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NATURE AS A REFLECTION OF THE CHARACTERS' INNER WORLD IN CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S *THE PROFESSOR*

Alona Kovalenko

*Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the Department of English Language
National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy"
Skovorody Str., 2, Kyiv, Ukraine
orcid.org/0000-0002-1896-4153
e-mail: al.kovalenko@ukma.edu.ua*

Abstract. *The article analyses the descriptions of nature used to reflect the feelings, emotions, and thoughts of characters in Charlotte Brontë's novel "The Professor". The research pays special attention to the author's peculiar feeling for nature (especially, for her Fatherland) and her exceptional ability to depict it with vitality and purpose. Being her first novel, "The Professor" only starts revealing the mastery of the woman-writer in not only describing nature but also using its elements for stylistic purposes. This feature will be noticeable even more in her later novels "Jane Eyre", "Shirley", and "Villette". The author presents and analyses excerpts from several magazines and newspapers with critical reviews on Charlotte Brontë's first novel and her later novels particularly those pointing out her exceptional talent of observation and depiction of nature. Despite the fact that some reviews of "The Professor" were not very favourable, several key features make this novel particularly interesting for reading and analysis. First, it should be noted that the author's personal experience of life and studies, love and striving for a desired aim can be found in her first novel thus making it even more personal and evoking readers' emotional response. Another important point is that "The Professor" is written from the male point of view by a woman which makes it different from the other Charlotte Brontë novels.*

The given paper studies the masterful descriptions of nature in "The Professor" contributing to the understanding of the character's inner and outer conflicts, their emotions, and their feelings. Particularly, in this novel Charlotte Brontë uses such elements as weather conditions, natural phenomena (fog, rain, snow, wind), celestial bodies, change of seasons, landscape (hills, lowlands, rivers), trees, and flowers as symbols that help to reveal the inner world of the characters. Special attention is given to the symbolic language of flowers. The study of the descriptions has found that nature can either contribute to implicitly presenting the feelings of the heroes or to creating a contrasting background between the internal and external worlds.

Key words: *Charlotte Brontë's The Professor, British female novelists, Victorian literature, romantic literature, descriptions of nature.*

ПРИРОДА ЯК ВІДОБРАЖЕННЯ ВНУТРІШНЬОГО СВІТУ ГЕРОЇВ У РОМАНІ «ПРОФЕСОР» ШАРЛОТТИ БРОНТЕ

Альона Коваленко

*кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент,
доцент кафедри англійської мови
Національного університету «Києво-Могилянська академія»
вул. Сковороди, 2, Київ, Україна
orcid.org/0000-0002-1896-4153
e-mail: al.kovalenko@ukma.edu.ua*

Анотація. *У статті аналізуються описи природи, використані для відображення почуттів, емоцій і думок героїв роману Шарлотти Бронте «Професор». У дослідженні окрема увага приділяється особливому чуттю авторки до природи (особливо її Батьківщини) та винятковому вмінню зображувати її яскраво й відповідно до мети. Перший роман «Професор» лише починає розкривати майстерність цієї жінки-письменниці не лише в описі природи, а й у стилістично зумовленому використанні її елементів. Ще більше ця риса стане помітною в її пізніших романах «Джейн Ейр», «Ширлі» та «Віллет». Авторка представляє та аналізує уривки з декількох журналів і газет із критичними рецензіями на перший роман Шарлотти Бронте та її пізніші романи, зокрема*

ті, що вказують на її винятковий талант спостереження та зображення природи. Попри те, що деякі рецензії на роман «Професор» були не дуже схвальні, кілька ключових особливостей роблять цей роман особливо цікавим для читання та аналізу. Слід зазначити, що особистий життєвий і навчальний досвід письменниці, її любов і прагнення до бажаного знайшли відображення в її першому романі, що робить його ще більш особистим і викликає емоційний відгук у читачів. Іншим важливим моментом є те, що «Професор» написаний від імені чоловіка жінкою, що відрізняє його від інших романів Шарлотти Бронте.

У даній роботі досліджуються майстерні описи природи в романі «Професор», які сприяють розумінню внутрішніх і зовнішніх конфліктів героїв, їхніх емоцій і почуттів. Зокрема, у цьому романі Шарлотта Бронте використовує такі елементи, як погодні умови, природні явища (туман, дощ, сніг, вітер), небесні світила, зміну пір року, ландшафт (пагорби, низовини, річки), дерева та квіти, як символи, які допомагають розкрити внутрішній світ героїв. Особливу увагу приділено символічній мові квітів. Дослідження описів виявило, що природа може сприяти як імпліцитному відображенню почуттів героїв, так і створенню контрастного фону між внутрішнім і зовнішнім світами.

Ключові слова: британські письменниці, вікторіанська література, романтична література, описи природи.

Problem statement. Nature has always attracted and inspired many men and women of letters. Having their origins primarily in the 18th-century novels of Rousseau, descriptions of nature became one of the central motifs in the 19th century due to the development of Romantic trends in literature [7, p. 55].

Charlotte Brontë is considered one of the most famous woman novelists of the Victorian era. Notably, vivid descriptions of nature helped her to reveal the inner world, feelings, and emotions of her characters. In his study *Brontës and Nature*, Duthie provides a detailed analysis of the way in which nature is presented in the works of all the Brontë sisters and how it helped to portray the key themes in their novels [4, p. 57]. According to his study, Charlotte Brontë was greatly attracted by the moorlands, highlands, and heathers of her fatherland, and that love was greatly reflected in her works. Remarkably, *The Economist's* review of *The Professor* stated that 'Miss Brontë's power as a painter of natural scenes is analogous to her power as a painter of characters' [16, p. 757]. No single element was used just for the sake of mere description. It was stylistically embedded into the narration aimed to demonstrate the relevant aspects of the character's life. The author often personified nature, thus giving it additional importance and turning it into another character. Charlotte Brontë conveyed her ideas implicitly by using various natural symbols, causing a more profound emotional response and understanding of the novel's plot and idea in readers [9, p. 21]. At the same time, each of her novels has its own peculiarities in terms of using natural phenomena. Being her first novel, *The Professor* only starts giving insights into Charlotte Brontë's characters' inner

world by means of nature and demonstrates her gift for investing nature with symbolic meaning. In *Jane Eyre*, the woman-writer shows the supernatural side of natural phenomena, though in an extremely realistic way. *Shirley*, written in Charlotte's most difficult time, when her brother and both of her sisters died, shows the conflict between nature and the industrialization that was destroying it. The last and the most mature novel, *Villette*, contains more complex natural descriptions, as they are clear revelations of the main character's state of mind, which she is trying to suppress, thus showing the contrast between the internal and external worlds. Although the latter three novels have been thoroughly studied in terms of the connections between their characters and nature, *The Professor* lacks similar research; therefore, it is worth investigating such connections for their psychological and aesthetic interest.

The purpose of the paper is to study the connections between the descriptions of nature in Charlotte Brontë's novel *The Professor* and the inner world of its characters and to find out in what way these descriptions intensify or contrast the feelings and emotions of the main characters.

Presentation of the main material. *The Professor* was the novel that Charlotte Brontë's wrote first, but it was published last, in 1857, two years after her death. Many respected newspapers and magazines of that time published reviews of the novel. However, opinions were mostly not very favorable. *The Ladies' Companion* wrote that the novel 'will not add another leaf to the laurels won' and that it is 'not to be liked' [15, p. 272]. The *Literary Gazette* and *Journal of Archaeology, Science, and Art*

mentioned that the novel ‘has scarcely any story in it, and such a story as there is lacks unity of structure, and is overlaid with sentiment, or reflection, or...the philosophy of character’ [14, p. 584]. One of the reasons for those negative statements was probably the fact that critics compared *The Professor* to the other Charlotte Brontë novels, which had already gained recognition and fame. This is proved by *The Athenæum* mentioning that ‘this tale bears to Curren Bell’s later works the relation which a pre-Shakespearian story does to drama – it is curious to an artist or a psychologist’ [16, p. 757]. However, being Charlotte Brontë’s first novel, it should not have been compared to her other novels. *Russell’s Magazine* argued that *The Professor* was not less remarkable than her later novels as ‘the dissections of character are wonderful – quite equal, I think, to anything in that line accomplished by the author... Her writings glow with the electric life and light of genius, and “*The Professor*” is no less significant of her great powers than “*Jane Eyre*”, “*Shirley*”, and “*Villette*” [12, p. 477].

There is one important point to remember. *The Professor* differs from the other Charlotte Brontë novels because it is written from the male point of view by a woman. Besides, it was one of the few examples of that kind of writing among the novels of that period [2, p. 444]. This fact alone makes the novel an interesting object for study and analysis. Moreover, the novel is autobiographical to a certain extent. It was written soon after Charlotte Brontë’s return to England from Belgium, where she was first a pupil and then became a teacher. There, she had a deep and tender feeling for Constantine Heger, a teacher at the girls’ school where she also studied and taught. The author’s personal experience of life and studies, feelings, and acquaintances in Brussels became the foundation of her first novel, describing a love story between a British teacher and his Anglo-Swiss pupil. Ewbank mentioned that Charlotte Brontë’s first novel was ‘an example of truth to life gained deliberately at the expense of imaginative truth’ [5, p. 192].

However, love is not the only theme in *The Professor*. It is also about finding oneself, one’s place in the world, self-improvement, and striving for a desired aim (it does not matter whether it is love or a decent workplace). This is what the protagonist, William Crimsworth, and his wife, Frances Henri, experience in the novel. Dobrinska emphasized that ‘Brontë

writes in a way that allows readers to understand Crimsworth’s emotions without necessarily needing to see the huge outbursts of passion... For that reason, *The Professor* should be read and appreciated’ [3]. Masterful descriptions of nature contribute to the understanding of the character’s inner and outer conflicts, their emotions, and their feelings. *The Guardian* fairly mentions that Charlotte Brontë, in her wonderful and charming manner, really ‘managed, with the lightest of touches, to make the banal beautiful, to add significance and weight to the barest scrap of a moment’ [11].

In one of her letters, Charlotte Brontë confessed that when she first wrote, she determined ‘to take Nature and Truth as her sole guides’ [8, p. 232]. In *The Professor*, the Truth of the author’s own beliefs and Nature in its broad meaning can be observed, starting from the nature of the human character and finishing with nature surrounding this character. Charlotte Brontë aimed to create a realistic story, but not without a hue of romanticism. Her artistic vision of the world helped to create a work where nature was not just a silent witness of the events but also an active participant.

The first-person narration of the protagonist William Crimsworth helps readers to notice that his emotional states are projected onto nature around him, and its changing ‘mood’ appears to be a reflection of his feelings and thoughts. As Fairchild mentions in his work, in such a way the author ‘uses external nature to clarify and give body to inward feeling, and uses inward feeling to give significance to external things’ [6, p. 124]. Charlotte Brontë singled out those aspects of nature that contributed to a particular feeling or thought at a given moment. The author uses weather conditions and phenomena (fog, rain, snow, wind), seasonal changes, the sky and celestial bodies, landscape elements (hills, lowlands, rivers), trees, and flowers to project the character’s inner state.

1.1. Weather Conditions

Charlotte Brontë uses weather conditions either to create a contrasting background between the internal and external worlds or to illustrate a particular situation or feeling of the main character.

The first description, presenting a clear contrast between the two states of weather, takes place when William first comes to his new workplace on ‘a fine October morning’ [1, p. 10].

The author presents a very peaceful, cheerful, and calm atmosphere. On the contrary, the weather surrounding the factories seems to be completely different. It emphasizes the despair wrapped in dense vapor and gloominess, as if the sun could not break through. Even the narrator points out that ‘steam, trade, machinery had long banished from it all romance and seclusion’ [1, p. 11]. The mill where the protagonist has to work is like an ugly monster, distorting the lives of people and the environment.

The day William decides to leave the factory also presents a contrast between the outer and inner worlds. Despite it being a frosty January morning, there is a burning fire inside William that helps him to find strength, firmly stand up to his cousin, and give up his job.

William’s arrival in the other city starts with another contrast between the weather and the protagonist’s feelings. The city of Brussels welcomes William with grey, wet weather [1, p. 35]. Not a single bright object captures his attention. However, the narrator’s inner feeling of freedom gives him such light and warmth that he does not seem to notice the gloomy day around him.

Readers come across another contrast between the weather and William’s feelings when he becomes an accidental witness to the conversation between Mdlle. Reuter, the woman he almost loved, and M. Pelet, his employer. The night on which it happens is calm and fresh [1, p. 66], but William feels feverish inside. However, the author presents a reverse situation when William comes to his beloved fiancée, Frances, one cool autumn evening. This time, it is cold for others, but for the narrator it is warm and mysterious [1, p. 132]. Cold outside and warm inside – these two opposites are used by Charlotte Brontë to depict the feelings of the main characters and to emphasize their burning love, which is at the same time delicate and fresh.

The first description of weather coinciding with the character’s inner state of being is that of the atmosphere during William Crimsworth’s arrival in the town where his cousin lives. It is a ‘wet October afternoon’ [1, p. 7], and the weather does not promise anything positive as the town welcomes the protagonist with ‘the dark gloomy mist which deepens those shades’ [1, p. 7]. The weather reflects William’s inner feeling of uncertainty as he sees his future

as something ‘misty’; he is not sure what waits for him. The cold frosty weather described in the part where William leaves the mill after long and tiresome working hours [1, p. 20] is not only outside; the same cold is also inside the soul of the main character. He feels the cold hand of hopelessness around his heart, as he sees no way out. The moment that he leaves the mill forever, his heart is in tune with the still weather, and his mind is filled with the tranquility that the fresh frosty air gives him [1, p. 20]. Calmness helps William to think clearly and to make a decision to leave England.

The further descriptions of the weather in Brussels correspond to William’s life and fully reflect his state of mind and soul, from the moment he is offered a job [1, p. 38] at the school for boys and the pensionnat for girls to becoming attracted to Mdlle. Reuter [1, p. 66]. He feels happy at these moments, and nature itself helps to intensify his happiness. This projection of inner joy into the outer world is magnified.

However, not only does sunny weather correspond to the narrator’s inner state of mind but so does gloomy weather. When William starts looking for his beloved Frances in Brussels, the author presents a cloudy, sultry, thunderous-looking day [1, p. 102]. The protagonist’s heart is in the same condition. The fact that the road leads William to the cemetery only adds to the feeling of hopelessness and melancholy. Only after their meeting and spending time together in Frances’ house does the weather change [1, p. 110]. William can see and feel the beauty of the clear day with fresh air that is especially fragrant after the rain. Finally, William and Frances’ return to England and their life there bring the readers back to the atmosphere of warm sunny days, filled with joy and happiness. Thus, the novel ends with complete harmony between a man and nature, love and happiness, and mind and soul [1, p. 165].

1.2. Rain

The Professor does not contain many episodes where it is raining, although there are many descriptions of grey, gloomy days. However, the following two rain scenes are used for a particular reason. First, it is raining when William arrives in Brussels [1, p. 35]. The rain is a symbol of cleaning away his past life, providing a new, fresh start. However, the brightest description of rain is used when William finds Frances after

a long period of searching desperately. The rain comes as a relief; it is the catharsis. After long days of waiting, searching, and worrying, William can finally breathe easily because he finds his treasure. The leaden sky (as the leaden burden on the soul of the protagonist) is finally relieved by the raindrops and Frances' tears. Notably, the heavy rain does not cause them any harm as they manage to get to the shelter.

1.3. Snow

Another natural phenomenon worth considering is snow. Like in the case of rain, it does not snow much in *The Professor*. White snow is a symbol of purity and innocence, and in this novel, it is often related to Frances. One of the descriptions where it is snowing is in the essay written by Frances, where she depicts her beloved England. However, in the novel's reality, it is snowing only once, when William and Frances are getting married [1, p. 152]. The snow is like a veil covering everything that they have experienced before and paving the way for a blank page for a new life story.

1.4. Wind

A few scenes that mention wind mostly contain the description of a breeze, that is, a light, cool wind. The narrator describes it either as 'gentle' or 'fresh'. During an unpleasant conversation with Mdlle. Reuter, after he had just discovered her betrayal, a fresh breeze helps William to calm down his burning spirit, 'soothed my temples like balm' [1, p. 95]. In moments of happiness, the breeze instils the protagonist with feeling of lightness, lifts his spirits. However, there are two descriptions of a breezeless night that convey a deep psychological meaning. The first one takes place before William uncovers Mdlle. Reuter and M. Pelet's secret date in the garden [1, p. 66]. The second scene is related to the description of the scene where the narrator is about to find Frances after a long separation [1, p. 102]. In both cases, still breezeless nights indicate the anticipation of emotionally intense moments in William's life.

1.5. Seasons

The change of seasons contributes to the development of William's feelings and emotions. At the beginning of the novel, it is late autumn and early winter when he works hard at his cousin's mill; thus, short, gloomy, cold days emphasize the feeling of melancholy. When the narrator arrives in Brussels, he recalls his careless life in Eton, 'freshly colored, green,

dewy, with a spring sky, piled with glittering yet showery clouds' [1, p. 34]. Here, spring represents youth, vibrant, full of the flourishing energy of ambitious boys. William begins his active life as a teacher in Brussels and falls in love with Mdlle. Reuter in early spring, the time of blossoming new life and feelings. Hot summer weather becomes the background to his disappointment and the decision to quit his job as he suffocates in the atmosphere of lies and hypocrisy. Finally, late summer and early autumn become the time of William's mature love with Frances. It is a period called 'mellow season', and so is their relationship. Sweet September evenings, mild and still, are the times of their pleasant meetings [1, p. 122]. Finally, fresh white winter is the time of their wedding, emphasizing the sense of purity and innocence, and bright sunny days accompany their happy family life after returning to England.

1.6. The Sun and Fire

The sun (as is fire in general) in Charlotte Brontë's novels is a powerful symbol of happiness, joy, excitement, hope, and warmth. In most scenes in *The Professor*, the author uses the image of fire as a contrast to the gloomy or cold weather outside, for example, when William arrives at his cousin's house he sees 'bright fire and candles burning on the table' [1, p. 7] as a symbol of his inner striving for warmth, understanding, and support. When the narrator visits his acquaintance Mr. Hunsden [1, p. 21], the fire symbolizes hope that gives William a prospect for a better life. It casts light on the protagonist's state of being and helps him to rethink his life and quit his job at the mill. Whenever William visits the house of his beloved Frances, he sees fire that gives warmth not only to his body but also to his soul, even when it is raining or snowing outside. In this way, Charlotte Brontë uses the contrast related to the warmth and the peace of the house, the presence of the beloved person inside, and the nasty weather outside.

The sun accompanies William in the happiest moments of his life, intensifying the feelings of joy and excitement. He suffocates in the unbearable atmosphere of the mill and says, 'excluded from every glimpse of the sunshine of life, I began to feel like a plant growing in humid darkness out of the slimy walls of a well' [1, p. 19]. This passage proves how much the sun means to William. When he leaves the mill, one of the first things he sees is the sun [1, p. 29].

Before, he can see only darkness (as he goes to work very early and returns home too late) and the grey sky filled with factory smoke. After his departure, a ray of sunlight brightens his life, symbolizing the light of a future life of freedom.

The excitement of the protagonist's arrival in Brussels and his pleasant anticipation of something new are presented in the thoughts where he compares himself to 'a morning traveler who doubts not that from the hill he is ascending he shall behold a glorious sunrise... He knows that the sun will face him...' [1, p. 35]. William is waiting for the sunrise as the new dawn of his life. The narrator is striving for a new day, and he knows that the sun of his life will shine despite everything.

The sun also accompanies William when he finds his job in Brussels, becomes acquainted with Mdlle. Reuter, with whom he thinks he falls in love, and when he finds his beloved Frances after a long separation. William even compares Frances' smile to a ray of light amidst the gloomy day. Surely, the happiest moments of William and Frances' family life are penetrated by sunlight.

On the contrary, when William is miserable or in despair, he can see no sun above his head, for example, in a scene where William is haunted by hypochondria [1, p. 142]. However, such scenes are rare in this novel.

1.7. The Moon and Stars

The narration does not contain many night scenes with descriptions of the moon and stars. However, some of them are of great interest. As the moon reflects the sunlight, it is also used as a glimpse of hope for future happiness; for example, in the scene where William leaves his job at the mill, he sees the crescent moon and the stars shining bright, and this vision gives him enormous pleasure [1, p. 20]. The cold full moon is witness to the narrator's secret grief when he accidentally sees Mdlle. Reuter and M. Pelet on a date [1, p. 66]. However, the moon also casts light on William's happy hours with Frances both in Brussels and in England [1, p. 161]. The moonlight is William's ally, as it reveals the treachery in the first case and enlightens the moments of quiet happiness in the second case.

One of the brightest images of stars comes from the narrator himself, where he compares the turbulent period of his life with 'a sky of one of those autumnal nights which are specially

haunted by meteors and falling stars' [1, p. 131]. The shooting stars in this very situation are a symbol of great changes and uncertainty.

1.8. The Sky

The sky in the novel is also used in a deeply symbolic way, as it perfectly reflects the inner state of William's personality. *The Professor* mostly presents it in a light, positive way. Readers come across only a couple of descriptions where the sky is grey. Both are related to a deep emotional experience of the protagonist. The first is his arrival in Brussels that welcomes him with a grey, dead sky [1, p. 35]. Despite the depressing weather, William sees everything in a positive way. However, such a gloomy description may indicate his future homesickness. The next scene is associated with William searching for Frances. The sky is leaden (as is the burden on the narrator's soul) and looks thunderous, as if in anticipation of something [1, p. 102].

However, positive images of the sky are more frequent. For instance, when William quits his job at the mill, he sees the clear, icy blue of the sky [1, p. 29]. Such a description symbolizes a clear vision of new prospects in life, which are not dimmed by the factory smoke. The same situation occurs when William finally gets his job as a professor in a school for boys. He is quite satisfied with this prospect, and his state of mind and soul is in harmony with nature, as for the first time he remarks on the deep blue of the sky [1, p. 38]. William finds pleasure in walking leisurely along the streets and enjoying himself and his life, which is promising him comfort and happiness. The narrator's pleasant moments and conversations with Mdlle. Reuter are also accompanied by a view of the clear blue sky [1, p. 66], so his heart is light, and his vision is clear. He experiences similar feelings, though more intense, after finding Frances and spending time with her. The description becomes more poetic and elevated. The sky is not just blue; it is like opal, azure commingled with crimson. Moreover, the narrator sees the arch of a perfect rainbow – high, wide, and vivid [1, p. 110]. The rainbow is a symbol of hope in many cultures, so it is indicative of a new life beginning for William. In his dream, he sees a beautiful angel against the background of the sky. No doubt, it is an image of Frances, as she is that innocent and kind angel in William's life.

1.9. Landscapes

Descriptions of landscapes also accompany the narrator in various life situations. Charlotte

Brontë's love for her fatherland and her experience of living and studying in Brussels helped her to present the nature of her native country and Belgium in a realistic and picturesque way.

From almost the very beginning of the story, readers encounter the description of a pleasant country with brown and mellow woods [1, p. 10]. When William leaves the mill for good, he enjoys the vision of a calm scene with 'a deep river, glinting sun through the leafless boughs of some very old oak trees surrounding the church' [1, p. 10]. The peaceful nature surrounding the protagonist is in tune with his state of mind.

Brussels presents quite a different picture at first. Belgium does not look very picturesque and romantic. The narrator sees 'green, reedy swamps', 'fields fertile but flat', and 'cut trees, formal as pollard willows' [1, p. 35]. If one compares this description to the last scene of the narrator leaving the factory, one can see the great contrast between rich and beautiful England, and dull Brussels. However, as William states, to him all is 'beautiful and more than picturesque' [1, p. 35]. This is one more contrast between the narrator's inner feeling of freedom that gives him light and warmth and the gloomy environment around him.

When William gets a job at the lady's pensionnat, he enjoys the vision of a perfect garden with 'a long, narrow strip of cultured ground with an alley, enormous old fruit trees, a lawn, rose-trees, some flower-borders, lilacs, laburnums, and acacias' [1, p. 48]. Everything is pleasing to the eye and in perfect order, which also emphasizes the character of Mdlle. Reuter and her striving to keep everything within her control. The garden has long been a secret for William, as he cannot see it from the window of the boys' school. However, the garden itself keeps many secrets, including the meeting of the narrator with the directress, hidden from everybody by tall shrubs, and the secret date of Mdlle. Reuter with M. Pelet at night [1, p. 66].

A completely different atmosphere is described in the protagonist's moments of misery and despair. For instance, when William is looking for lost Frances in Brussels, he looks 'over the cultured but lifeless campaign' [1, p. 102]. The key word is 'lifeless' here, as without his beloved Frances, William feels no life inside of him. He experiences a similar state when he is haunted by hypochondria, which creates

a contrast to a seemingly ideal life. The author presents 'nooks in woods, hollows in hills', that is, some dark places for dark thoughts, where neither blue sky and bright sun, nor green grass and trees are seen.

Despite William's and Frances' happiness and a decent place in Brussels, they are still dreaming of moving to England, their Promised Land. Frances has never been there, but she loves England without even having seen it. The novel depicts Charlotte Brontë's love and longing for her fatherland when she was in Brussels. William and Frances are trying to find a piece of England even in Brussels, a secluded nook looking like an English pastoral province with wildflowers [1, p. 154]. Everything is described with such love and tenderness, proving the author's deep feeling for the beauty of England.

Finally, William's and Frances' dream comes true. They move to England and buy a beautiful house with a nice garden located in a secluded place among the green hills, 'whose waters still run pure, whose swells of moorland preserve in some ferny glens that lie between them the very primal wildness of nature, her moss, her bracken, her blue-bells, her scents of reed and heather, her free and fresh breezes' [1, p. 159]. Nature is literally personified because the author uses the pronoun 'she' and creates a picturesque atmosphere. The landscape of England crowns this novel.

1.10. Rivers

One particular landscape element that has a special meaning in all Charlotte Brontë's novels is water. Many descriptions contain water reservoirs that contribute to the revelation of particular events. *The Professor* is not an exception. It depicts clear representations of rivers. First, the river is a reflection of the sky, and, correspondingly, its mood and the mood of the narrator, for example, at the very beginning, William's inner state is like a calm river gliding between the woods [1, p. 10].

However, a more vivid view is seen when William leaves the mill forever. He enjoys watching the rapid rush of the deep and abundant river in the light of the sun, and the vision of flowing water calms him down and gives him the tranquility that he has lacked [1, p. 29]. This passage conveys the author's sensitivity and love of the sound and sight of flowing water.

Another image of the river is presented in the description of the narrator's hypochondria [1, p. 142], but it is not that clear one that fills

the narrator with tranquility. This river is black and sullen, and William finds himself standing on the very verge of it – like on the verge of death. Both descriptions are different and used for different purposes; however, they implicitly give readers an idea of the narrator's feelings.

1.11. Trees and Flowers

In Romantic novels, trees and flowers have deep symbolic meaning. They not only add to the descriptions of landscapes but also carry some implicit significance. For instance, around the windowpane in Mdlle. Reuter's office, William sees ivy leaves [1, p. 48]. This plant species is very tenacious and extremely dangerous to trees. As soon as it embraces a tree, the latter is doomed. So, Mdlle. Reuter has the same nature. One more symbol is used when Mdlle. Reuter and William are walking in the garden along the alley 'bordered with fruit-trees, whose white blossoms were then in full blow as well as their tender green leaves...' [1, p. 66]. This romantic atmosphere perfectly reflects William's aroused feelings since he feels wonderful amidst these blossoming trees, and his soul is blossoming too as he is 'on the brink of falling in love' [1, p. 66]. Their conversation takes place in a secret spot of the garden hidden from everybody, and Mdlle. Reuter gives William a beautiful branch of lilac. This flower symbolizes the first emotions of love [10], which perfectly reflects the inner state of both characters, as Mdlle. Reuter also feels some kind of affection for William. In contrast, when the next conversation takes place between him and Mdlle. Reuter in the same garden, they are in a completely different state. The characters are under the arc of a huge laburnum [1, p. 96]. In Victorian times, that flower meant the feeling of being forsaken [10]. This is precisely noticed as William is forsaken by his beloved pupil, and the directress is forsaken by William's affection and friendship. William also compares himself to a gardener and his beloved pupil to a precious plant, the growth of which he also contributed to [1, p. 91], which creates a perfect metaphorical image.

The description of the cemetery also contains some typical symbols of grief, such as mute cypresses, still willows, languid flowers, and yews. The trees also hide this place from everybody; hardly anyone can disturb the dead (and the two beloved who meet here) in the atmosphere of stillness and heaviness.

One more interesting detail relates to Frances' house. She loves England and strives to visit it. She tries to recreate the atmosphere of an English house in her dwelling in Belgium, for example, when Mr. Hunsden comes to visit them, Frances has a fresh rose (a symbol of England) in each china cup on the mantelpiece [1, p. 145].

Finally, the place bought by William and Frances in England is called 'Daisy Lane', and it is one more symbolic use of a flower, as a daisy represents purity and innocence [10]. The nearby house of Mr. Hunsden is called 'Hunsden Woods', and here the hard-core and closed nature of this character is emphasized by his dwelling. Still, the narrator and his wife are happy to live near their friend, and Daisy Lane is like a paradise for them, beautiful and pleasant both at noon and at night and in summer and winter. It is a place they can call their home, feel free, and live comfortably for many happy years.

Conclusions. Thus, after having analyzed the descriptions of nature in Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor*, I arrived at the following conclusions. First, the descriptions of nature used by the author are very vivid and picturesque. Charlotte's love for her fatherland is evident and reflected in this novel. The Brussels scenes are also described with great mastery, as the author draws them from her own experience of living and studying there. Second, each description is used not only for the sake of setting the scene but also to implicitly show the inner state of the characters, their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. The author uses elements such as weather conditions (cold or warm) or phenomena (rain, snow, fog, wind), celestial bodies (sun, moon, stars), change of seasons (autumn, winter, summer, spring), landscape elements (hills, rivers), trees, and flowers. All these diverse elements contribute to presenting the inner world of the characters in a deeply symbolic way, helping either to emphasize and intensify their state or create a clear contrast. It makes readers share the characters' feelings and emotions and better understand their thoughts and motives. Although *The Professor* was not positively reviewed when it debuted, this novel is still popular with readers who cannot stop admiring Charlotte Brontë's unique style, her sense of nature, her individuality, and her great talent for giving great significance to seemingly simple details.

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