production determines the mode of reproduction. This instance does not stem from Marxism's inherent economic determinism but from the very nature of the capitalist mode of production as a whole.

Marxist Feminism supports the idea that the biological difference cannot justify any form of oppression and inequality in human societies because it is not responsible for oppression and inequality between sexes. Instead, they argue that it is the class structure that is responsible for the oppression and inequality between sexes. Guerin defines Marxist Feminism as:

Marxist Feminist criticism focuses on the relation between reading and social realities...Karl Marx argued that all historical and social development are determined by forms of economic production. Marxist Feminists attack the prevailing capitalistic system of the west, which they view as sexually as well as economically exploitative. Marxist Feminists thus combine study of class with that of gender. (202)

Charlotte Bronte's *The Professor* presents the male's domination over female which is the cause of class structure not the sexes. *The Professor* was written during the Victorian period, the period of capitalism and the period of class consciousness.



So, the so-called upper class always oppresses the lower class. Not only this, the working class man could himself be an oppressor of his wife. Regarding this Inman says; "All women are oppressed in these areas of life (home, in education, in the media, in the manufacture of femininity and in the sexual double standard) and insisted that the working class man could himself be an oppressor of his wife- she called this 'male domination under class rule" (qtd in Bryson 85).

In *The professor* there are multiple forms of oppression and discrimination. The central characters of attraction are William Crimsworth and Frances Henry. They are the representatives of working class people, who due to their loneliness and poverty are living pitiable and miserable life in the street of capitalistic mode of society in the great town of X.

*The Professor* focuses on different classes existing in the society where the dignity of lower class people always gets suppressed from bourgeois people. The world of *The Professor* is the world of inequality and class conflict where the situation of poverty is dominant in the novel. Charlotte has captured the condition of reality shared not only by William and Frances, but the aristocrats and business people.

Almost all the characters of the novel represent two types of classes where they represent the social realities. The narrator and his beloved wife Frances Henry represent the working class of people working for the capitalist's benefits. On the other hand, the mill owner Edward, Mr. Hunsden, the school owner, M.Pelet, Zoraide Reuter are from the higher rank of the society who do have lots of money and means of production in one way or the other. Such people always care about their interest and profession. They give employment but always count their benefit. Edward accepts to give Crimsworth job and says:

Since you know French and German, I will take you as second clerk to manage the foreign correspondence of house. I shall give you a good salary-£90 a year; and now, he continued, raising his voice, hear once for all what I have to say about our relationship, and all that sort of humbug. I must have no nonsense on that point; it would never suit me. I shall excuse you nothing on the plea of being my brother. If I find you stupid, negligent, dissipated, idle, I shall dismiss you as I would any other clerk. Ninety pounds a year are good wages and I expect to have the full value of my money out of you. Remember, too, that things are on a practical footing on my establishment: businesslike habits, feelings, and ideas suit me best. Do you understand? (13)

Edward gives employment to William in his mill as a second clerk. He works in the mill to translate documents of different languages into English and to deal with the business affair of mill very hardly.

The master, Edward tries to make him an object in his mill during the duty. He expects more work from William. Not only this, he treats him like an animal which can be seen in the conversation between Mr. Hunsden and William:

What do you think I do with my eyes and ears? I've been in your counting-house more than once when Crimsworth has treated you like a dog – called for a book, for instance, and when you gave him the wrong one, or what he chose to consider the wrong one, flung it back almost in your face; desired you to shut or open the door as if you had been his flunkey –to say nothing of your position at the party about a month ago, where you had neither place nor partner, but

hovered about like a poor, shabby hanger-on. And how patient you were under each and all of these circumstances. (25)

During the work in Edward's company (Mill), William finds his master very cruel in his treatment. Edward does not treat him as a human being because the society has already turned into the mode of money relation. William is treated as an animal without any personal, social and human dignity. In the beginning William accepts his inferior dignity. He says; "As an animal, Edward excelled me for; should be proves as paramount in mind as in person, I must be slave, for I must expect from him no lion-like generosity to one weaker than himself, his cold, avarious eye, his stern, forbidding manner, told me" (28).

In capitalistic social system, relationship between employer and employee is similar to the commodity and its owner. Capitalists have everything but proletariats have nothing except their labour. When proletariats come to know that they are exploited, they are not getting proper wage they try to find out where and how they are exploited. Then they revolt against every kind of injustice. They revolt freely because they have nothing to lose but bourgeois have everything to lose. Then they establish classless society which is a society of every people. In such society women also get equal chances. Then, hierarchy less society emerges. That is the result of class consciousness.

William Crimsworth works in the Edward's mill for three months. But Edward's (capitalist) treatment upon him makes him leave the mill. In the beginning he accepts Edward's cruel treatment (animal comparison), his lest wage, and more work. But at last he cannot accept such unjust behavior. And he revolts against the exploitation imposed upon him. He revolts freely against Edward's injustice. There is a hot discussion between them. William says to Edward:

Come, Edward Crimsworth, enough of this. It is time you and I wound up accounts. I have now given your service three months' trial, and I find it the most nauseous slavery under the sun. Seek another clerk. I stay no longer. (30)

The picture of the bourgeois commercial economy of the nineteenth century seems so harsh that it towered over all human values, the sense of humanity and duty. Wealth becomes the only object everyone desire to obtain. William accepts the job offered by his brother Edward and works very hard. One day William's brother comes to the mill where William was working. William becomes happy and remembers their relationship, forgets the difference of position. But by living in capitalist society Edward has lost human values, the sense of humanity and duty. Edward does not care about the relationship but cares about his money. He treats his brother as a means to obtain money. He wants the relation of master and servant between them; "Do as I order" was the answer, "and no questions! You are my servant; obey me!"(24). Due to capitalism human values have been lost. All human relationships and human values have changed into money relation with the rise of capitalism.

Since the very beginning of the novel William starts struggling for life. Due to the class conflict in the society, the hostility begins with the aristocratic families:

Tynedale and Secombe for my education; but as I grew up, and heard by degrees of the preserving hostility, the hatred till death evinced by them against my father, of suffering of my mother of all the wrong, in short, of our house. (5)

William no longer remains as a clerk in the mill of Edward and Mr. Hunsden due to the harsh treatment of the masters. The ill treatment compels him to go out off the

work. He starts his journey from 'X' town to the crowded city of Brussels for getting next job. He is able to get a job after long struggle in private boarding school. The school is run by the friendly M. Pelet, who treats William kindly and politely. M. Pelet decides to give him an appointment as a teacher in the school:

The subject of salary next comes on. It was fixed at one thousand francs per annum, besides board and lodging. 'And in addition', suggested M. Pelet, 'as there will be some hours in each day during which your services will not be required in my establishment in other seminaries, and thus turn your vacant moments to profitable account.'

(44)

When William gets a new job at an all-boys boarding school in Belgium, soon William's merits as a professor reach the ears of Mlle. Reuter the headmistress of the neighboring girl's school. Mlle Reuter offers him a position at her school:

She was very cautious, quite on her guard. She did not absolutely barging, but she warily sounded me to find out what my expectation might be; and when she could not get me to name a sum, she reasoned and reasoned with a fluent yet quiet circumlocution of speech, and at last mailed me down to five hundred Francs per annum-not too much, but I agreed. Before the negotiation was completed, it began to grow a little dusk. I did not hasten it, ... the sort of business talent she displayed. (60)

William starts working there very sincerely by thinking that it is the ultimate solution for him in the capitalist city. He just gets wages from the school which is much less than the expectation of his work. In the capitalist society workers do not

get the wages as they deserve. It is the masters who determine the wages of the workers without considering the needs and the evaluation to the workers.

Workers get lower wages than their work. They know that but they are compelled to work as there is no other alternative. William works sincerely in the school the whole day. He keeps himself busy in school affairs and with the lessons of the classes but he gets low salary. The city of Brussels seems very pleasant for him in the sense that he feels comfortable and some degree of freedom though he is working under the capitalists or masters' wishes.

But William cannot remain in the school any longer as a teacher. He does not get sympathy from the school owners rather he understands the contemptuous and unfair attitude from his masters. The conversation between M. Pelet and Zoraide Reuter reflects the real attitude towards William:

What folly! How could I prefer on unknown foreigner to you? And then- not to flatter your vanity- Crimsworth could not bear comparison with you either physical or mentally, he is not a handsome and intelligent man at all. Some may call him gentleman like and intelligent looking. (86)

The bourgeois does not understand the life of poor people. So, they do not understand the real problem of William. He is unable to raise his living standard with the small amount of money which he gets as salary of his own labour. The masters, M. Pelet and Zoraide Reuter are of the same ages but they do not understand the problems of William because of the gap between the consciousness among the classes. In other words capitalists do not want to realize the problems faced by the workers. So, William seeks another alternative for the betterment of his socio-economic standard. The cold relationship between William and Pelet and

Zoraide Reuter makes him uncomfortable to live in the school. He, therefore, leaves the school and searches for other good place for work. He later gets an appointment in a private college. He starts his job of teaching with the hope of better life in the capitalistic mode of society. But he remains again under the heavy pressure of capitalism.

Another central character, the beloved and wife of William, is Frances Henry. William Crimsworth the male protagonist is victimized by the capitalist social system but Frances Henry is victimized not only by capitalistic social system but also by patriarchal social system. That is to say she is doubly victimized. She is victimized by capitalism and patriarchy. Henry is from lower class people in the capitalistic society. She is Swiss speaking girl belonging to working class people working as a lace mender in the city of Brussels. Actually she has migrated to a crowded city Brussels from Switzerland for the sake of having good life. She lives with her old aunt who is very helpless:

I am poor and not skillful; I have not great acquirements. When I was quite tired of this round, I begged my aunt to go to Brussels. My existence is no larger here, because I am no richer or higher; I walk in as narrow a limit, but the scene is changed. It would change again if I went to England. I knew something of the *bourgeois* of Geneva; now I know something of the *bourgeois* of Brussels. If I went to London, I should know something of the *bourgeois* of London. (106)

She is compelled to work in her early age because of her poverty. Her poor aunt could not provide her food and education properly.

Their living condition can be realized by the observation of management in the room:

I apprehended after all that Mlle Reuter's hint about its extreme poverty might be too well founded, and I feared to embarrass the lace-mender by entering her lodgings unawares! Poor the place might be; poor truly it was; but its neatness was better than elegance, and had but a bright little fire shone on that clean hearth, I should have deemed it more attractive than a palace. No fire was there, however, and no fuel laid ready to light; the lace mender was unable to allow herself that indulgence especially now when, deprived by death of her sole relative she had only her own unaided exertions to rely on. (127)

She is a poor fellow in the capitalist society. She is living an alienated and orphan life dominated by patriarchal law and social system. In *The Professor* there are some female characters like Mrs Crimsworth, William Crimsworth's mother, M. Pelet's mother, Mademoiselle, Adele Dronsart, Juanna and so on. They are in one way or other dominated by the so-called males of the Victorian Period. And there is only physical description of female characters. Their other positive side has not been shown to the reader. Females in the novel are depicted as weak persons without any guts and without any spirit of enterprise or resistance to events and persons. They are presented as sick, pale and frail creatures completely devoid of intellect and accomplishments. They are judged by their outer look. They are objectified or commodified. William Crimsworth meets his brother and his brother calls him for supper. There he meets his sister-in-law and he describes her as: "She was young, tall, and well-shaped; her dress was handsome and fashionable. So much my first glance sufficed to ascertain" (8). Crimsworth describes her outer appearance, not her inward talent.



In the same way women are considered as careless one. When Henry leaves the school William becomes very sad and search for Henry everywhere. But he could not find. One day Henry herself leaves a note for William. William becomes happy and reads it. He finds that there is no address of Henry and he says:

'No address on the note', I continued, drawing it again from the pocket book and examining it on each side of the two leaves.

'Women are women that is certain, and always do business like women'. Men mechanically put a date and address to their communications. (120)

Likewise males in the novel are depicted as powerful persons with guts and with the spirit of enterprise or resistance to events and persons. They are presented as active, superior and powerful beings. The description of Edward is done with a superior quality:

I rose from my seat and turned towards the library door, I saw a fine looking and powerful man, light complexioned, well-made, and of a athletic proportions. The first glance made me aware of an air of promptitude and sharpness, shown as well in his movements as in his port, his eye, and the general expression of his fac. He greeted me brevity, and in the moment of shaking hands, scanned me from head to feet. (7)

From the very beginning of human civilization, women were considered as inferior, incidental beings, whereas men as the subject, superior, and absolute ones.

Patriarchal society has indeed been well served by the masculinist images. In patriarchy all images of women have constructed by male. Time and again, we come across the ambivalence in men's feelings towards women. For the masculinists

women and sex are almost synonymous term. Misogyny includes the beliefs that women are irrational, incompetent, gossipy, silly, overemotional, stupid, petty, dishonest, oversexed, and a host of other ugly things. Such stereotypes culminate in the attitude that women must be dominated, controlled, subdued as well as abused.

Though men and women are the products of the same society, man is called a cultured being and woman is considered as a wild being. Men are always overpowered with the sense of “I as man; she is woman. I am strong; she is weak. I am tough; she is tender. I am self sufficient; she is needful.”(Rutheven54). Hence women’s place in patriarchal circle is unstable. Men think that it is their right to rule over women.

Frances Henry has been living with her poor aunt who is unable to provide her daily essential needs and support her daily need. Therefore, to maintain the daily essential needs, she has to work in the aristocrats’ houses and teach the lace-mending in a school from where she just gets wage which hardly manages their poor living needs. Her poor standard can be understood from her profession of lace-mending which is not highly intellectual work:

You teach lace-mending?

Yes.

'A dull, stupid occupation. Do you like it?

'No; it is tedious.' (103)

Because of her poor condition Frances is compelled to leave her education from school without completing it. When her aunt dies she becomes alone and helpless. So she leaves the school.

William Crimsworth searches for her everywhere every day. But he cannot find her. He searches her for four weeks continuously but in vain. In the fear of

losing her, he enters 'The Protestant Cemetery, outside the gate of Louvain'. There he suddenly meets Henry. She is on a deep pain in the death of her aunt. Her pains and misery a bit decreases with the presence of William. After the death of her aunt she is alone, parentless, penniless and homeless. It is the William who becomes the protector. He thinks that she is his treasure and she is needful. She is weak but he is a strong man to give shelter to her. It is the general concept of the male member of the patriarchal society. He thinks his superiority over Henry and acts accordingly. He compares her with an object:

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 thought, feeling such as I felt; my idea of the shrine in which to seal 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- the gift of all my affections; model of truth and honor, of independence and conscientiousness-those refiners and sustainers of an honest life. (125)

Women are treated as commodity in capitalistic society. They see freedom but cannot experience it. In family their voices do not get any place in front of her husband, boyfriend, father and other male members and dictators. Their relatives, supposed nearest persons try to impose their desire upon women.

Therefore they feel alienated from nature and surrounding. Similarly, women neither get any respect of their house work nor any wage. That is the main cause of alienation of women's self. In capitalistic society, workers are like commodity and

in patriarchal society women's place is also like marketable thing. Males use women as they want and get benefit according to their will. Actually, capitalists get benefit from the exploitation of women. But there are some Marxist feminists who reject the demand of wage for housework. Housework is related to feeling and emotion for them. In her book *The Economic Emergence of Women* Barbara Bergman advocates dislike for wage of housework if woman demands wages for housework "the sexual division of labour would actually ossify" (qtd. on Tong 56). On the other hand, if it is not demanded males dominate females more.

Working class women are treated badly by the higher class women and working class men also try to manipulate working class women according to their will. The same is the case in Henry. Henry is a poor, helpless, penniless woman. So she does lace mending in a Mlle Reuter's school. But Mlle Reuter dismisses her from her job. The job was very important for Henry but knowing the situation of Henry Reuter dismisses her from the job. Reuter treats Henry badly:

Mademoiselle I shall not soon cease to regret your departure from my establishment, though indeed it is true that you have taught your class of pupils so well that they are all quite accomplished in the little works you manage so skillfully, and have not the slightest need of further instruction. My second teacher must in future supply your place, with regard to the younger pupils, as well as she can, though she is indeed an inferior artiste to you, and doubtless it will be your part now to assume a higher position in your calling. I am sure you will everywhere find schools and families willing to profit by your talents. (126)

Women are mostly confined in household activities and they are not allowed to go out to work (in office) because their strength, skill, ability are taken to be inferior to males. In fact, this is not real but general assumption. Women are doing household activities without any paying.

Women's work plays vital role in outside work but they do not get any credit. In fact, women enter the productive and important work more than the males of society. This is what Rosemarie says:

No woman has to enter the productive work force, for all women are already in it, even if no one recognizes the fact. Women's work is the necessary condition for all other labour from which, in turn surplus value is extracted. By providing current (and future) workers not only with food and clothes but also with emotional and domestic comfort, women keep the cogs of the capitalistic machine running. (54)

Therefore, some Marxist feminists ask for the wage for their household activities. They say that from the production of capitalistic factory or from surplus value some amount of money should be given to women. State should pay for housework of women. Tong brings this Marxist feminist concept from Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, who "proposed that the state (the government and employers) not individual men (husband, fathers, and boy friend), pay wage to housewives because capital ultimately profits from women's exploitation" (955).

The same is the case in Frances Henry. Henry wants to be independent. When she express her desire to William he says, "It would be useless for you to fag yourself by going out to give lessons; on six thousand francs you and I can live, and live well" (167). When Frances talks about to be independent of him he takes it

something flattering to man's strength, something consonant to his honorable pride.

So to show his superiority over women he says:

Life has been painful and laborious enough to you. So far, Frances; you required complete rest. Your twelve hundred francs would not form a very important addition to our income, and what sacrifice of comfort of earn it! Relinquish your labors- you must be weary- and let me have the happiness of giving you rest. (167)

Marxist Feminism says that capitalism which gives rise to economic inequality, dependency, political confusion and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women, is the root cause of women's oppression. So, to liberate women from such unhealthy social relation capitalism should be replaced by the socialist structure. Regarding this view Engel and Bebel say:

Women's oppression is a product of class society that will only be ended when proletarian revolution brings about a socialist society in which women will have full economic independence, and domestic work and child care will be collectivized. (qtd. in Bryson.121)

Both William Crimsworth and Henry are orphans. They do not have their own parents. Henry is brought up by her aunt and William is by her uncle. It is William who get chance to educate himself but Henry cannot get education like William because of the capitalist social system that is gender biased. So, Charlotte Bronte wants to show such unhealthy social system of the contemporary Victorian period. According to her it is socialism which will give equal opportunity to men and women.

The world of *The Professor* is very hard and difficult for the common people. It is the world dominated by capitalism. William and his wife are central

figures. They have neither any heroic qualities nor dominating personality. They work whole day for wage that is actually very minimum for their labour. The condition of working people is very pitiable.

The term patriarchy is not of course new to political theory. The word patriarchy is derived from the Greek 'Patriarches', meaning 'head of the tribe'. It was central to seventeenth-century debates over the extent of monarchical power; here supporters of absolute rule claimed that the power of a king over his people was the same as that of a father over his family and that both were sanctioned by God and nature. Regarding this Valerie Bryson says:

Patriarchy is primarily maintained by a process of conditioning which starts with childhood socialization within the family and is reinforced by education, literature and religion to such an extent its values are internalized by men and women alike; for some women this leads to self-hatred, self-rejection and an acceptance of inferiority. (185)

Patriarchy also rests upon economic exploitation and the use of threat of force. In all societies patriarchy relies upon sexual violence and rape. About the patriarchy Millet views:

Love, too, can be but a confident trick, part of patriarchal ideology designed to hide the realities of power; not until patriarchy has been overthrown and sexuality radically transformed can men and women relate in any way as equal human beings. (186)

Capitalists, also represent patriarchy, exercise to create false consciousness to establish their empire. They try to hide all kinds of discriminations and injustice. Workers work very hard for the production of factory and produce a large quantity but "none of them bore which name or any other mark of their individual

contribution” (Tyson 58). So, the workers are alienated from the production itself. They are alienated from the product they find the work unpleasant but they are bound to do their work; “When the potential source of workers humanization becomes the actual source of his or her dehumanization, the worker is bound to undergo a major psychological crisis” (Tong 44). Therefore workers are alienated from themselves. Workers are alienated from other human being as well, because they see around them their co-workers as competitor for job and promotion as the capitalistic system encourages. This sense of competition for job and promotion alienates workers from their co-workers. In this system finally workers are alienated from the nature itself “because the kind of work they do, it makes them see nature as an obstacle to their survive” (Tong 44). So, they are alienated from nature itself because of the capitalistic economic system. Therefore, the most important aspect of elimination of alienation is the eradication of capitalism which helps women also to emancipate from patriarchal domination.

For the elimination of the oppression of women capitalistic economy should be diminished which also dismantles the patriarchal social system. As workers are alienated from the product, self, from other human being and nature, women are also alienated from sex, self, children and their surroundings. Women do not get their proper place because they are women:

Women are not paid less simply because they are unskilled, but because working class men have succeeded in protecting their own interest at women’s expense. They have been able to do this because dominant attitude label any work done by women is inherently inferior to that done by men. (Bryson 241)



Frances Henry wants to do job. So, she requests William for continuation of her work but William imposes his authority over her and tells her not to do much labour. According to him he is responsible to feed the family not Frances. He wants to give her rest. That makes Frances alienate from her work. Her feelings of alienation can be seen in the following narration:

Instead of answering me with her usual respectful promptitude, she only sigh, and said, 'How rich you are. Monsieur!' and then she stirred uneasy on my arms. 'Three thousand francs!' she murmured, 'while I get only twelve hundred! She went on faster. 'However, it must be so for the present; and monsieur, were you not saying something about my giving up my place?' (168 )

For Marxist, the root cause of all forms of oppression consists in the division of society into classes. For many feminists, on the other hand, the oppression of women is rooted in the nature of men. It is not a social but a biological phenomenon. According to feminists this is an entirely static and unscientific concept of the human being. The oppression of women by men has always existed and therefore always exists. Marxism explains that this is not the case. It shows that, along with class society, private property and the state, the bourgeois family has not always existed, and that the oppression of women is only as old as the division of society into classes. Its abolition is therefore dependent on the abolition of classes, that is, on the socialist revolution.

Engels and Bebel are very important figures to put forward the feminist issues. They share the basic position that women's oppression is a product of class society that will only be ended when proletarian revolution brings about a socialist society in which women will have full economic independence, and domestic work

and childcare will be collectivized. Bebel however, goes beyond Engels in a number of ways, and he gave women's issues a centrality quite lacking in Marx's own writings, insisting that socialism could not succeed without the active participation of women and that "there can be no emancipation of humanity without the social independence and equality of the sexes" (6).

According to Bebel:

Under conditions of capitalist competition woman cannot earn as much as a man and that she is additionally worn down by domestic toil: while her husband 'avails himself of the freedom that accident gives him of having been born a man' and seeks refuge in drinking and gambling, the wife 'sits up, and sews and patches deep into the night she must work like a dray horse; for her there is no rest or recreation'. (qtd. in Bryson 103)

Frances works as a lace-mender for a half year. But Frances does not like to continue such non intellectual work. She has a keen interest in teaching field. So, she starts to work in a school. William works in a college and Frances works in a school. Frances cannot earn as much as William and she has to work in house.

Whenever William gets a free time he enters into the library to get literary knowledge. By reading different books he acquires different kinds of knowledge. On the other hand, Frances do household activities in her free time. There is not a (study room) library for her. Her library room is her kitchen. There is not any responsibility for man to household activities. William says:

In the daytime my house and establishment were conducted by Madame the directress, a stately and elegant woman, bearing much anxious thought on her large brow, much calculated dignity in her

serious mien. Immediately after breakfast I used to part with this lady. I went to my college, she to her classroom. (186)

So, males are free from household activities but females are not. In free time man can do whatever they like, like drinking, gambling, reading, writing etc. But woman never gets free time. They should do double duty, the duty of outside work and the duty of house work.

In the novel, the kitchen responsibility is done by Frances not by William. Frances is doing house work as well as out work, the work of teaching. "Frances approaches my library window, puts honeysuckle which half covers it, and tells me tea is ready"(109). It is the pitiable situation of woman. They do double duty but their duty of home neither count nor they get wage for house work. They perform their work silently. So some Marxist feminist asks wages for household activities.

Another concept of patriarchy regarding the marriage is that woman should be happy with her husband though he is a drunkard, unfaithful, harsh, and careless towards his wife. Wives should tolerate such inhuman activities of husbands and obey their husbands. Law also cannot give justice to women in Victorian period. William is faithful, careful, husbands of Frances. He has a boast upon his faithfulness and carefulness. So he says:

Frances, was, then, a good and dear wife to me, because I was to her a good, just, and faithful husband. What she would have been had she 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 a while; and when I

found it intolerable and incurable, I should have left my torture suddenly and silently.' (189)

Frances Henry seems much conscious about her right. When William asks what she would have done when she had got such drunkard, tyrant, prodigal, careless man as her husband she answer with confidence that she should had left him. They further discuss about the matter. William again asks:

'And if law or might had forced you back again?

'What! to a drunkard, a profligate, a selfish spendthrift, an unjust fool?

'Yes'

'I would have gone back, again assured myself whether or not his vice and my misery were capable of remedy, and if not have left him again'.

'And again forced to return and compelled to abide? (190)

If male wants to leave his wife he can leave, there is not any compulsion to stay with his wife. But if wife becomes tired of her husband, she cannot leave him because law compels her to stay with her husband.

Bronte has written this novel with the interest to bring out the situation of the Victorian period. M. Pelet, Zoraide Reuter, Edward, Mr. Hudson and so on are the capitalists; they do have the possession in the means of production in various sectors. They are getting more and more profit from the factory and schools by giving few wages only to the workers. But the condition of the worker is very difficult to raise their socio- economic status. William and Frances Henry are the representatives of the thousands of laborers who always remain in the same bourgeois ideology of the society although they want to escape from one place to

another place in course of their jobs. There is no healthy relationship between the classes. There is cold relationship between William, Edward and M. Pelet because of the money relation.

Charlotte Bronte being a realist attempts to draw the attention of the readers towards the reality of her society. She selects the subject matter for her novel from the society where the social condition of England is going towards capitalism. The world presented in the novel is not exactly the same to the society of the Victorian period rather it is similar in various ways. According to Bronte art is an outcome of the subjective imagination of the author and the objective selection of the events. She does not believe in the photographic representation of the society in art. Being a true artist she believes in the pleasure of art that should not be missed. The novelist is able to present the socio-economic condition of the society in the novel *The Professor*. She presents the domination of the patriarchal ideologies in the contemporary Victorian period. She specially analyzes the classes of the Victorian society in the art form. She mixes the different classes of characters with their relations to work in the novel. It does not look photographic reflection of the society rather one way or the other. Similar to the aspects of the social reality, it is the world that does not serve one-to one correspondence to the reality outside.

As stated above, William and Frances Henry both represent the lower class people. They are working in the society for their own life but the reality is that they are getting more exploitation from the upper class. On the other hand, bourgeois such as Mr. Hunsden, Edward, M. Pelet and so on is the next types of class. They are involved in struggle to get more and more advancement in economy. Similarly there are two types of characters in the novel exploiter and exploited. William is exploited as well as exploiter. He is exploited by his masters Mr. Hunsden, Edward,

M. Pelet and so on and he is the exploiter of his wife Frances Henry. Charlotte Bronte not only presents the pitiable life of workers who always sink in the problems but also present the life style of the rich people at the same time. The struggle between them is always going on for more economic achievement. Two different sets of class of people lead the society into the progression. The capitalists try to involve earning more money in factory as Edward and Hunsden. The basic element of social prestige for a man is to have money. It is reflected when William struggles to earn more money:

You're mighty difficult customers to suit. You won't be a tradesman or a person; you can't be a lawyer or a doctor, or a gentleman, because you've no money.

I'd recommend you to travel.

What! Without money?

You must travel in search of money, man. You can speak French- with a vile English accent,... you may get to Brussels, for instance, for five or six pounds, if you know to manage with economy. (38)

The passion of earning money does seem very unnatural to the readers. It is the real consciousness of the people especially in a capitalist society. The novelist very consciously captures the social reality with her imaginative faculty of mind. The situation of William and Frances is paralleled but the story forwards towards the reconciliation of them with the bond of love which ends into marriage. The selected social facts or realities get place in the form of the novel with her subjective creativity.

The working situation in England is effectively portrayed in the novel.

Therefore, the people were oriented towards the progression. From the different

parts of the country, men are attracted to the city. They want to do work in the factory for their source of earning money. It is the very situation of the country in nineteenth century. The process of privatizing the different institutions has made the situation of the society, the monopoly of the factory owners. The monopoly of the capitalists has made the difficulties to the lives of the workers because it makes easy to exploit labors by the capitalists.

So, appropriation of the value of working people is the sole supporting base for capitalism to thrive. The value of labour power is determined by the amount of labour necessary for its production or, in another word, by the amount needed for the workers to subsist. But in the hand of capitalists, the labour power employed in the course of the day produces more than that require for sustenance. The difference between the two values is appropriated by the capitalist.

Charlotte Bronte's *The Professor* deals with the intersection of class and gender in the Victorian society. The novel focuses on different classes existing in the society where the lower class people always get suppressed from the higher class people. Similarly, Bronte presents the males domination over females.

Victorian society is such type of society where the people are divided into various hierarchies that can be further categorized under two different hostile camps, i.e. bourgeois and proletariat. Bronte is very conscious about the situation of her society which she tries to capture with the help of literature. Thus the preliminary function of the writer is to present the intersection of class and gender and resistance to capitalism and patriarchal ideology.

Charlotte Bronte raises the social and economic problems faced by the British people. Various social situations depicted in it have close relation to reality. Being a realist, she attempts to depict social problem in *The Professor*. Actually it is

her socio-historical document in artistic form. Bronte has presented her experience of the socio- economic and political situation. *The Professor* is written by female but the narrator of the novel is male. The politics to present the male narrator on female text may be that if the narrator was female the text would not be accepted by the society. Because the society was gender biased society.

So, by knowing the situation Charlotte has presented this novel to resist the capitalist and patriarchal ideology. The novel has attempted to bring the social economic situation to the readers. It presents the social conflict among different classes of people due to the unequal distribution of the property. The story of the novel presents two sets of characters on the basis of economic status.



### III. Conclusion: Reflection of Victorian Social Reality in *The Professor*

Charlotte Bronte's *The Professor* illustrates the experiences and feelings of the protagonists who are living in Victorian society. Victorian society is the society of capitalism. In capitalistic social system there is the inequality between male and female. So, gender inequality is production of capitalism and determined by capitalistic mode of production. To liberate woman from such discrimination socialism is required. Charlotte Bronte is living in such type of society where the people are divided into various hierarchies. Specially people are categorized as bourgeois and upper class and proletariat and lower class. So, it is bourgeois who suppresses the proletariat and uses proletariats according to their benefit. Proletariats always become the prey of bourgeois. Bronte being conscious about such reality presents characters who resist against capitalism and patriarchal ideology.

Bronte distinguishes character in the story of the novel into two types according to their social condition. One type of characters represents the working class people, proletariats in Marxist term and another type of character represents the owners or the bourgeois. The upper class people who possess the immense means of production are Edward, M. Pelet, Mr. Hunsden, M. Vendenhuten and so on. They are typical characters whose life depends on materialistic luxury on the basis of economic status.

The central character William Crimsworth always becomes the prey of bourgeois. Though he is literate, honest and careful he could not get stable job. Wherever he works he becomes the victim of bourgeois. William works as a clerk in the mill which belongs to his own older brother. But his brother treats him like an object. Edward never shows human behavior upon William. So, William revolts against Edward and leaves job. But the condition of William is very pitiable because

he is lower class people. Lower class people spends the life of hunger. They are hardly able to keep their body and soul together. Therefore, they wander here and there for job. Although, they work hard, they are unable to raise their socio-economic status. William wants to have respectable social status in the society, so that he works in different places to earn more money because economy is measurement of social status. But the environment is unfavorable because he works in a capitalist society. Wherever he goes he becomes the prey to capitalists. But he does not like his inferior dignity. So, everywhere he revolts against his masters.

Likewise, the writer presents the female character Frances Henry who becomes the victim of capitalism as well as patriarchal social system. Henry faces various problems at her work. In home she is dominated by her own husband. Charlotte Bronte presents such character to depict the real condition of female during the Victorian period. Henry and William both go to work but the payment Henry gets is lower than William. Similarly, domestic labour is performed only by Henry. Lower pay and marginalization of women is seen as a means of maintaining women's dependence upon men and forcing them to service their domestic needs.

Charlotte Bronte presents William as victimized as well as victimizer at the same time. William becomes victimized of capitalism at his work because he is proletariats and he becomes the victimizer to his wife because he is a male. So, Charlotte Bronte presents the chain of victimization in the novel. Similarly, to present males superiority over female is also the resistance towards it.

In this way, Charlotte Bronte presents not only the domination of upper class people/capitalists upon proletariats but also the resistance of lower class people/proletariats. The proletariat William Crimsworth resists to capitalist Edward who treats him like an object. Similarly females are dominated by males in one way

or other. So, females become conscious about their right revolt against the male domination. William Crimsworth tries to impose his desire upon his wife Frances. In return, Frances revolts against his exploitation and injustice. Charlotte Bronte being a female has to face various problems in literary field but she presents the resistance to capitalist and patriarchal ideology very artistically in *The Professor*.

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