

Reflections of *Tartarin of Tarascon* in *Araba Sevdası* in the Context of Impressionism

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Abstract

Araba Sevdası, written by Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem and one of the most important novels in Ottoman-Turkish literature, criticises the “European snob type” who despises his own culture and desires everything Western. Based on Alphonse Daudet’s impressions of his trip to Algeria in 1861, *Tartarin of Tarascon* criticises the “Provençal type of Southern France” who is overly fond of the exotic and looks quite comical in Eastern clothes. Both Daudet’s and Ekrem’s protagonists are alienated from their own identities and are caricatured with their incompatible, ridiculous, and exaggerated aspects. Ekrem himself states that these two texts, which have parallel aspects, are similar to each other, especially in terms of *style*. This article argues that the stylistic similarities between the two texts are based on the methods and techniques of impressionist painters and that Ekrem exemplifies Daudet’s impressionist style.

Keywords: Alphonse Daudet; Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem; literary impressionism; *écriture artiste*; *Araba Sevdası*; *Tartarin of Tarascon*

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Introduction

This article examines the influence of Alphonse Daudet's 1872 novel *Tartarin of Tarascon* on Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem's 1897 novel *Araba Sevdası* (The Carriage Affair),¹ focusing on both the principles of impressionism and the characteristics of the protagonists. Ekrem makes a connection between his work and Daudet's novel, which itself exemplifies Cervantes's *Don Quixote*.² Ekrem stated that he was influenced by *Tartarin of Tarascon*: "*Araba Sevdası* should be compared with some of Alphonse Daudet's novels, for example, there is a similarity of style between many parts of *Tartarin de Tarascon* and *Araba Sevdası*. It is for you to determine how close this relationship is" (Ekrem 2021, 108). By assessing the words in a letter written to Ekrem's friend Fazlı Necip on 25 March 1896, this study contends that the closeness between the two novels stems from the impressionistic style. The evidence is discussed under three headings. The first section, titled "The Distorting Effect of Light," explains with examples how the techniques of impressionist painters are reflected in the two novels. The second section, titled "Free Indirect Discourse," focuses on literary impressionism's free indirect discourse. In the third section, titled "Écriture Artiste," it is determined how Daudet and Ekrem apply *écriture artiste* to their texts, a special writing style used by impressionist writers who aim to give a projection of the character's visual sensations.

The term "impressionist style," used by Ferdinand Brunetière in his article "Impressionism in the Novel" ([1879] 1896), is the main focus of this study, which considers *Tartarin of Tarascon* and *Araba Sevdası* as literary examples of impressionism and compares the way painting techniques are transferred to literature in these two texts. The impressionist style, which developed alongside impressionist painting in literature, transfers effects similar to light flickers in nature to the surface of the text. The author, like a painter painting in nature, captures a fleeting moment based on his visual impressions before it vanishes. This rapid transfer from the canvas to the text paves the way for strange words and the syntax of disjointed sentences. Commas, which are used frequently, can be compared to the broken brushstrokes of painters.

A First Glance at the Relationship between the Two Novels

Nineteenth-century Ottoman-Turkish writers, while introducing the novel genre from the West to their own societies, particularly benefited from French literature. As one of the important novelists of this period, Ekrem was a writer who considered it essential to be influenced by French literature. This is due to the fact that France, where the original examples of the novel were written, was the first European country with which the Ottomans established political, commercial, and cultural relations. France was also

¹ This novel has not yet been translated into English. All quotations are my own translations.

² This analogy is also evident from the fact that Tartarin's inner speech, a two-way character, is presented in the novel through a dialogue scene between "QUIXOTE-TARTARIN" and "SANCHO-TARTARIN" (Daudet [1872] 1899, 39).

where new ideas could emerge and be used to revive the declining Ottoman Empire in every field; literature being one of these.

Despite utilising Daudet's novel *Tartarin of Tarascon*, Ekrem created a novel that is highly original with *Araba Sevdası*. He achieved this success by basing the novel on the social spaces and cultural characteristics of that era's society and painting it in regional colours. *Araba Sevdası*, published in 1897,³ is a novel that mocks and discredits an Ottoman youth who aspires to be Western. Bihruz, the protagonist of the novel, is a dreamer, a show-off and a "car" enthusiast. This character, who hates his own culture and finds everything Eastern, especially his native language, vulgar and inadequate, is an admirer of the West with his "Frankish" clothes, "Frankish" pen, "Frankish" cigarettes, and his interest in speaking French. Bihruz, who represents the Ottoman Empire's rootless generation in the nineteenth century, is a social consequence of "socio-cultural tensions hidden behind excessive Westernization" (Mardin 1991, 37). The bitterness of this conclusion is reflected in the grotesque⁴ laughter of Bihruz's lover Periveş, which is heard throughout the novel.

Tartarin of Tarascon ([1872] 1899) is based on Alphonse Daudet's hunting trip in Algeria. Daudet spent the winter of 1861–1862 in Algeria, and based on this trip experience, in 1863 he wrote an entertaining novel titled *Chapatin le tuerur de lions* published in *Le Figaro* newspaper. This first version of *Tartarin* was a caricatured portrait of Alphonse Daudet's cousin, Henry Reynaud, a travelling companion and hunting enthusiast. This was followed by *Barbarin de Tarascon*, and, two years later, by *Aventures prodigieuses de Tartarin de Tarascon* ([1872] 1899). So *Chapatin* became *Barbarin*, then *Tartarin*. *Tartarin*, characterised by his imagination, pretentiousness, and passion for "the hunt," is a playful character with a penchant for the exotic. *Tartarin* looks quite ridiculous with his Oriental clothes and red fez on his head. *Tartarin* is such a fan of the Orient that he fills his Tarascon mansion's garden with endemic plants from Africa.

A parody of the adventure novel and a mockery of the French Provençal type, this novel explores character in detail and depth. Sachs summarises Daudet's most distinctive stylistic quality: "Instead of continuous narrative, Daudet has chosen to present his story in a succession of individual scenes, each colorfully detailed in itself, and calculated at the same time to advance the story one more step" (1965, 34). As these words suggest, Daudet draws the types he characterises as "a bundle of various parts" (Moore 1916, 168). *Tartarin* is the best-known example. *Tartarin*, who attracts attention with his

³ Before its publication as a book, it was serialised in the magazine *Servet-i Fünûn* in 1896.

⁴ Periveş's mocking laughter, which serves as a *leitmotif* throughout the novel, demonstrates how laughter takes on a "grotesque" form by combining with "pain" (Bakhtin 2005, 79), representing the inevitability of the empire's demise by assuming the function of discrediting the sublime, which frequently represents power or the established order.

difference and incompatibility, is introduced to the reader in fragmentary but multifaceted ways with interconnected scenes.

Like Tartarin, Bihruz, the protagonist of *Araba Sevdası*, is a multifaceted character. Turkish critics therefore liken him to different novel characters. For example, Tanpınar finds similarities between the protagonist Sabir Çelebi in Muallim Naci's *Mehmed Muzaffer Mecmuası* and Bihruz (1988, 609). According to Mardin, Bihruz is "a Turkish Oblomov" (1991, 40), infected with the disease of civilization and lacking identity. According to Moran, he is "Don Quixote" (Moran 2001, 76). Bihruz is the Ottoman reflection of Tartarin, whose prototype is Don Quixote, and he is a parody of Tartarin with his incompatible, ridiculous, and exaggerated aspects.

Tartarin is first described as "a man of between forty and forty-five, short, stout, thick-set, ruddy, with flaming eyes and a strong stubby beard" (Daudet [1872] 1899, 14). The narrator also mentions a different aspect of him in each chapter of the novel. By combining the information and clues scattered throughout the novel, the reader learns about Tartarin's imagination, pretentiousness, narcissism, passion for lion hunting, incompetence, and even stupidity. A similar approach is also found in *Araba Sevdası*. Bihruz is first described as "a gentleman of around twenty-three to twenty-five years of age, with a round face, with a pale face, hazel eyes, dark hair, a little mustache, of short height, and well-dressed" (Ekrem 1897, 7). The entire novel needs to be read in order to perceive him as a whole with his different aspects such as his imagination, pretentiousness, narcissism, enthusiasm for cars, incompetence, and ignorance. Every scene reveals a different aspect of him. The *dramatic showing method*, which disperses this information throughout the story, is a modern branch of characterisation, as opposed to the *description method*, which provides comprehensive and preliminary information about the protagonist at the start of the novel. This is because, in the dramatic approach to characterisation, the reader is a "spectator" rather than a listener. Daudet and Ekrem utilise the method of "dramatic showing" in presenting their protagonists as a "whole-in-piece" because "the reader wants to be able to visualize him to see him act and hear him talk" (Shaw 1976, 51). The method in which the narrator disappears and leaves the character and the reader alone does more than just construct a portrait of the individual; it "visualises" acts, events, and things in the same way as a painting does.

This is where the relationship between the two texts increases; some details are based upon visual reproductions such as light, colour, movement, and form, while others convey impressions of tastes, touches, smells, and sounds. Ekrem utilises Daudet's vivid writing style and fills his novel with striking images, describing people, events, or situations as if he were drawing pictures with words. Daudet's style, which is similar to impressionist painting, appears to be consistent with the notion of "literary impressionism."

Literary Impressionism

Impressionism⁵ first emerged in painting, and later reflected in literature. Describing daylight, light reflections, flickers, and water surfaces in their works as if they were painting an impressionist painting, literary artists drew pictures with words using the motifs, techniques, and methods of painters. Thus, literary impressionism emerged. Ferdinand Brunetière used this term for the first time in his article “Impressionism in the Novel” (1879), in which he connected literature and painting. Brunetière defined literary impressionism as “the systematic transfer of the expressive means of painting to literature” ([1879] 1896, 87), and in that article he considered impressionism as a type of naturalism and Daudet as a master impressionist.

In novels such as *Jack*, *Le Petit Chose*, and *Fromont Jeune et Risler*, Daudet reproduces the crowded neighborhoods of Paris, the noisy streets, and the daily struggles of ordinary people like a painter; he presents these scenes, which contain impressions of modern life, to the reader “like a painting” (Lanson 1920, 1083). His identity as a painter-writer who uses the pen like a brush is also evident from the narrator’s words in the second chapter of *Tartarin of Tarascon*: “Joyful would I be, my dear readers, if I were a painter—a great artist, I mean—in order to set under your eyes, at the head of this second episode, the various positions taken by Tartarin’s red cap in the three days’ passage it made on board of the *Zouave*, between France and Algeria” (Daudet [1872] 1899, 85). This desire of the narrator, who wishes to be a painter instead of a writer, was realised in the first illustrated edition of the novel in 1887. Pierre-Georges Jeannot illustrated the five different shapes of the red fez worn by Tartarin on the ship *Zouave* on his way from France to Algeria. The red fez had an “arrogant and heroic” (85) appearance as the ship set sail, but when the voyage was complete and the Corsican coast was in sight, the red fez was looking down into the sea with a troubled look.

These five different depictions of “movement,” described by the author with words and by the painter with brush strokes, aim to visualise the impression of a particular moment. The narrator of *Araba Sevdası* also uses the *detaile action* technique, a means of expression common in both Daudet’s and Ekrem’s novels, to analyse instant reactions and small movements with his eyes: “Bihruz Bey, whom we left to think while smoking in his room ... after leaving the white ash of the cigarette, more than two-thirds of which was gone, on the cigarette tray on one side of the table, he headed towards the dining

⁵ The term “impressionism” was first used by journalist Louis Leroy. On 25 April 1874, Leroy wrote an article titled “Exposition des impressionists” in *Le Charivari*. The term “impressionism” was derived from Claude Monet’s *Impression-soleil levant* (*Impression, sunrise* [1872]), one of the paintings in the exhibition mentioned in the article. In this painting, the harbour of Le Havre looks hazy in the early morning. Leroy used the term impressionism to belittle artists who abandoned the traditional understanding of painting and reflected their own visual impressions on canvas. Painters at the time were painting outside, attempting to record their paintings on canvas with brushstrokes as quickly as possible in order to preserve every “momentary impression” without becoming lost in nature’s continual flux. Impressionist painters were fond of painting reflections and the effects of light, especially the surface of water (Sérullaz 1984, 13–15).

room, pinching the remaining piece of the cigarette between his lips” (Ekrem 1897, 22). Daudet presents Tartarin’s pretentiousness, passion for hunting, and selfishness to the reader by mocking and visualising them. Ekrem presents Bihruz with all the details of his movements, like an actor on the stage. The scene in which Bihruz thinks of Periveş with a cigarette in his hand also includes visual details of the house. The room, furnished with Western furniture such as fireplaces, mirrors, clocks and paintings, with which Ottoman society was not yet familiar, is also visualised with a painting. These and other pictures drawn by Halil Pasha⁶ for *Araba Sevdası* reinforce the visual perception of the reader. Moreover, *Araba Sevdası* was the first novel to be illustrated in Turkey—a fact emphasised by the words “Illustrated national story” on the inner and outer covers of the novel.

Literary impressionism is a *hybrid* style formed by painting and literature. This hybridity is emphasised by the line “If the word owes to represent the thing”⁷ (Ekrem 1897, 45), which Bihruz chooses to add to his letter to Periveş. This line, which sheds light on the relationship between painting and literature, explains that “literary impressionism owes much to painting” (Matz, 2001, 44). In the following section, these two texts, which are clearly related to painting, will be compared in terms of their parallels with impressionist painting, and the evidence for this will be discussed under three headings: the Distorting Effect of Light, Free Indirect Discourse, and *Écriture Artiste*.

The Distorting Effect of Light

Impressionist writers investigate the effect of light on an object or person and capture snapshots. Therefore, they depict the earth’s exposure to prismatic decomposition or melting under sunlight as moving shadows and fluctuating colours. For example, in *Araba Sevdası* we read about Periveş, whose “hair is very light yellow and her eyes are wavy dark yellow,” and “when she faces the sun, a dazzling, wave-wave landscape in lights and shadows appears” (Ekrem 1897, 18–19). In Daudet’s novel, which turns the body into a silhouette, Tartarin is depicted as “a mysterious shadow moving up and down” (Daudet [1872] 1899, 57); the passengers in the omnibus Tartarin boards sway with the effect of tremors, as dancing “ridiculous shadows” (156); Periveş is described as a “swift shadow” (Ekrem 1897, 89), Çengi Hanım as an “irregular shadow” (20) of Periveş (20), and Bihruz as a “shadow” (23) that always follows them.

The authors render the characters of the novels as a landscape and show that the colours are constantly changing under the influence of light through the colour fluctuations on

⁶ Halil Pasha was the husband of Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem’s sister Aliye Hanım and studied impressionism in Paris for five years (Tansuğ 1994, 20–24).

⁷ Jale Parla, who interprets this line, which takes its source from Michael Psellos’s idea that “[t]he Word is the image of the thing” (as cited in Edmonds 1923, 259), as a matter of contemporary philosophy, states that Bihruz “hits an epistemological wall” (2009, 147). However, this line, which refers to literary impressionism and gains a key function regarding the novel’s style, carries an artistic rather than a philosophical essence.

the characters' trembling bodies. When Tartarin reads the news about him in the newspaper *Sémaphore*, he “first blushes, then changes from color to color, then shivers” (Daudet [1872] 1899, 150). When Bihruz sees Periveş, whom he thinks is rich, in a cheap carriage, his body trembles from head to toe; the colour of his face first turns red, then yellow, then green (Ekrem 1897, 66). The narrators use Tartarin's and Bihruz's bodies as canvases and achieve an effect similar to the colour flickers of light in nature with the colours they bring together on their trembling bodies. They also use the effects of fog, vapour, and smoke, which give impressionist paintings the appearance of sketches, and create a hazy image on the surface of the canvas. When Tartarin locks eyes with the Maghrebian woman in the omnibus, he feels in his body effects similar to the moving flickers of an impressionist painting whose contours melt: “Although the dame was veiled, the liveliness of the big black eyes, ... [t]he fond, mute gaze of these splendrous Oriental orbs agitated him, perturbed him, and made him feel like dying with flushes of heat and fits of cold shivers” (Daudet [1872] 1899, 117). A similar scene is also found in *Araba Sevdası*. The moment Bihruz sees Periveş, whom he thought was dead, on the ferry, he is attacked by his senses. The fear, astonishment, and amazement he experiences affect his whole body: “His heart began to pound with such violence, dizziness with such terror, his eyes darkened to such an extent, and his body trembled to such a degree that if he had not pulled himself back quickly, he would undoubtedly have fallen into the sea” (Ekrem 1897, 119).

The dissolution of the character's self in an impressionist novel also encompasses social deterioration (Kronegger 1973, 64). The dissolution represented by the involuntary reactions in Bihruz's body is therefore presented through the Üsküdar harbour. The fusion of man and nature is parallel to the dissolving selves of the characters. This scene, which includes Bihruz's rush to catch the ferry, is depicted with a painting showing reflections of water and light. Containing motifs typical of impressionism, the painting captures the atmosphere of the harbour and the effects of sunlight on the water, rather than depicting the realistic details of classical landscape painting. The smudges of brush strokes that can be seen when the painting is viewed closely embody “social dissolution,” with boats going in different directions under the wind or asymmetrical shadows stretching in two different directions under the same sun. On a personal plane, it is conveyed through Bihruz's darkening eyes, hazy mind, and the involuntary reactions of his body. Literary impressionism, which sprouted in an era when the bourgeoisie was on the rise and the aristocracy was on the decline, can be seen as a movement suitable for times of social crisis. The impressionist writers, who chose to distance themselves from the public in reaction to liberalisation, convey the subject⁸ of

⁸ Impressionist painters often portrayed dandies dressed in elegant clothes with accessories such as monocles, canes, hats and black redingots. At the end of the nineteenth century, these dandies, known as “La Gomme” or “Dandy,” became the centre of novels with their flamboyance, foreign admiration and feminised features influenced by what they read (Gürbilek 2007, 47–48). Mahmut Mutman also sees criticism of the upper class and cultural elites hidden behind this character (2019, 237).

this new and problematic period from the threshold of temporary and personal sensations in the *moment*.

A similar scene showing the light pulsations in the water is also present in Daudet's novel. Describing the moment when Tartarin is lurking to hunt, the narrator creates a "light painting" with key words in the impressionist style. In this passage, expressions such as "twilight haze," "the swishing of branches," and "flicker" aid the reader in visualising nature in all its dynamism. The narrator's words, "add to this the vague swarming of the African nights" (Daudet [1872] 1899, 189), show that he uses the reader's mind as a canvas in the act of visualisation: "A little clump of rose-laurel shook in the twilight haze on the edge of a rivulet all but dried up. ... The rosy tint of nature changed into violet, and then into dark blue. A pretty pool of clear water gleamed like a hand-glass over the river pebbles; this was the watering-place of the wild animals" (188–89). The most striking aspect of this description is the "pool of clear water" whose contour is distorted by the flickers on its surface. This motif, which is positioned at the centre of the scene in the painting and the novel as the source of light, shows that with impressionism, the *sacred* light, previously associated with God or the sublime, was replaced by *earthly* light. What is more important is that the water surface is characterised as "hand-glass."⁹

The fading of contours in impressionism correspond to the *illusions* of characters in literature. The illusion caused by light is addressed with the mirror motif in both novels. Ekrem conveys this motif with a pool scene. Periveş and Çengi Hanım see their reflections on the surface of the pool by which they are standing. Periveş compares the surface of the water to "yer aynası" (the mirror of the earth); Çengi Hanım understands this as "yer elması" (earth apple). At the end of this ridiculous dialogue, the "mirror of the earth" turns first into the "yer elma-sı" (earth apple) and then into the "yer elması" (earth diamond) (Ekrem 1897, 21). As the image on the surface of the water disappears due to the effect of flickers, each reflection of the fragmented light corresponds to a different impression, giving rise to a series of illusions.

Daudet uses the water's surface, which he likens to a mirror due to its illusion of depth, with the function of distorting the character's perception. For example, Tartarin, who is waiting for his prey with his gun at the edge of the "hand-glass" water, entrusts his wallet full of money to Prince Gregory, whom he thinks is noble, for fear of being snatched by the lion he is attempting to ambush. But when he returns after firing two shots into the night, the prince is no longer there. Having lost everything to the prince,

⁹ This association between water and mirrors originates in Greek mythology. The surface of still water, where Narcissus sees his reflection and falls in love, is the oldest mirror in which man encounters his own image, and like a mirror, it creates a three-dimensional illusion on its two-dimensional surface. Even Narcissus is only an image and can disappear with a tiny flicker. This is because, as Kronegger points out, the flickers that divide and fragment light cause images that are perceived for a moment and then disappear (1973, 44).

Tartarin turns around and sees only the strangely shaped shadow of a camel standing alone in the moonlight (Daudet [1872] 1899, 190–91).

The character's first visual impression is caused by the misleading effect of light. First, a record of visual data is presented, and then reality becomes clear. Ian Watt refers to this phenomenon as "delayed decoding" (1981, 175). According to him, what distorts sensory perception and delays the character's decoding is atmospheric refraction: "In narration the main equivalents to atmospheric interference in painting are the various factors which normally distort human perception, or which delay its recognition of what is most relevant and important" (178). Delayed decoding is the most effective and original way of expressing the process that records the character's impressions of the outside world and makes these sensations comprehensible and communicable for the narrator (176). This narrative tool is successfully integrated into the plot of both novels.

To elaborate, *Tartarin of Tarascon* is about the African adventures of Tartarin, an Eastern enthusiast with a passion for hunting. Tartarin falls in love with a North African woman he sees for a few seconds on an omnibus in Algeria, where he goes to hunt lions. Because of this love, he forgets "his lions and his fame" (Daudet [1872] 1899, 140). *Araba Sevdası*, on the other hand, is about *the passion for cars* of Bihruz, who is an admirer of the West. Bihruz falls in love with a *blonde* woman he sees for a few seconds in a landau in Çamlıca Garden. Because of this love, he "loses his love for the car" (Ekrem 1897, 118). After searching for the woman he is in love with for days, Tartarin writes a letter to this woman, whose name he learns is Baya from Prince Gregory of Montenegro, a liar. "Naturally a man does not write to a Moorish girl in Algiers in the same way as to a seamstress of Beaucaire" (Daudet [1872] 1899, 135). Therefore, he makes use of books of Eastern expressions while writing the letter. Bihruz receives the first information about Periveş from Keşfi Bey, a liar, and writes a letter addressed to this noble woman. Naturally, "a letter addressed to a noble woman like Periveş Hanım, who belongs to a noble family and has received excellent upbringing, should contain noble expressions" (Ekrem 1897, 40). For this reason, he makes use of French romantic books while writing the letter. Both Tartarin and Bihruz fall in love with these *radiant* women *at first glance*; however, they have the *illusion* that the women they fall in love with are noble because they focus only on their looks. Tartarin returns home after his lion hunting adventure and catches Baya with a man (Daudet [1872] 1899, 200–201). Periveş also does not belong to an "honorable family, a noble house" (Ekrem 1897, 27), as Bihruz thought. The reason for this illusion is that the *light* that Baya and Periveş spread around dazzles and blinds the eyes. The optical illusion experienced by Daudet's hero is caused by the brightness of Baya's eyes. Bihruz is also mesmerised by the beauty of Periveş, who "dazzles like the sun from afar and shines like the moon up close" (22). The source of the optical illusion he experiences is the sun-blond hair and eyes of the woman he falls in love with.

Free Indirect Discourse

Literary impressionism has its own style of narration, which is determined by the position of the narrator.¹⁰ In impressionist texts, the narrator, who hides his presence as much as possible and turns into a *pure voice*, creates distance between himself and the character through *free indirect discourse*. Thus, the narrator shares the character's inner speech or thoughts through expressions such as "he said to himself" or "he thought." The reader sees the fictional content through the character's eyes, but through the narrator's words (Wood 2008, 9–11). In free indirect discourse, which blends the narrator's language with the character's perceptions, grammar¹¹ becomes complicated and it becomes difficult to understand who is speaking (Pascal 1977, 26). The narrator of *Araba Sevdası*, after saying "he was extremely bored" (Ekrem 1897, 72), narrates Bihruz's waiting for Periveş, his declaration of his love for her, Periveş's response to this love with tears, again from the perspective of Bihruz's mind, in a long passage of 16 sentences in the future tense; this passage ends with "That is why Bihruz Bey was bored" (73). In this way, the reader hears a "dual" voice in which the voices of the narrator and the character merge, thanks to the free indirect discourse that shows the reader the character's mind instead of directly conveying his ideas.

Free indirect discourse is the most effective way of creating an objective narrative in impressionist texts where individual impressions are conveyed through the eyes of characters. In this respect, impressionist novels, where the reader is left alone with the content, have the characteristics of *novels with scenes*. This is a parallel between *Tartarin of Tarascon* and *Araba Sevdası*. The narrators of both novels appear and withdraw in the first few lines of each chapter, like the opening of a theatre curtain. In this context, the second scene of the first chapter of both novels begins with a sentence in which the narrator, who is the visual witness of what happened in the past, appears and then immediately withdraws. In *Tartarin of Tarascon*, we read: "At the time I am telling of, Tartarin of Tarascon had not become the present-day Tartarin, the great one so popular in the whole South of France; but yet he was even then the cock of the walk at Tarascon" (Daudet [1872] 1899, 16); in *Araba Sevdası*, we read: "Before that, Çamlıca Bahçesi was not a sad, desolate, quiet place like it is now, but a noisy, boisterous, exuberant place of entertainment" (Ekrem 1897, 5).

This narrator, who is not a fictional figure but "tells" the story by focusing on one (or more) people, is called "extradiegetic" (Prince 2003, 29) in the art of the novel. Although attempts are made to keep the narrator out of the scene, the narrator enters the text "in cases where the character refuses to decipher the code" (Watt 1981, 272) and

¹⁰ Peter Hallberg also says that the most important element that characterises the writers of the impressionist movement is the position of the narrator (as cited in Storskog 2018, 44).

¹¹ Jale Parla, in *Babalar ve Oğullar: Tanzimat Romanının Epistemolojik Temelleri* (Fathers and Sons: The Epistemological Foundations of the Tanzimat Novel), states that Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem, who tries to show the character's mind through grammar, transforms the novel into a modern narrative by trying different parody methods in the narrative dimension of *Araba Sevdası* (2009, 137).

reveals the truth to the reader. For example, Bihruz labels his letter as a “*chef-d’oeuvre de style*” due to misreadings¹² (Ekrem 1897, 77); the narrator reveals that this odd, ridiculous letter written by Bihruz is in fact a “freak writing” (45).

The narrator does not participate in the events of the novel, but rather intervenes in the narrative through *irony* resulting from the difference between the character’s expectations and the outcomes he encounters. The narrator’s attitude, which condemns the incapacity to see the facts rather than delivering them explicitly, is used with Gerard Genette’s technique of “double focalization” (1980, 209). This bidirectional emphasis on the “subjective” protagonist, on the one hand, and the “objective” narrator on the other, results in absurdities caused by ironic exaggerations and parodic distortions. Daudet’s narrator indicates sarcastically through this free but indirect discourse that the protagonist, whom he refers to throughout the novel as “the intrepid Tartarin” (Daudet [1872] 1899, 11), is actually a huge coward. The narrator of *Araba Sevdası* sometimes characterises Bihruz as “Magnificent Mr. Bihruz” (Ekrem 1897, 7), but more often as the “poor” (56) or “wretched youth” (98). This complex irony, reflecting the *dualism* of free indirect discourse (Pascal 1977, 42), conveys the hazy and ambiguous atmosphere of pictorial impressionism to the novel due to the ambiguity of the perspective between “criticism and sympathy” or “negation and affirmation” (Pascal 1977, 42). This ironic style is a variation on naturalism, but it also overlaps with literary impressionism, which hides its coarseness, praises its complexity, and dazzles with its nuances.

The playful tone created by satire and irony allows the observant narrator to keep a safe distance. This humorous language, combined with pity, creates the sense that the protagonist is an “inferior” character. The narrator belittles the protagonist, regarding him with *pitying sarcasm* or *sarcastic compassion*, and degrades him. One explanation for this sarcastic attitude is the protagonist’s exhibitionist and egotistical attitude, as a result of which he thinks of himself as “greater” than he truly is. Tartarin, for example, does not wish to chase lions on a donkey because he is seeking glory. He thinks that a donkey-led convoy would look ugly: “I want something more Oriental. For instance, if we could only get a camel” (Daudet [1872] 1899, 179). After getting the camel, he climbs on the hump and salutes the crowd proudly; after that, he laments: “It’s horribly beautiful! If only the Tarasconians could see this!” (181). Tartarin’s ostentation is further exemplified by the fact that he had his name etched in capital letters on the gun chest he ordered: “TARTARIN DE TARASCON CAISSE D’ARMES” (85).

Bihruz is also a pretentious person; he walks around with his *Mir*-branded overcoat, *Heral*-branded shiny boots, silver cane with his initials (M.B.) on it, and glazed watch.

¹² This is because Bihruz is incapable of translating and understanding Ottoman Turkish poetry, which is a combination of three different languages and written in Arabic script. For this reason, he misreads the word “siyeh-çerde” in the poem he wants to include in his letter as “bersiye” and is ridiculed for this poem written not to a woman but to a man, not to a blonde but to a brunette. For a grammatological study on Bihruz’s continued translation in a fragmented language, misreading and misunderstanding throughout the novel, see Ertürk (2018).

This aspect of Bihruz is also visible in the fact that he went so far as to have his initials engraved on his car, to which he is passionately attached: “The sides of the car were decorated with gilded ornaments bearing the initials of the Bey’s name and nickname” (Ekrem 1897, 10).

The other reason for the narrator’s ironic attitude is that the protagonist is a dreamer. As a reaction to the blindness of the character whose senses have been dulled, the narrator uses sarcastic language. While the narrator of *Tartarin of Tarascon* scolds Tartarin, saying, “This is what Tartarin might have seen had he given himself the trouble; but, wrapped up entirely in his leonine hunger, the son of Tarascon went straight on, looking to neither right nor left” (Daudet [1872] 1899, 185), the narrator of *Araba Sevdası* says, “Bihruz Bey could see nothing, look at no one. However, he did not want to see or look” (Ekrem 1897, 11). The narrators of the impressionist novels, like cameras, become the eyes of Tartarin and Bihruz, exactly as the impressionist artists, who flee from emotions and thoughts to create an art based on the senses, and shift away from human depth and become merely a “strong eye.” For example, with words such as the following, the narrator of *Tartarin of Tarascon* both reveals himself and shows that he has a better grasp of the truth than the protagonist: “On my word of honor as a story-teller, the poor *Turk* would have made a paste-board dummy pity him” (Daudet [1872] 1899, 87), or, “After all, blinded by a new mirage, our candid hero may have imagined in perfectly good faith that he had gone to Algeria” (61). The narrator of *Araba Sevdası* has the same attitude. Through the words: “Mrs. Periveş did not belong to such an honorable family ... to a noble dynasty, as Bihruz Bey portrayed her” (Ekrem 1897, 27), the narrator clearly reveals that he can see what Bihruz cannot see and transforms into the blinded figure’s eye. This eye, however, is no longer the divine eye of the omniscient narrator, but an earthly eye that has been emptied of its sanctity and has passed sovereignty to the reader rather than keeping it in its own hands.

Écriture artiste

Impressionist writers use the techniques of impressionist painting to present a theatrical/visual representation and to give a pictorial equivalent of the characters’ sensations. They use a special style of writing called *écriture artiste*¹³ to achieve this visuality. Herman Bahr attributes the emergence of *écriture artiste*, an essential component of literary impressionism, to the hypersensitive sensibilities of the Goncourt brothers. The Goncourts had more refined senses and nerves than their contemporaries.

¹³ This writing, invented by the Goncourt brothers but named by Edmond Goncourt, first appears in the preface to the novel *Les Frères Zemganno* (1879). In this preface, Edmond Goncourt states that in the literary war he and his brother fought their greatest ambition was to declare the victory of realism and naturalism and to write “roman réaliste de l’élégance” (the realist novel of elegance) (Goncourt 1879, vii–viii). In order to write this realistic but elegant novel, they invented a style they called *écriture artiste*. The purpose of this new narrative style, according to him, is not merely to employ vulgar words to describe the vile or to describe unpleasant odours that elicit revulsion. The purpose of *écriture artiste* is to depict the superior and beautiful, the appearance of pure beings and rich things.

Such vibrant sensations had never been experienced before, with even the smallest detail emitting light flickers. But it was not enough for the Goncourts to see or hear better. They developed the *écriture artiste* (artistic writing) style in order for other writers to adapt it (Bahr 1912, 176). At the end of the nineteenth century, the Goncourts' writing style captivated many writers, including Daudet, Zola, Flaubert, Balzac, and others.

For impressionist writers who conveyed life by visualising it as if they were describing landscapes, *artistic writing*¹⁴ was an ideal formal and thematic tool. *Art* in this sense also means “to draw a picture.” This is why Edmond Goncourt said that he wanted to find expressions similar to a painter’s touch in a sketch (as cited in Baguley 1995, 270). What he means is to draw a picture with words. The lines in *Tartarin of Tarascon*, “If I were a painter—a great artist, I mean—in order to set under your eyes ...” (Daudet [1872] 1899, 85), and in *Araba Sevdası*, “If the word owes to represent the thing” (Ekrem 1897, 79), emphasise the relationship between writing and painting.

Impressionist writers twisted the grammatical aspects of the language in order to free it from its oppressive rules and in order to achieve images within the novel as vivid and moving as a painter would. Therefore, *écriture artiste* rejects *classical* syntax and adopts *schematic*¹⁵ syntax. This linguistic structure is quite compatible with the texts of Daudet and Ekrem. For example, the lines in *Tartarin of Tarascon*, “Un lion! ... un lion! ...”¹⁶ (A lion, a lion!) (Daudet 1887, 54); “Hé! Bé ... hé! Bé ... Et mon fusil! ... mon fusil à aiguille que vous emportez! ...” (Here, here, I say! That’s my gun—my needle-gun you are carrying off) (55); “Tous, femmes, enfants, portefaix, chasseurs de casquettes, le brave commandant Bravida luimême ...” (Everyone, women, children, porters, cap hunters, even the brave Commander Bravida ...) (60) reflect the main characteristic of impressionist writing. The scenes of inner monologue in *Araba Sevdası* constructed by the juxtaposition of sentences that are not semantically related to each other, with repetitions, ellipses, and frequently used punctuation marks, represent impressionist writing.¹⁷ This irregular writing style, which methodically destroys the rule-determined structure of language, fractures Bihruz’s mind into parts, the way light is separated into spectral colours, and produces a distinct impression for each part: “Ah!. Promise! They don’t keep their promise.. [sic]¹⁸ huh!. Stop! It is coming. No it’s not..

¹⁴ This writing, which marked an era, was recognised as “impressionistic prose style” (Baguley 1995, 270). Therefore, they were sometimes characterised as “écriture artiste” and sometimes as “écriture impressionniste” (Pages 1992, 35).

¹⁵ Schematic syntax avoids logical word order and coordinating conjunctions; the regular structure of sentences ending in periods is deformed. Thus, stream-of-consciousness passages are made up of inverted sentences, repeated words, elliptical clauses, or incoherent sentences that have no semantic relationship (Gibbs 1952, 179).

¹⁶ Since the punctuation is lost in the English translation, I use the French text.

¹⁷ Berna Moran considers *Araba Sevdası* the first novel in Turkish literature to use the stream-of-consciousness technique. Furthermore, he emphasises that this technique was quite new even for Western literature at the time the novel was written (2001, 84–85). This conscious use of language throughout the novel reflects the Goncourt brothers’ “écriture artiste” style.

¹⁸ Punctuation in all quotations as in the original.

Wait, maybe it's the car.. wow! Wow! Neither is this! Did he bring you down? Did he not get permission.. or did he misunderstand? Another car! Oh god damn it! It's empty.. it comes again.. it's empty too! What the hell are these! Who is that coming?.. He looks at me a lot.. is he bringing a letter?. Much!" (Ekrem 1897, 74).

Another characteristic of *écriture artiste* is the use of metaphorical and metonymic language. This is because metaphor and metonymy are effective tools for painting with words. Inanimate beings or abstract concepts are thus presented to the reader as vivid and colourful paintings. For example, Tartarin's elegant slippers *scurrying like a little red mouse* on his hunting boots: "To finish him, the lady's slipper meddled in the onslaught: he felt the dainty thing wander and frisk about over his heavy hunting boots like a tiny red mouse" (Daudet [1872] 1899, 117). In another example from the same novel, it is *two black marigold eyes* that look at Tartarin and shout "Come, cull us!": "and the eyes, widely open opposite him like twin black velvet flowers, seemed to say: 'Come, cull us!'" (118). In *Araba Sevdası*, inanimate beings or abstract concepts are personified. The books that Bihruz tries to read, for example, attempt to escape him: "All the books left under the cupboards covered in dust tried to escape from Bihruz Bey as they fell into his hands, trying to find a place to hide again" (Ekrem 1897, 50). The letter that Bihruz writes for Periveş "remains in his jacket pocket each day morning till night, trapped and sad" (95).

These examples have a meaning beyond inanimate beings acquiring human characteristics. The mobility of personified objects or concepts, such as being scared, frightened, running, escaping, and so on, demonstrates that even the most fixed objects create a perceptual flow. And what enables this flow is the lack of conjunctions that coordinate the syntax. Describing sentences stripped of conjunctions as "phrase désossé," Louis Desprez says that the speed of the sentence is what gives such sentences their visuality (1884, 84). Desprez goes on to say that conjunctions that slow down the flow are considered banal and are consciously avoided by impressionist writers. Such verbal compression resulting from the omission of connecting elements between sentences, especially conjunctions, is called asyndeton.¹⁹ Uses such as "[o]nly a sequence of phrases linked by commas" (Baldrick 2008, 27) give the sentence a sense of *flicker* and, in particular, *speed* (Quinn 1993, 10–13).

Both Tartarin and Bihruz are fast-movers and hurried characters. This hastiness, which is reflected in the novel's thematic aspect, is also reflected in the novel's formal aspect, with Tartarin's and Bihruz's distinct speaking styles. This is because the two characters create numerous asyndeton examples with their words when the flow of events gets exciting. Tartarin shouts in Latin: "Rosa, la rose, bonus, bona, bonum!" (Daudet 1887, 123) amid the stampede on the docks. Meanwhile, Bihruz, in a panicked situation where he bumped into a waiter with a tray in his hand and caused the bottles to break, shouts out in French: "J'ai affaire!.. [sic] Je afer!.. Je suis très presse" (I have a job!.. I have a

¹⁹ The most famous example of asyndeton is Julius Caesar's statement about Gaul: "Veni, vidi, vic" (I came, I saw, I conquered) (Quinn 1993, 7).

job!.. I am in a hurry) (Ekrem 1897, 26). Asyndeton is demonstrated by these expressions in which punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and exclamations are preferred over conjunctions.

Other examples of asyndeton in *Araba Sevdası* can be listed as follows: “He went to the garden wall. Waited for a little. Returned back the way he came” (66); “He looked, he looked, he found” (151); “He rushed out the door. He got into a taxi he saw” (92); “He found a car quickly. He went to the bridge, took the ferry. He arrived in Kadikoy” (93).

Turning to *Tartarin of Tarascon*, asyndeton is exemplified through the following: “Il se tut ... Cela se baissait, flairait la terre, bondissait, se roulait, partait au galop, puis revenait s’arrêtait net ...” (This thing lowered its head, sniffed the ground, bounded up, rolled over, darted off at a gallop) (Daudet 1887, 137); “Enfin!.. [sic] Pan! ... pan! pfft, pfft!” (At last! Bang, bang! pfft, pfft!) (248); “Ta, ta, va, ta ... Tarata! ...” (Tar, tar, rar, tar! tar, rar, tar!) (139); “Vite, vite, à l’affût” (Quick! quick! to the ambush) (239).

Asyndetons, which give the impression of acceleration, appear in locally spoken curses, joyful cheers, hasty words, or angry sentences, rather than long, intrusive sentences that slow down the flow. This *telegraphic* writing technique, which is used to visualise speed perception, also causes flicker. Asyndetons are a notably effective tool in *écriture artiste* due to their resemblance to impressionist painting’s flickering light reflections. The use of commas instead of conjunctions corresponds to the impressionist painters’ broken brushstrokes, as the painters worked quickly to capture instant images without losing them.

Conclusion

Literary impressionism is the transfer of impressionist painting’s means of expression to literature. French writers who moved closer to impressionist painting in the last quarter of the nineteenth century attempted to describe the projection of the character’s visual sensations as if they were drawing a picture. They focused on daylight, light reflections, flickers, and water surfaces in doing so. In light of these principles, they framed each sensory image of the characters in the works they wrote as if they were projected on canvas through episodic scenes. Atmospheric conditions were the main cause of the characters’ optical illusions. The ironic attitude and limited point of view of the observer narrator, who conceals his presence as much as possible, convey the clusters of sensory images to the reader. The *écriture artiste* style served as both the formal and thematic means of visual transmission.

This article focused on the similarities between *Araba Sevdası* and *Tartarin of Tarascon* based on a sentence in a letter written by Recaizade Ekrem to his friend Fazlı Necip on 25 March 1896. The most significant similarity between the two novels is that they were written in accordance with literary impressionism principles. *Araba Sevdası*, which is regarded as romantic by some critics and realist by others due to its lyrical elements and

positivist elements, was written in accordance with impressionism principles. Ekrem is also thought to be the first representative of impressionist art in Turkish literature.

To conclude, this article, examining the strong relationship between the novels *Tartarin of Tarascon* and *Araba Sevdası*, is significant because it is the first time that impressionism, a movement in painting, finds its reflection in Turkish literature, allowing for the works of many novelists following in Ekrem's footsteps to be read with a different perspective.

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