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Imagery in Literary Language and Its Translation

Abstract

This study explores the concept of "image" within the aesthetic and creative dimensions of literary language. Imagery is examined not only in its denotative sense as "something that exists in reality and its reflection in the mind," but also as a subjective creation shaped by imagination and enriched with multiple layers of meaning. Within the refined and poetic nature of literary discourse, imagery emerges as a powerful tool: in romantic contexts, it reveals inner states of the self, while in symbolic functions, it opens pathways to associations and dreams. The research adopts a reader-oriented approach of "reception aesthetics" and analyzes examples from 19th- and 20th-century French literature to highlight the role of imagery in literary discourse and its significance in translation practices. The findings demonstrate that imagery is neither fixed nor uniform; rather, it is dynamic and transformative, capable of reshaping itself and those who engage with it through imagination. Ultimately, imagery is emphasized as a mirror reflecting both the creative power of human imagination and the realities of human existence, thereby strengthening the aesthetic dimension of literary language and contributing meaningfully to literature and translation studies.

Keywords: *literary language, Imagery, reception aesthetics, French literature, aesthetic discourse*

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Ədəbi dildə təsəvvür və onun tərcüməsi

Xülasə

Bu tədqiqat "imge" anlayışını ədəbi dilin estetik və yaradıcı ölçüləri çərçivəsində araşdırır. İmge yalnız "gerçəklikdə mövcud olan şey və onun zehnimizdəki əksi" kimi denotativ mənada deyil, həm də təxəyyül vasitəsilə formalaşan və çoxqatlı mənalarla zənginləşdirilmiş subyektiv bir yaradıcılıq kimi nəzərdən keçirilir. Ədəbi diskursun incə və poetik təbiəti daxilində imge güclü bir vasitə kimi ortaya çıxır: romantik kontekstlərdə daxili mənlik halları üzə çıxarılır, simvolik funksiyalarda isə assosiasiyalara və xəyallara yol açılır. Araşdırmada oxucu yönümlü "qəbul estetikası" yanaşması mənimsənmiş və XIX–XX əsr Fransız ədəbiyyatından seçilmiş nümunələr üzərində imgenin ədəbi diskursdakı rolu və tərcümə praktikalarındakı əhəmiyyəti vurğulanmışdır. Nəticələr göstərir ki, imge nə sabit, nə də vahid bir quruluşdur; əksinə, dinamik və transformativdir, özünü və təxəyyül vasitəsilə onunla qarşılaşanları dəyişdirə bilir. Nəticə etibarilə, imge insan təxəyyülünün yaradıcı gücünü və insan varlığının gerçəkliklərini əks etdirən bir güzgü kimi ön plana çıxır, ədəbi dilin estetik ölçüsünü gücləndirir və ədəbiyyatla tərcümə araşdırmalarına mənalı töhfə verir.

Açar sözlər: *ədəbi dil, İmge, qəbul estetikası, fransız ədəbiyyatı, estetik diskurs*

Introduction

The art of "literature," which we may regard as a reflection of the cultural life of societies, in its broadest sense corresponds to written works that contain an aesthetic purpose. Within this framework, "literary language" refers to a language situated on the plane of writing; literature, in turn, denotes all works produced in this language that belong to a specific time and literary understanding, and that are categorized as literary genres (novel, poetry, theater, etc.). In terms of linguistic level, literary language, positioned primarily in the domain of written communication, has been recognized as a "distinguished language" with its own terminology, aesthetic features, and stylistic discourse. Literary language is a poetic language. What makes literary language distinctive is its "creative language," full of evocative associations and persuasive discourse based on aesthetic–rhetorical qualities. What strengthens the discourse of literature both in form and style are not only diverse modes of expression and syntactic structures but also the multiple meanings reflected by certain words and idioms. Literature has long been accepted as a "mirror" reflecting a culture and, essentially, humanity in all its aspects; among the elements that function as a mirror in literary language, the "image" (imge) stands foremost with its qualities of reflection and representation.

Research

In this study, designed in three parts, we will examine the term "image" (imge), which, with its meanings in both concrete and abstract contexts, corresponds to numerous definitions across different disciplines and, for this reason, leads to a confusion of definition and meaning. Starting from its general description, we will look at how it is used in literature and literary translation, with examples from prose and verse. The aim of our study is to observe the denotative and connotative features represented by the image, and especially to examine in poetry the meanings it evokes and the rhetorical devices through which these meanings are conveyed. Literature is, above all, a subjective art that appeals to the world of emotions and imagination, which we may call the "alchemy of words"; in other words, its reflection differs for each reader. We believe that in approaches to literature and literary translation, it would not be correct to seek a single or absolute reality or to arrive at definitive judgments. In line with this understanding, we have adopted the method of "reception aesthetics," which is considered a reader-oriented interpretation, for the analysis and translation of literary texts. Most of the literary texts we will present as examples for image analysis—primarily poetry—are selected from 19th- and 20th-century French literature.

At the conclusion of our study, we will have demonstrated—through examples—that literature and literary language possess unique, aesthetic, and image-creating qualities. Regardless of the translation theories and strategies adopted in the field of literature, in translations already made or to be made, the importance of the "image," which strengthens and enhances literary discourse, will be emphasized—particularly by referring to its modes of use in poetry—as a modest contribution to the field.

Perspectives on the Definitions of the Image

When we compare dictionary definitions, we find that the French *Image* and the Turkish *imge* or *imaj* differ significantly, with the semantic field in French being much broader. In the dictionary of the Turkish Language Association (TDK), we encountered four definitions; the first is a philosophical one: "Something conceived in the mind and desired to be realized; imagination." The second definition conveys form and reflection: "General appearance, image." The third and final definitions are psychological: "The counterpart of an object perceived externally by the sense organs, reflected in consciousness; imagination, image."; "Objects and events that appear in consciousness without the presence of a stimulus perceived by the senses; dream, imagination, image." Within the semantic field of Turkish, the word *imge* emerges in two forms, which we may call concrete and abstract: "outer appearance," which includes form and objective reflection, and "inner appearance," which conveys mental representation or dream.

In French dictionaries, there are definitions parallel to those given by TDK, but also additional ones. First, there are objective descriptions pointing to a technique in science and art: "The reproduction of an object by an optical system"; "the representation of an object in graphic or plastic

arts". In our research on the image, we can identify a conceptual confusion both in definition and classification, since as a technical term it spans a wide range of terminology and usage—from optics to visual arts, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and literature. To summarize:

Image:

1. Something that exists in reality and its reflection in the mind (transmission from outside to inside)
2. Something referred to or conceived (transmission from inside to outside)

In literature, especially poetry, the image is essential in the structure of literary figures of speech such as simile, substitution, symbolization, indication, and allusion. Therefore, the definitions we will rely on are not the concrete or objective ones but rather the abstract and subjective.

In French dictionaries, we encounter three figurative (*figuré*) definitions of the image:

1. Analogy/Resemblance: The reproduction or analogical representation of a being or thing. Examples:

a) *"C'est l'image de son père".* ("Just like his father.")
b) *"L'homme est créé à l'image de Dieu".* ("Man was created in the image of God.")

2. Symbol: Something that evokes or suggests a reality. Examples:

a) *"C'est l'image de l'abondance".* ("The image of abundance.")
b) *"Donner une image noire de la situation".* ("To give a dark (pessimistic) image of the situation.")

3. Comparison or Metaphor: The concretization of an abstract reality in language, expressed in tangible terms. Examples:

a) *"C'est l'image du bonheur."* ("The image of happiness.")
b) *"Evoquer une image noble."* ("To articulate a noble image.")

In prose texts, authors have occasionally resorted to images because of their evocative qualities; for instance, in Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, the flower image can render the novel poetic, transforming it into a lyrical narrative. However, the figurative definitions of the image given above appear most intensely in poetic texts. The poet is, in fact, a producer of images. Köklügiller describes the image as "an element of implicit expression like a symbol." The image "is formed through figurative expression, figures of speech, associations, and symbols" (2009, p. 149). Karabulut emphasizes that the image, "used in the sense of pictures constructed in the mind, is an important element affecting the meaning and structure of poetry," while citing Bayat (2006, p. 50) regarding the origin of the term:

"*Imge* is a word of Turkish origin. It is derived by adding the suffix *-ge* to the root *im-*. The root *im-* meaning 'sign' produces similar words with other suffixes. One of these is *imlemek*, which means 'to indicate, to express indirectly, to imply'." (Karabulut, 2015, p. 606)

Another element related to the image is imitation, which we encounter more often in philosophy but which is also noteworthy in its relation to literature. In French, with its subtle distinctions, we find imitation expressed as *pastiche*, *imitation*, or *parodie*. This method of imitation can generally be thought of in connection with the mirror image, which reflects literature's function of representation: reproducing or creating similarity by looking. There is the situation of external reality being reflected or revived in the mind and the creation of new structures; in other words, reference is made both to reality itself (objective image) and to its fictionalized form (figurative image). As in many cultures, in French and Turkish, the coexistence of denotation (*dénotation*) and connotation (*connotation*) in many words can be considered within this framework.

The Self, Image, and Imagination in Literature

Literature is a fantastic space in which an external reality (object or event) is represented both in its denotative meaning and in its possible figurative dimensions; poetic images are the entities that render this space magical, extraordinary, and rich. The element that abstracts the object from its monotonous appearance and general meaning, directing it toward multiple images and interpretations, must be sought in the artist's (the poet's) way of perceiving and apprehending external reality. How does the external world appear in the poet's eyes? How do objects, images, and events reflect upon the poet's inner world? Doğan Aksan (2015, p. 30), after emphasizing the essential importance of imagery in poetry, defines it—beyond its analogical quality—as "the expression of unreal, unique

events and appearances formed in the poet's mind." Ezra Pound, in defining the image, highlights its sudden and instantaneous quality: "An image is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." (Baş, 2015, p. 422) Meanwhile, Marcel Proust speaks of the mysterious laws that make the poet's connection with the external world extraordinary and enchanting:

"The poet's mind is filled with manifestations of mysterious laws; when these manifestations take shape and gain strength, when they become distinct in the background of the mind, they strive to emerge, because everything that must endure seeks to escape from what is weak and obsolete, from the being that may die the same day or lose the power to give birth […] The poet is unhappy whenever he is not aligned with the line of mysterious laws, whenever he does not feel the same vital bond with every object. Yet this often happens to him, because when he seeks something coldly and mercilessly, when he directs himself toward a goal that carries his being outward from within, he leaves that inner chamber from which he can communicate with the beauty of the entire world, as if he were in a telephone or telegraph booth." (Proust, 2018, pp. 22–23)

From this emerges the following portrait of the poet: the poet lives in a constant struggle between the external self ("social self") and the inner self ("mysterious self"), which forms the world of imagination and emotion. This struggle is experienced far more deeply and painfully than by ordinary individuals. From Proust's perspective, the communication between the external world (social self) and the inner self is marked by intermittent continuity. The genius of poetry lies in these interruptions; poetry (or poetic images) surfaces in those pauses. As Proust emphasizes, *"the poet is occupied with himself; the moment you find him, the other disappears… You always find the poet alone."* (Proust, 2018, p.23) The poet's self is nourished by these mysterious laws—difficult to name—and reveals itself as poetry. One of the pioneers of modern poetry, Rimbaud, describes the poet as a seer who can perceive the invisible, declaring: *"Je est un autre!"* ("I is another!"). This description, as an ontological problem, refers not only to the subject–object relationship but also to the poet's role as prophet and spokesperson of the invisible realm.

In the modern literary process that began with the Romantic movement of the 19th century, and developed in parallel with social transformations, we can observe the progression of poetic currents: at the beginning of the century, poetry bore a subjective (self-centered) tone; from the mid-century onward, with the Parnassian school, an objective (poetry-centered) tone emphasizing formal beauty prevailed; toward the end of the century, Symbolism sought to establish a connection between the subjective and the objective through a metaphorical tone (centered on communication between self and other), that is, a poetic tonality based on allegory. Although the themes and stylistic features of these poetic movements differ, the presence of poetic imagery is a common thread. The themes of the Romantic self—love, passion, dream, nostalgia, melancholy, solitude, and escape—cannot be separated from one another; for example, in Alphonse de Lamartine's poem *Le Lac*, which lends its name to the image of the lake, several of these themes coexist:

"Ebedi gecesinde bu dönüşsüz seferin
Hep başka sahillere doğru sürüklenen biz
Zaman adlı denizde bir gün bir lahza için
Demirleyemez miyiz?" (translated by Yaşar Nabi Nayır)

The poem *Le Lac* is an image not only through the presence of imagery in its verses but also through its title, theme, and descriptive qualities; it refers not only to a sorrowful love story but also to the poet himself—Lamartine, the poet of the lake. In contrast to the Romantic self and lyrical discourse, Parnassian poetry embodies the collective self, grounded in the principle of "art for art's sake." By depicting objects and scenes from the external world, Parnassian poetry juxtaposes painting with poetry, presenting pastoral and epic tableaux that reference antiquity and mythology, or incorporating concrete images related to the fine arts such as sculpture. In Parnassian poetry, the aim of poetry is neither the poet's nor the social self's dilemmas; the aim of poetry is solely poetry itself.

"Eskiden niceleri Burgonya bahçelerinde,
Adlarını kazıdılar ağaçlara sevdiklerinin
Niceleri o canım salonlarında Louvre'ların
Burunları havada gülüp eğlendiler delice."
(J-M de Heredia, *Sonnet*; translated by İlhan Berk)

Concrete images highlight the evocative or memory-inducing qualities of a plastic art. In opposition to Romanticism's purely self-centered discourse and to Naturalism's reflection in poetry, the Symbolist movement emphasized the function of the image as a symbol. In terms of characteristics, the image in Symbolism encompasses the second and (more significantly) the third of the definitions previously given, finding its fullest expression in poetry. The Symbolist movement begins from the idea that "the universe has a meaning beyond appearances, and that the poet, aware that everything in the universe is sensitive, seeks to transcend these appearances in order to reach truth." (İnal, 1981, p. 172) Within Symbolism, the quest to discover possible connections, syntheses, or associations between the visible and the invisible universe is pursued through symbols. The presence of certain mysterious images—awaiting discovery by poet and reader alike—resembles hidden gems lying in twilight.

In Baudelaire's *Correspondances*, nature is described as a living temple:

"Bir Tapınaktır Doğa, direklerinden akan
Anlaşılması güç, karışık sesler duyulur
Ve kişi, tanıdık gözleriyle ona bakan
Simge ormanlarından geçip yola koyulur.

Aydınlık gibi geniş, ve gece gibi kara
O derin birlik içinde, sesler, kokular, renk
Uzaktan uzağa karışan yankılara denk
Birbirlerini işte böyle yanıtlamakta." (translated by Erdoğan Alkan)

The poet's aim is not to directly name what these visible symbols express—which would be equivalent to a mere description—but rather to access the invisible spiritual domains they reflect as impressions. *Correspondance* indicates a "mental environment" in which material and spiritual realities are patterned and unified. For this correspondence to occur and to transform into poetic discourse, the poet traces the reflections and analogies of his inner world, deciphering the symbols of this living temple one by one, thereby reaching ontological secrets related both to the universe and to himself.

In the Surrealist movement shaped by the war literature of the twentieth century, the image is now laden with meanings beyond the familiar sense emphasized by Baudelaire (Baudelaire, 1857/1984). The order of resemblance/analogy is also different. Looking at the descriptions of one of the leading figures of the movement, Pierre Reverdy (1990, p. 161):

"The image is a pure creation of the mind. It is born not from comparisons but from the rapprochement of two realities that are more or less distant from each other. The more distant and accurate the connections between these realities, the stronger the Image will become, acquiring an exciting power and poetic reality. […] Analogy is a path of creation; it is a similarity of connections; yet the strength or weakness of the created image depends on the nature of these connections. What is great is not the Image itself, but the emotion it arouses; if the emotion is great, only then is the Image justified. The emotion aroused is poetically pure, because it is born outside all comparisons, imitations, and associations."

An example of the image in Surrealist poetry, which contains distant correspondences, can be found in Paul Eluard's line *"La Terre est bleue comme une orange."* ("The Earth is blue like an orange."). Beyond the description of the Earth as blue and shaped like an orange, one might recall the

distant association that an orange, when it begins to rot, takes on a bluish hue. The transformation of an object or event into a poetic image can, at first glance, be evaluated in terms of the poet's choice of words, mode of expression, and the sonic harmony of verses and rhymes. Poetry, for some, is an art difficult to decipher and understand; what makes its meaning challenging is the poet's intensive use of figures of speech and the absence of direct ideas as in prose. Yet the most important feature distinguishing poetry from prose genres such as the novel or story is precisely that it is not written to directly narrate or be understood. As İlhan Berk (2001, p. 148) emphasizes, *"Poetry does not actually tell [only] one thing… No matter how dark or incomprehensible a poem may seem, if it is a good poem, it still conveys something."* In this respect, the expression of poetry differs from prose. In prose, the meaning of sentences is generally clear and follows a logical structure. Berk, who argues that poetry cannot be translated into prose, states: *"A good poem, rather than telling, suggests or evokes something. This is the meaning of poetry."* (2001, p. 149) In other words, the existence of meaning(s) is hidden within the plural semantic universe and evocative power of poetry.

How has the poet perceived phenomena and events, filtered them through the inner self and emotional world, and chosen to express them, thereby creating images? Or did the image arise spontaneously before the poet and impose itself upon the mode of expression? The magic of poetry lies here; yet describing this process is not easy. From the reader's perspective, similar situations occur; each reader may derive different semantic conclusions from their perception and reception of poetry. The unique interaction and inseparability of external reality and internal reality (mental appearance/image) result in the creation of poetic imagery, which cannot be reduced to a single concrete interpretation. In this respect, poetry, with all its analyzable and unanalyzable elements, is a literary text possessing multiple meanings (Le Robert, 2025).

"Outside of this ambiguous nature, the image has no existence; this leads to a dilemma in the interpretation of artistic/literary imagery: how can these extremely different qualities of the image be reconciled? How can its contradictory nature, its polysemy, be harmonized, and on what ground? There are two answers to this question. From the artist's perspective: no interpretation. From the perspective of the recipients: through interpretation." (Atakay, 2004, p. 68)

Beyond preparing the ground for interpretations that cannot be reduced to absolute conclusions, the image, with its plural semantic structure, must also be considered as a process whose time and space are variable. The images reflected in the verses of a poem written in the nineteenth century can be observed in terms of how they were interpreted in their own era, geography, and cultural context. Today, there may be a need to reinterpret those poems and their imagery. Looking at the phenomenon of imagination (*Imaginaire*) as the source of poetry's evocative power enriched by images, the Turkish Language Association dictionary provides the following (psychological) definition: "The ability to establish connections between elements of past experiences and present experiences; imagination". Jean-Paul Sartre, in his essay *L'imaginaire*, emphasizes that the image cannot be analyzed if it is regarded as a passive psychic residue, stating: *"The image is a specific type of consciousness. The image is not a thing, but an act. The image is the consciousness of something."* (2009, p. 154) In other words, the image is the process of formation through imagination. Although not equally present in everyone, the phenomenon of imagination is related to the degree of sensitivity an individual has toward external realities; the poet, in this context, is an individual whose sensitivity is at a level quite different from that of others. In the French *Robert* dictionary, in addition to a similar definition, we encounter another that emphasizes the competence of the poet's personality in relation to imagination: "The ability to create images from previously unperceived or unnoticed objects, or to associate them with new images and ideas; the competence to visualize possible situations in one's imagination".

Synonyms connected to *imagination* (*imgelem*) include, in French: *Imaginaire* (meaning unreal or fictional), *Créativité* (creativity), *Mensonge* (fabrication/lie), *Illusion* (fantasy or unreal image), and *Evasion* (escape from reality). These are elements used not only in poetry but also in prose literature, and as Kırkoğlu notes, *"even the most abstract art, stripped as much as possible of imagery, still carries a latent network of images or refers to an image potential."* (2004, p. 76). For example,

when we look at the definition of the fairy tale genre, we encounter descriptions of short narratives composed of unreal events. Fairy tales are fabricated, unreal, or supernatural stories, but essentially products of imagination. In another form of the fairy tale, the fable—arranged in verse—animal characters (images) symbolize human virtues and vices. In terms of textual structure and literary language, similar reflections of imagination can also be found in novels and short stories.

One of the ways imagery is used in literary works is in titles of books or narratives. In classical literature, there is a direct semantic relationship between titles and content, whereas in contemporary literature, authors often prefer to convey this relationship indirectly, through implication or wordplay. For instance, in French classical literature, Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet* or *Le Père Goriot* directly indicate the characters of the novels. In contrast, Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* (*The Red and the Black*) refers to and symbolizes social classes represented by the colors. Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* (*Sentimental Education*) also directly relates to the status and development of a character within society. Thus, in these cases, title and context are directly linked (Stendhal, 1830).

From the perspective of contemporary literature, however, Louis-Ferdinand Céline's *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (*Journey to the End of the Night*) emphasizes not only the literal meaning of "journey" but also abstract dimensions; the image of "night" alludes to themes such as war, the psychological state created by war, and death. Albert Camus's famous novel *L'Étranger* (*The Stranger*) employs its title as one of the reflections of an attitude grounded in absurdist philosophy. Michel Butor, one of the writers of the *Nouveau Roman* school, demonstrates a striking example of wordplay in his first novel *Passage de Milan*. The title *Passage de Milan* simultaneously denotes a place (a passage in Milan), emphasizes a condition or reality (*passage de mille ans* = a passage of a thousand years), and refers to an event or description (*passage de milan* = the flight of a kite bird in the sky).

3. The Use of Imagery in Literary Translation

From the observations made in the previous section regarding the characteristics of imagery in literature, we can conclude that, regardless of the literary genre, imagery carries a value beyond mere ornamentation or embellishment of expression. The image is a kind of key to the writer's or poet's world of thought and feeling: it signals the hidden structure behind the visible form, the deeper meaning, and new latent values. To regard certain words in literary texts as images—that is, to approach them with a sensitivity that directs them beyond their literal meaning toward new interpretations—enables the reader to use this key effectively; in doing so, the reader experiences not only aesthetic pleasure but also a process of spiritual fulfillment (Türk Dil Kurumu, 2025).

The introduction of literary works to other cultures, presenting them to the appreciation of readers belonging to different cultural backgrounds, most effectively occurs through the translation of original texts into other languages. Translating prose genres into other languages is relatively easier than translating poetry, since readers' interest lies more in the fluency of narration and the appeal of the subject matter. However, this depends on the translator's competence in both languages, as the aim is to render the original text accessible to the appreciation of another culture. In prose, readers seek to understand the text, grasp its integrity, and enjoy the reading experience. Poetry, however, as previously mentioned, is written not so much to be understood as to be felt; readers reach "meanings" to the extent that they experience the poem emotionally.

In retranslations—multiple translations of the same literary work into another language—we can observe variations in vocabulary and expression depending on the translator's approach, whether oriented toward domestication or foreignization, and including adaptations. In this context, when considering the transfer of imagery, some translators remain faithful to the original text, conveying words with imaginal value according to their usage and semantic significance in the source culture, while others adopt a target-culture-oriented approach, introducing changes at the level of language and expression. In both approaches, especially in poetry or prose with poetic qualities, losses in form and sound or semantic shifts are possible; thus, in preserving aesthetic discourse, semantic losses may occur—or conversely, aesthetic gains may be achieved.

Images in literary texts generally share cultural, sensory, and symbolic references within the language in which they are created. Therefore, translating an image is not simply equivalent to

translating a word. The translator, in presenting the original text to another culture, is someone striving to create a new discourse, a new sensation, and a new aesthetic. The translator is more than a mediator between languages; the more effectively they employ literary style, the more successful the translation will be. Positioned at the intersection of the values and meanings of imagery in two different cultures, the translator must decide how to create the most beautiful discourse. Some images in the original text retain their universal meaning and value, posing no difficulty in translation, while others are culturally specific, existing as idiomatic or fixed expressions absent in the target culture, and thus requiring adaptation. At this point, the translator becomes the one who redesigns the image.

Let us observe, with examples from French literature in the genres of novel, theater, and poetry, how a literary image is transferred from one language to another:

From Émile Zola's naturalist novel *Thérèse Raquin* (1867):

"Suyun kıyısına gittiği zamanlar, otların üstüne yüzü-koyun uzanıp her ân sıçramaya hazır bir hayvan gibi geriniyor, büyüyen kara gözleriyle doya doya etrafı seyrediyordu. Güneşte yanıp kavruluyor, parmaklarını büyük bir mutlulukla toprağa daldırarak saatlerce kalıyordu orada." (translated by Adnan Cemgil, 1968, p. 28)

In this passage, one of the main characters, Thérèse, is portrayed in a completely different light outside the domestic environment where she is usually depicted as quiet, docile, and self-sacrificing. When alone in nature, she transforms into a being that moves according to instinct, like an animal. Here, the two images of Thérèse Raquin (the social self / the natural self) are presented together.

In André Gide's *Les Faux-monnayeurs* (*The Counterfeiters*, 1925), the character Edouard (a figure representing Gide himself) writes a novel titled *Les Faux-monnayeurs* within the novel itself, employing the technique of *mise en abyme* (a novel within a novel). This raises a kind of quest for the reality—or unreality—of the narrated events. The image is presented as known and unknown realities, and writing/narration becomes an allegorical element symbolizing the search for truth. The following excerpt reflects a profile of society at the time in which the events take place:

"Bu dünyada, Tanrı'nın hep sustuğunu fark ettiniz mi? Bir şeytan var konuşan. Ya da hiç değilse, hiç değilse… ne kadar dikkat edersek edelim, ancak şeytanın sesini duyabiliyoruz… Tanrının sesini duyacak kulak yok bizde. Tanrı'nın sözü!" (translated by Tahsin Yücel, 1989, p. 395)

From 19th-century French theater, Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897): *"Tarifle: Burun değil bir kere, coğrafyada Böylesine dağ denir, dağ değil, yarımada!"* (translated by Sabri Esat Siyavuşgil, 2005, p. 45)

In the section known as the "nose tirade," Cyrano is portrayed humorously: on the one hand, he appears as a brave and noble knight who fears no one; on the other hand, because of his extraordinarily large nose, he is too shy to declare his love to Roxane. Cyrano's nose is compared to geographical landforms; the exaggerated nose image stands in stark contrast to his heroic identity. At the same time, it is referenced as an obstacle (a complex) preventing him from confessing his love (Hilmi Yavuz, 2013).

From 20th-century Absurdist theater, Eugène Ionesco's *Rhinocéros* (1959): In the play, apart from the character Berenger, the people of a town gradually transform into rhinoceroses. The rhinoceros image functions allegorically, representing totalitarian regimes and rigid traditionalism.

"MASALARA BAKAN KIZ (to the Patron) A rhinoceros!

PATRON (from his window, to the Girl) You must be imagining things! (He sees the rhinoceros) Good heavens!

[…]

OLD MAN, GROCER, GROCER'S WIFE (opening the glass door of the shop that the Old Man had closed upon entering) Good heavens!

JEAN Good heavens! (to Berenger) Did you see it?

(The rhinoceros's noise and bellowing fade into the distance; the people remain standing, watching the animal with their eyes, while Berenger sits unmoved in his usual state.)

ALL TOGETHER (except Berenger) Good heavens! BERENGER (to Jean) It seems so, a rhinoceros! What a cloud of dust it raises!" (translated by Hasan Anamur, 2000, pp.13–14)

Turning to poetry, where imagery is employed even more richly, from the 19th century, Paul Verlaine's *Il pleure dans mon cœur* (*Romances sans paroles*, 1874):

"Kente yağan yağmurlar
Kalbimde kan ağlıyor.
Bu nasıl hüzündür ki
Canevimi dağlıyor?

Ey hoş yankısı yağmurun
Çatılar üstünde, yerde!
Hüzün dolu yüreklerde,
Tatlı şarkısı yağmurun![…]" (translated by Erdoğan Alkan, 1984)

In this poem, the natural phenomenon of rain is presented both literally and metaphorically as the poet's "inner rain"; the rain falls into the poet's heart as tears. Alongside the relationship between external and internal worlds, the rain image carries evocative resonance. In Verlaine's verses, simplicity, fluidity, and musicality—aligned with his principle of "music before all else"—are achieved through rhythm in syntax, rich rhyme, and the use of single-syllable lines. As Nedim Kula notes in his study of Verlaine's poetry, "Nature" is a primary image in the poet's expression of emotions.

Finally, from the 20th century, among the original poets, Jacques Prévert's *Paroles* (1946), in the poem *Le Cancre*:

"Kafasıyla evet diyor
Yüreğiyle hayır
Sevdiğine evet diyor
Öğretmene hayır
Sözlüye kalkmış
[…]

Öğretmen tepine dursun
Çığlıkları ortasında mucize çocukların
Renk renk bütün tebeşirlerle
Belâlı kara tahtanın üstüne
Resmini çiziyor mutluluğun."
(*Yumurcak*, translated by Sabahattin Eyuboğlu, 1963)

In this poem by Prévert, written in a simple and accessible language, numerous poetic images are presented alongside the image of the lazy student. The act of saying "no with his heart" while saying "yes with his head" indicates a metaphorical conflict between mind and heart. Meanwhile, the student's act of drawing colorful pictures in response to imposed questions—and these drawings being "the picture of happiness"—stands as a powerful and striking metaphor created by the poet.

Conclusion

From the examples we have attempted to provide across different literary genres, we can say that while the denotative and concrete meaning of the image as "something that exists in reality and its reflection in the mind" remains, the feature we have particularly emphasized is its nature as a subjective creation shaped by imagination, a product of discourse laden with multiple meanings—in other words, a truth brought into being by imagination.

Literature is an art woven with images. Images are inseparable elements of creative discourse. When placed within a romantic discourse, the image opens onto the states of the inner self; when

functioning symbolically, it opens doors to associations and dreams. Contrary to fixed and monotonous definitions, images are not static forms; for those who approach them with special attention, images can always transform into dynamic and extraordinary entities. Through whichever artistic path, the image is a mirror reflecting both the virtues and weaknesses of humanity, the power of imagination, and the realities and truths of human existence. In this sense, the image transforms itself and also transforms those who approach it with the eye of the heart.

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