Research Article

Received: 21 May 2023 / Accepted: 22 August 2023 / Published: 5 September 2023

Brontë's *The Professor:* Colonial Traces

Gassim H. Dohal

IMSIU,
Riyadh,
Saudi Arabia

DOI: https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2023-0126

Abstract

The colonial history and 19th c. English literature have a unique connection. Indeed, writings of this period, particularly novels, contributed to the development of the ideologies that enabled imperialism to continue and persist; the interactions, presentations, and support of the authors varied and took different and complex aspects and forms. In cases, some texts directly address the topic of colonization while other texts hint at, refer to, and address indirectly some behavior and various colonial tendencies. This paper aims to analyze and address Charlotte Brontë's The Professor (written in 1846 and published in 1857); her first book that was published after her death. A contrapuntal reading expresses the narrative's overt and covert references to colonialism though it is initially perceived as a naïve love story. It is one of the unpopular novels that have tackled colonialism in a way or another due to the fact it was written during the peak of the colonial period. This article will trace the colonial elements addressed in the novel. Examining colonial traits in the novel, such as oppression, subjugation, exploitation, the assertion of racial and cultural superiority, etc., is the goal of the current study.

Keywords: *Colonialism, Brontë, England, Language, Belgium, Novel*

1. Introduction

An empire cannot survive and thrive on an administrative force alone; in order to simultaneously influence the complex web of culture, it needs an ideology. The ideology of binary oppositions, which assigns all positive attributes to the West and/or the colonizer and all negative ones to the East and/or the colonized, is developed in the human psyche through Orientalism. The process of Orientalization does not only apply to the East or the Orient; it also relates to every region of the world that was/is once a colony of a great empire. These ideologies permit the colonizer to defend their argument of storming colonies and to support their economy through bringing in economic resources to their country. Moreover, they psychologically influence the colonized and prepare them to accept the status of being inferior and weak so that they accept their destiny of dependency on the colonizer. With regard to intellectuals, in everything they do, including all types of writings, they embody their view of what is taking place during their era, and that definitely includes the atrocities of colonialism. An essential component of the discourse on colonization is colonial literature, particularly novels, which "obscures the underlying political and material aims of colonization" (Ashcroft, 2001, p.15). Throughout his *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Said (1983) argues that literature is a product that is never apolitical. In

an article, Dohal (2015) urges academics "to admit that there are interests of some factions in the field of literature" (p. 299) Hence, attempting to read a novel written at the peak of the colonial period while bearing in mind the history of the imperial system is merely an effort to give the existing readings of that work a historical and political dimension. According to what is written in *Culture and Imperialism*, reading a colonial literature contrapuntally entails being aware of "both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts" (Said, 1994, p. 51). In this article, Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor*'s structural and thematic relationship to colonization is revealed by a contrapuntal reading. In general, the novels of 19th c. Britain play a significant part in advancing, supporting, and crystalizing "the colonial agenda, creating colonialist ideology, making it normal and even rarely questioning it" (Sultana, 2020, p. 941). They may make direct or oblique references to the process of colonization. Additionally, they might not make any references at all. Yet, a reader can trace those colonial indications and traits in any literary work that belongs to that colonial era because of the impact of the period on the intellectuals. This article aims at tackling those imperial traits in Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor*. Those colonial elements emerge through direct reference to the colonies, as stated in the letter written by Crimsworth at the beginning of the novel, as well as through the application of colonial practices such as control, oppression, racial discrimination, etc., while dealing with those individuals who belong to other races. Spivak (1985) observes that British literature from the nineteenth century reflects the imperialist ideology. She is right; by failing to depict people of other races in general as British people's equals, *The Professor* perpetuates the imperialist mentality of the period in question. By focusing on everything that is English and glorifying it, denouncing if not demeaning everything that is not English, and paying no attention to the plight of the marginalized people, Brontë promotes and supports the ideology of colonialism pursued and worked on by her Empire to solidify it in the minds of the English, especially when we know that her works are primarily written to be read by the English.

It is known "as a result of her stay in Brussels, Charlotte Brontë wrote *The Professor*" (Thornley, 1993, p. 124), and after her death "it was published" (Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of literature, 1995, p. 908). The narrative tells the story of William Crimsworth as a teacher at an all-girls school in Brussels. Later, he falls in love with a fellow teacher and marries her. Of course, the novel "is distinguished primarily by its autobiographical nature" (Sadikova, 2022, p. 24). In turn, Funtek (2018) argues that "*The Professor* was discarded by the majority of critics, as well as the readers. They considered the beginning weak and the plot thin and the main characters proved unsuccessful in making an impression on many" (p. 22) readers. In my opinion, the novel has not received enough study, research and analysis; it is more than just a romance.

Most of the relevant studies, mainly theses, focus on feminist aspects, romance, and the relationship between men and women as presented in the novel. For example, Ghimire (2012) analyzes the novel from the view point of Marxist Feminism and addresses resistance of females to patriarchal norms and values. In turn, Whittington (2004) discusses William's intimate friendship with two women and how such relationship leads to self-awareness. Moreover, Abdessatar (2019) in her research deals with the gender roles during the Victorian Era that reflect the social status of women in the patriarchal society. In her thesis, Soares (2015) tries to give insight on how women of that time fought "against society norms within limited boundaries" (p. 13). Also, Monin (2010) argues that as a male protagonist, Crimsworth "is more privileged because of his sex than his female counterparts who are subjected to a certain level of obedience and silence throughout their lives" (p. 58). In turn, Sheikh (2018) focuses on the main themes of the novel, particularly religion and gender. Recently, Sakata (2022) devotes her thesis to study the influence of characters on each other and the topic of passion.

On the other hand, Gregorová (2019) focuses in her thesis "on places of education, conditions of education, the participants of the process, both educators and pupils, curriculum and discipline portrayed in Brontë's two pieces [*Jane Eyre* and *The Professor*] of work" (p. 5). In another study, Sharma (2007) analyzes characters' relationship from a Marxist point of view where "the class conflict [becomes] the central motive of the novel. It realistically represents the Victorian period" (p. 8) according to this study. Hence, the novel depicts "the world of inequality and class conflict" (Sharma,

2007, p. 22). In her dissertation, Cooper (2016) explores, "animalism" when applied to a human, and examines "the interconnected ways that representations of animals and animality and representations of illness function in the Victorian novel" (p. 14).

Furthermore, the setting of the novel is Belgium which is indeed a significant imperial power. Yet, there are also overt or covert references to British territories. In actuality, investigating Belgian colonial authority appears to be a sideways approach to dealing with the British Empire. Moreover, reconsidering and discussing *The Professor* while keeping in mind the colonial history of the author's country can aid in comprehending the subtle hegemonic workings of the current neo-colonization; colonization of culture, media, and values as well. This article addresses what is not said in the novel, but is understood and implied in the text by analyzing behavior and content, considering what Said (1994) has urged us to "read the great canonical texts . . . with an effort to draw out, extend, give emphasis and voice to what is silent or marginally present or ideologically represented . . . in such works" (p. 66).

2. Discussion

As a contemporary writer of the colonial era, Charlotte Brontë refers to the colonies without criticizing her colonial Empire, and makes use of colonial practices as topics and ideas to discuss in her writings when they are applied to English citizens without taking into account the suffering of the colonized. Brontë's main novels include *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Shirley* (1849), and *Villette* (1853). In her novels "like *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is paralleled with that between a man and a woman. The mastery, power and authority in these relationships are often explored" (Sultana, 2020, p. 944), and colonialism is referred to "in both *Shirley* and *Villette* [where] the men whom the heroines are in love either leave or threaten to leave Europe for places of European colonization" (Meyer, 1990, p. 247). Of course, no one forgets Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre* who is a West Indian. Moreover, colonial practices such as inequality, domination, power, oppression, etc. could be traced in her works.

In *The Professor* (*TP* while quoting, followed by page no.), in addition to colonized nations or ethnicities, France and Belgium as competing colonial powers are exposed to unfair portrayal; the British should outperform all others including European countries. In the novel, the structural and thematic connection to the imperial project becomes apparent when one tries to read it contrapuntally. Bhatia (2017) argues, "The task of contrapuntal reading is to both identify and resurrect what is invisible and excluded" (p. na). The economy that underpins the civilization in England depicted in the book, as well as its distinctive way of life and moral code, are largely reliant on wealth imported from distant colonies. The first letter in the book is one that William Crimsworth, the main character and narrator, has written to his friend Charles. Since Charles has "accepted a Government appointment in one of the colonies, and was already on his way to the scene of his official labours" (*TP* 11), Crimsworth reveals that he might not get the letter. See how the term "colonies" in a plural form is mentioned once as is in the above quotation in passing.

In the letter, Crimsworth boasts that he is not "Oriental" and that, therefore, intellect must be valued over "white necks, carmine lips, and cheeks" (*TP* 10). Mr. Hunsden, "a manufacturer and a millowner" (*TP* 20), tells Crimsworth that Patrician descent ladies develop beauty similar to "oriental odalisques" (TP 22) as if the idea of concubines is restricted to the Orient; he also paints a negative picture of the orient. Indeed, what would you expect from two subjects who bear the tendency and interests of the Empire more than this? Both characters Crimsworth and Hunsden have imbued the ideology and instructions of the Empire despite the difference; Crimsworth perceives early on in the novel that he knows "not what it was in Mr. Hunsden that, as I watched him, suggested to me, every now and then, the idea of a foreigner" (*TP* 24). Longmuir (2009) concludes that "Hunsden is a true Englishman of 'an old stem'," "but his cultivation is French" (p. 38). Hence, he is different and does not believe in the type of superiority Crimsworth does adore.

Regarding Belgium, it is also one of the colonial powers and is known for its colonial history.

Yet, when colonial countries are in competition with each other, the British Empire, in Crimsworth's eyes, becomes the best, the worthiest, the most capable, and the most perfect because in the end, it is his country, and he represents it. Although he acknowledges that Belgium is a beautiful country, however, he yearns for his "small and dingy, though not uncomfortable" (*TP* 51) flat he had "at a respectable inn in London" (*TP* 51). He yearns for everything in London; "the great bell at St. Paul's" (*TP* 51), and other local things with a strong and fervent affection for Britain. He prefers that "the sensations, stirred by those first sounds, first sights, are felt but once; treasure them, Memory; seal them in urns, and keep them in safe niches!" (*TP* 51). When his friend Frances informs him that she will "go and live in England" and "teach French there" (*TP* 132), patriotism becomes more intense than religion as he notes that she pronounces the word "England" (*TP* 132). Frequently, such ardent love of one's country borders on snobbishness and, perhaps, hostile nationalism. Crimsworth confesses his distaste for the Flemish, especially in light of the way they mispronounce words when he tries to teach them English. Here, reading contrapuntally helps us interpret various standpoints simultaneously and see how the text interacts with other historical contexts. So, what is not narrated may be as important as what is narrated in the novel. What is addressed in the text is that students should learn English, but what is not mentioned in the novel is that they have to hire an English teacher. This job is what gives Crimsworth a chance to travel in search of money. Accordingly, Hunsden urges him, "Go on to the Continent, and see what will turn up for you there" (*TP* 46). Ultimately, gaining money will help in "the process of maintaining a particular style of life in England" (Said, 1994, p. 66) and/or for an English subject. And in any way, "Belgium is not England, and its ways are not [the English people's] ways" (*TP* 62).

On the other hand, describing "others" as vulgar, violent, and bad is part of the colonial culture; stereotyping "others" is noticeable in the novel. For example, a Flemish housekeeper is described as "not pretty or polite" but "very picturesque" (*TP* 51). Moreover, the narrator initially finds the French spoken in his school to be "music to [his] ears," yet the local accent gradually becomes "horrors" (*TP* 52) to him. Crimsworth's English nationality provides him with power and authority to judge people from other races and nations, and almost all of a person's positive or negative traits are never considered to be personal and individual qualities but rather are always linked to the person's country of origin, where they are then referred to as national traits as emphasized and generalized in the below quotation; "[the youth of Brabant] were relentless acting *en masse*" (*TP* 59). At the same time, Crimsworth has a strong sense of superiority when he talks about the youths of Brabant—no one who has read the novel can overlook the next passage without scrutiny:

> *Their intellectual faculties were generally weak, their animal propensities strong; thus there was at once an impotence and a kind of inert force in their natures; they were dull, but they were also singularly stubborn, heavy as lead and, like lead, most difficult to move . . . having short memories, dense intelligence, feeble reflective powers, they recoiled with repugnance from any occupation that demanded close study or deep thought . . . they would have resisted as obstinately, as clamorously, as desperate swine; and though not brave singly, they were relentless acting en masse. (TP 59- emphasis in the source)*

Well, it is rare to find such a detailed picture in a book; "they were dull" "having short memories, dense intelligence, feeble reflective powers" "as desperate swine." Nothing is left to talk about and if these described youth are compared with animals, they are definitely inferior. Those traces of imperialism are found in this novel and presented in a way that provides colonizers an appropriate gauge with which to judge colonized, oppressed and suppressed societies and countries.

After describing the youth of Brabant in such a way, Crimsworth emphasizes the importance of his position and justifies the way he is behaving. This look is similar to that of those colonizers who go far away in the colonies. The colonized "others" are stereotyped in such a way; they are inferior, vulgar, uneducated, and bestial. In addition, Crimsworth gives himself the right to judge these people and classify them according to the ideology of his nation because that ideology has instilled confidence in him of being superior. In such a way, he has himself justification to work in the school

and get paid a good wage because of their desperate need for him to educate them and elevate their social status. Monin (2010) eventually concludes that Crimsworth is behaving according to his Victorian era. For Federico (1994), his manner is "aggressively masculine" crowned with a sense of "superiority" (p. 188). Indeed, he is a man of his colonial period. Qurbonova (2022) adds that Brontë "creates a male character, William Crimsworth, to stand up for her because women are not allowed to speak freely and express her feelings and ideas" (p. 76). Brontë represents her period and knows to what extent a man can have power and impact at that time.

Furthermore, Crimsworth paints a very unfavorable picture of the girls he is teaching. He claims that they are selfish, audacious, egotistical, and dumb liars, not to mention their low mentality (*TP* Ch. XII). There is no space to go over his description and have some quotations, but Chapter XII shows how as an English man Crimsworth sees himself and how he looks at "others." See how he describes his interaction with Juanna Trista; a student who makes "noises with her mouth like a horse, she ejected her saliva, she uttered brutal expressions" (*TP* 91). He assures that in such a class there are "a band of very vulgar, inferior-looking Flamandes, including two or three examples of that deformity of person and imbecility of intellect" (*TP* 91). Nothing more than this description could be added; Flamanders are inferior and bestial. As Mitchell (1994) notes that Crimsworth's descriptions of the girls "inevitably descend to bestial imagery" (p. 38). Also, Cooper (2016) sees that the female students are "dehumanized" (p. 160). This way is how the reigning ideology is used and manipulated to construct its subjects even when they are at schools. Crimsworth is one of those who are imbued with a set of instructional beliefs and attributes that distort and misrepresent for them the way they relate to the real conditions of their existence.

On contrast, the British students are described as being tidy, with erect posture, fluid bodies, and white, tapered hands. Crimsworth is also pleased to inform the readers that they are "more intellectual than those of the Belgians" (*TP* 93); this look is really colonial. This way of thinking promotes the notion that some nations or ethnic groups are inherently inferior and as a result, they deserve to be governed and corrected if we are persuaded there is a correction by the "superior" nations. Indeed, it is "the power relationship" (Said, 1979, p. 256) where the strong colonizer controls, dominates, and exploits "others." He "does not need, in all cases, to use force" (Dohal, 2016, p. 25), but using rules, regulations, and instructions may work, particularly when the colonizer manages to convince the colonized of their alleged backwardness. At that time, such colonial relationship "chained the colonizer and the colonized into an implacable dependence, molded their respective characters, and dictated their conduct" (Memmi, 1965, p. ix). Once, the protagonist acknowledges the goodness of Flamand ushers at the school, he does not overlook their frailty in his biased judgment. He reassures that their "intellectual inferiority is marked in lines none can mistake" (*TP* 61).

Moreover, despite the fact that Crimsworth respects his French Headmaster, Pelet, for his cleverness, he never misses an opportunity to assert his own superiority; he bestows on the French man "a degree of laxity in his code of morals" (*TP* 61), declaring that he detests simple licentiousness. Indeed, Longmuir (2009) notices that "a conflict between British and Continental, especially French, values dominate Brontë´s fiction" (p. 156). Later, Crimsworth does not hesitate to announce, "I felt half his master, because the reality of his nature was now known to me" (*TP* 101). He also adds that the headmaster's mother is no more than a hideous old woman, and he even wonders if she intended the invitation to tea, she called him for as a project for lust. The English "venerable granddames would recoil from as absolutely disreputable," according to him, but Belgian old women give themselves "a license of manners, speech, and aspect" (*TP* 64). However, according to the narrator, Pelet lives according to a "proper French style with due disregard to moral restraint" (*TP* 171), and his future will stick to that style. Indeed, there are many other examples where Crimsworth paves the way for the Empire he represents; no one in the narrative is immune from vilification; it is a colonial way of devaluing 'others' for one's own sake.

In chapter XXIV, Frances and Hunsden have a protracted disagreement on nations, countries, their greatness, patriotism, and other topics. Hunsden criticizes England's alleged august nobility, excessive fashion obsession, and corruption, but he also praises the country's accomplishments in

business, industry, and scientific research. Economically, he gives the Empire a credit. Of course, economy is a main pillar of colonialism. The Empire invades other countries to seize their resources and bring them to England. Indeed, Crimsworth "becomes an academic and economic success" (Erickson, 2000, p. 34) in a foreign environment. In turn, Frances believes that while every nation has issues, England is "the most glorious region [she] can conceive" (*TP* 219) because her mother is English; she has instilled in her a love of England. She has a certain amount of religious fervour in her love of England and Switzerland. Since "England [is] still her Promised Land;" nationalism and patriotism very nearly take the place of religion in the book (*TP* 230). In fact, religion is the source of values colonizers have claimed to call for. Such a claim is used as a justification for colonizing "others." Crimsworth keeps reminding readers of morals and values his nation has. Furthermore, Frances responds that despite Hunsden's claim to be "a universal patriot," "sympathies so widely diffused must be very shallow" (*TP* 188). His claim of being "universal" indicates another way of justifying his right as an English subject in the whole world. So, both express their loyalty and sincerity for the Empire, but in different ways; she wants to go back to England because it is her "Promised Land," and he thinks that he has the right to go anywhere as an Empire subject. Ultimately, their different opinions support their colonizing country anyway.

Anyway, a crucial element of colonization has always been the control of the educational system. It is constructed in order to colonize the minds in the European colonies in the 19th c. *The Professor*'s central plot is around an educational system in which the colonizers serve as the teachers and assume the role of the dominant master with knowledge and power in a hierarchical setting. The full-English hero William Crimsworth tutors even the half-English Frances Evans Henri. When Crimsworth talks about his experience in Belgium with international students, the entire educational endeavor mirrors a colonization process. Crimsworth, who has previously thoroughly examined the personalities of his incoming students, moves cautiously forward with a particular plan to manage the rowdy rebellious students—a plan similar to that of a colonizer. He starts out making "gentle, considerate" signal, but after "plant[ing his foot]," he becomes "immutable as the towers of Ste. Gudule" (*TP* 60). Later, he can transform into a "despot" at any impertinence or because of "a movement of disobedience"—note the terms used here. Consequently, his students have only two options: "submission and acknowledgment of error, or ignominious expulsion" (*TP* 60); the choices are limited. The educational effort is at the heart of this book, and since a male professor teaches female pupils, the power relationships between Crimsworth and his female students might be sexualized for some readers. Of course, feminism may intersect with colonialism at certain points. Yet, it is more than this limited idea; it is a relationship between two completely opposite sides: powerful and powerless, strong and weak, educated and uneducated, dominant and ownerless, and you may conclude with male and female. Crimsworth is educated and constructed by the Empire in order to serve and represent what is superior, i.e., his nation. There is no room for failure; he asserts, "I am successful after all" (*TP* 145).

It is clear that reading literature and mastering foreign languages play a significant role in the novel. The worldview and ideology of the mother countries are carried beyond boundaries by colonial languages like English or French, which are finding new foreign mouths to speak them. The English language, its correct pronunciation and syntax, its semantics, its sounds, as well as the way of life it signifies, are shown as the protagonist's obsessions despite the fact that he has had a horrible time to make living inside his great nation. Crimsworth is disturbed by the incorrect English pronunciation which indicates his presence in a hostile environment; it is a disruptive and challenging milieu because it affirms the existence of the "others." Also, it is claimed that Frances finds "both pleasure and profit from the study of her mother-tongue" (*TP* 136); it is the influence of her mother. Here, Brontë refers to and stresses the important role of mothers in bringing up and constructing their families through creating in them a feeling of loving their nation. Of course, studying language requires exploring and discovering its literature. At the time Crimsworth encourages Frances to study English Literature, he boldly states that "modern French novels are not to [his] taste, either practically or theoretically" (*TP* 172). Such an attitude implies that English literature is superior; Crimsworth criticizes the modern

French novels due to their immoral and impertinent plots. Despite the fact that France is a major-known colonial country, Crimsworth's role is to put his country in the foreground and asserts that it has the priority in everything including culture that is mainly conveyed through literature.

By the way, English girls at his school are wretched students who have never tasted the "advantages of settled homes" (*TP* 93). Indeed, imperial ideology maintains that all perfect traits originate in the home country and that the influence of all other places is corrupting and polluting. Being driven from their own country for whatever the reason is, they do not receive an "honest Protestant education," but rather "some scanty instruction, many bad habits" (*TP* 93); it is "an imbecile indifference to every sentiment that can elevate humanity" (*TP* 93). For Crimsworth, they have "lost every notion even of the first elements of religion and morals" (Sultana, 2020, p. 943). He sympathizes with the natives of his country, indicating that his nation is superior in religion, education, and values—what is left for "others"? With this claim he tries to prove that 'others' need his state's intervention; it is a justification for colonizing and exploiting 'others.' Usually in relationships, regardless of their type, interactions depend on mastery, power, and authority. In *The Professor*, too, the protagonist is an English man who patronizes half-English woman. Crimsworth, who dedicates himself to the English language, methods, and identity, teaches the half-English female, Francis, his language, values, and way of life. He only marries her after making sure she is fundamentally English. He continues to be "the master in all things" even after their marriage (*TP* 233); it is an expected behavior in the 19th c. patriarchal society—this is "the metropolitan history being narrated" which Said (1979, p. 51) refers to. Sakata (2022) decides that Crimsworth "shows himself as an intellectually superior and self-controlled person to readers" (p. 50) in the novel. Eventually, the image is important; Crimsworth tries "to attain the image of an ideal man judged favorably by the Victorian age" (Minamoto, 2018, p. 222).

Later, Crimsworth confirms, "My wife she shall be — that is, provided she has as much, or half as much regard for *her master* as he has for her" (*TP*163 — emphasis added). The way that prevails in their relationship is similar to that in a colony when a colonizer plays the role of the master; he wants to be "her master" even after marriage. The strange reaction is that she accepts his stipulation; she states, "Master, I should be *glad* to live with you always" (*TP* 207 —emphasis in the source). In this regard, Whittington (2004) argues that "it is not only her book that Frances yields to Crimsworth's possession, but ultimately her very identity and perception of reality" (p. 14). Seen as the way of the West, Crimsworth takes advantage of the opposite sex to self-reflect and give himself credit over the other.

Furthermore, Crimsworth believes in the principle of 'predominance' even while dealing with other men; talking about the French Headmaster, he states, "I felt half his master, because the reality of his nature was now known to me" (*TP* 101). When he meets M. Vandenhuten, he never overlooks his 'superiority'; conforming, "my mind having more fire and action than his, instinctively assumed and kept the predominance" (*TP* 193). Such behavior shows a colonizer's mentality. The idea of domination could be traced and found in the early part of the novel when "Hunsden and Edward struggle to dominate William [Crimsworth]" (Bernard, 2013, p. 31). Hence, Soares (2015) opines that "in *The Profe*ssor, Charlotte Brontë goes beyond the topic of oppression of women to demonstrate how the patriarchal society also affected men" (p. 40). In all of these cases, Bronte draws on features that cut across all that is colonial, such as oppression, subjugation, and power, to depict such relationships.

But there are also indications of opposition because Frances Henri may still represent women of her era who face a lot of hardships; the male-female relationship may go in parallel with that of the colonizer and the colonized with regard to oppression, torture, and manipulation. Hence, the history of the Empire may intertwine with the histories of other countries. Frances' resolute and forceful voice against male dominance resembles a voice against national or ethnic dominance and a shout against oppression at home as well. Making a comparison between marriage—a domestic issue—and slavery—a universal dilemma and related to colonialism, Frances says eloquently, with "a strange kind of spirit" on her face that:

> *If a female hates the man she 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. (TP 236)*

In the passage above, notice the used terms: slavery, revolt, resistance, torture, and finally freedom. All these terms have their colonial connotations though they might be used to refer to an individual domestic case as argued in the text.

In another conversation, Frances warns Mr. Hunsden if he wed a Swiss woman and kept insulting Helvetia and cursing the cantons, she would "some night smother her Breton-bretonnant" (*TP* 224) and repeat Shakespeare's Othello's action with Desdemona; some sort of parallelism between both oppressed ethnic races and suppressed gender identity emerges. Both race and identity are usually present when colonialism is tackled. Frances' speech reminds us as readers of the imposed relationship between the colonizer and the colonized where exploitation, tyranny and denial of rights take place. Crimsworth actually acknowledges in the graveyard scene that "every nation, tribe, and kindred, mourned after its own fashion" (*TP* 153). But the narrative's sense of aggressive nationalism, which is a crucial component in the process of colonizing other nations, quickly overshadows this sympathetic picture of universal humanity. What we have mentioned above is sufficient to denote the relationship between empire and colonialism, and reflects what is happening in the general atmosphere with regard to what is invisible and excluded from texts such as Brontë's *The Professor*. One can carefully analyze and contrapuntally read what is written in order to expose what is not said as presented in this article.

3. Conclusion

Colonizers, at any time, have to create an inferior identity for the colonized through constructing and generalizing "most recurring images of the Other" (Said, 1979, p. 1) in order to justify their intrusion. Books of the time in question are very important in this process of "othering" or Orientalism. But books are still works of art, and ideas have never been so easily explained in them. Well, we have to admit that "texts are fundamentally facts of power" (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 23). Throughout ages, the colonized, mainly the East has cleverly served as the inferior Other in the construction of the Western identity. Contrapuntal reading of canonical texts can aid in our understanding of the intricacies of this relationship presently, when the hegemonic and highly subtle interaction between culture and globalization, encompassing issues of identity and the entitlement to representation, is taking place. Brontë's *The Professor*'s central character, Crimsworth, seems to have been placed in Belgium's multilingual and cosmopolitan setting to investigate the supremacy of his native tongue and the preeminence of his motherland's culture over not only that of its colonies but also over that of Belgium as well as France. He "seeks fortune as a teacher of English in Brussels" (Marić, 2016, p. 20).

As a well-known writer, Brontë's seeming pride in British nationality and its "Great Empire" is understandable for the most part. Yet, a few lines in the book explicitly address slavery or unjust suppression in relation to colonization. Brontë apparently wants to say something biographical about the treatment of her gender in a way that transcends gender in general and has a lot of interactions with "other" people's treatment as described in the article. Indeed, Crimsworth's class is a microcosm of the external real frustrating world of that period of time. Though the relationship in Crimsworth's class depends on two vital sides; i. e. teacher and students, yet one of them is powerful, dominant, and knowledgeable while the other side is controlled, suppressed, to some extent ignored, and stereotyped.

References

Abdessatar, B., & Naoual, A. (2019). *Gender Role in the Victorian Era a Case Study of Charlotte* Brontë*'s The Professor* (Master's Thesis, University of Eloued).

Ashcroft, B. and Ahluwalia, P. (2001). *Edward Said*. 2nd ed. Taylor & Francis e-Library. Web. 16 March 2022.

Bernard, R. (2013). *The accents of persuasion: Charlotte Brontë's novels*. London: Faber & Faber.
Bhatia, G. (Feb. 5, 2017). Contrapuntal Reading: Outlines of a Theory. Web. 16 March 2022. https://indconlawphil.wordpress.com/2017/02/05/contrapuntal-reading-outlines-of-a-theory/
Brontë, C. (1998). *The Professor*. The Electric Book Co.
Cooper, I. L. (2016). *Humankindness: Illness, Animality, and the Limits of the Human in Victorian Fiction* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park).
Dohal, G. (2015). Literature and Academic Freedom. *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics* (IJLLL), 1 (4): 304-08. DOI: 10.18178/ijlll.2015.1.4.56
_____ (2016). Power Relationship in William Shakespeare's The Tempest, Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe and Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness. The ICFAI Journal of English Studies, XI (4): 25-29.
Erickson, R. (2000). Charlotte Brontë's The Professor and Natsume Soseki's Botchan: Alienated Loners, Reluctant Teachers, and Unsung Heroines. *Bullletin of College of Foreign Studies, Yokohama: A combined*, *22*, 33-40.
Federico, A. R. (1994). *The Other Case: Gender and Narration in Charlotte Brontë's The Professor.* Papers on Language and Literature.
Frederico, A. R. (1994). "The other case: gender and narration in Charlotte Brontë's 'The Professor.'." *Papers on Language & Literature*, vol. 30, no. 4, fall, pp. 323+. *Gale Literature ResourceCenter*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A15897100/LitRC?u=anon~be2c7f9e&sid=googleScholar&xid=ec50d316. Accessed 25 June 2023.
Funtek, E. (2018). *Charlotte Brontë's Narrative Modes in the Proffesor, Jane Eyre and Villette* (Master's Thesis, University of Rijeka).
Ghimire, M. (2012). *Resistance to Capitalist and Patriarchal Ideologies in Charlotte* Brontë's*TheProfessor* (Master's Thesis, Tribhuvan University).
Gregorová, J. (2019). *Teaching and education in Charlotte Brontë's novels Jane Eyre and The Professor* (Master's Thesis, Masaryk University).
Longmuir, A. (2009). " Reader, perhaps you were never in Belgium?": Negotiating British Identity in Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor* and *Villette*. *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, *64*(2), 163-188.
Marić, G. (2016). *The image of Belgium in Charlotte Brontë´ s novels "The Professor" and "Shirley": a comparative analysis* (Master's Thesis, University of Zagrib).
Meyer, S. L. (1990). Colonialism and the Figurative Strategy of "Jane Eyre." *Victorian Studies*, *33*(2), 247–268. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3828358
Minamoto, T., & SASAKI, T. (2018). Transformation of 'Passion' in *The Professor*. *Studies in English Literature/Regional Branches Combined Issue*, 11, 219-26.
Mitchell, J. (1994). *The Stone and the Scorpion: The Female Subject of Desire in the Novels of Charlotte* Brontë, *George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy*. Westport: Greenwood.
Monin, C. M. (2010). *Addressing the Reader in Charlotte Brontë's Novels: Jane Eyre, Vilette, and The Professor* (Master's Thesis, The College at Brockport). http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/eng_theses/26
Professor, The. (1995). *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature*, p. 908
Qurbonova, N. R., & Sadikova, S. T. (2022, July). Problems of Woman and Society in the Novel of Charlotte Brontë. In *International Conference: Problems and Scientific Solutions.* (Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 69-79).
Sadikova, S. (2022). Charlotte Brontë: From shadow to reality. *Eurasian Scientific Herald*, *4*, 23-25.
Said, E. W. (1994). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books.
_____ (1979). Orientalism. New York: Vintage Books.
_____ (1983). The World, the Text and the Critic. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. Print.
Sakata, M. (2022). *A Study of The Professor: Hunsden as a Catalyst in the Whirl of Passion* (Master's Thesis, Osaka City University).
Sharma, B. (2007). *Social Realism in Charlotte Brontë's The Professor* (Master's Thesis, Tribhuvan University).
Sheikh, A. A., & Singh, A. (2018). A Themetic Study of Charlotte Brontë's; The Professor (1857). *International Journal of Research, 5*, 631-637.
Soares, D. N. (2015). *Charlotte Brontë and Virginia Woolf: Feminism and Androgyny* (Master's thesis, Uni. of Porto).
Spivak, G. C. (1985). Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism. *Critical Inquiry*, *12*(1), 243–261. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343469
Sultana S. (2020). An Extra-European Reader's Rereading of The Professor. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 5(4): 941-44. Available online: https://ijels.com
Thornley, G. C. & Gwyneth R. (1993). *An Outline of English Literature*. Longman Group Uk Limited.
Whittington, E. M. (2004). *Identity is in the Eye of the Beholder: Examining the Function of the Gaze in Charlotte* Brontë*'s The Professor and Jane Eyre*. (Master's thesis, North Carolina State University)