

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

The Origins of Modern Turkish Cypriot Literature and Its First Novel: *Bir Bakış* (*A Glance*)

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Abstract

Written by Muzafferredin Galib, *Bir Bakış* (“*A Glance*”) 1892) is examined as the earliest known Turkish serialized novel published in Cyprus, where “first” functions not as an aesthetic judgment but as an indicator of earliness grounded in publication context and supported by archival materials. Based on a review of extant installments—and supported by tables documenting intrusive narration and recurrent Divan-derived diction—the analysis demonstrates that the novel develops a transitional narrative aesthetic shaped by its interventionist narrator, meddah-like tone, and reliance on classical Ottoman literary conventions; the opening Marmara description, with its nesib-like lyricism, parallels Namık Kemal’s Çamlıca passage in *İntibah* (“*The Awakening*”) 1873). The work shows affinities with *İntibah* through its moralizing voice, “love at first sight” motif, and sheltered young male protagonist recalling Ali Bey, while diverging from Sezai’s *Sergüzeşt* (“*Adventure*”) 1887) through limited realism, minimal psychological depth, and sparse spatial detail—the brief “ten room, north–south oriented” house description exemplifying early realist experimentation. The fact that Galib, like many Tanzimat novelists, was a journalist underscores a center–periphery parallel, showing that the newspaper-based origins of Ottoman fiction were reproduced in Cyprus. Ultimately, *Bir Bakış* is significant less for artistic refinement than for marking a foundational stage in the localization of serialized fiction, illuminating the center–periphery circulation of narrative forms and the hybrid character of early Ottoman novelistic modernity.

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Modern Kıbrıs Türk Edebiyatının Kökenleri ve İlk Romanı:

Bir Bakış

Öz

Muzaffereddin Galib tarafından yazılan *Bir Bakış* (1892), bu çalışmada Kıbrıs'ta yayımlanmış bilinen en erken Türkçe tefrika roman olarak incelenmektedir; burada “ilk” nitelmesi, estetik bir yargı olarak değil, yayımlanma bağlamına dayanan ve mevcut arşiv malzemeleriyle desteklenen bir kronolojik erkenlik göstergesi olarak kullanılmaktadır. Mevcut tüm tefrika bölümlerinin sistematik bir incelemesine-ve anlatıcı müdahaleleri ile tekrar eden Divan kaynaklı söz varlığını belgeleyen kanıtlayıcı tablolara-dayanan analiz, romanın müdahaleci anlatıcısı, meddah etkili tonu ve klasik Osmanlı edebiyatı geleneklerine süregelen bağlılığı tarafından şekillenen geçiş niteliğinde bir anlatı estetiği geliştirdiğini göstermektedir; açılıştaki Marmara betimlemesi, *nesib* benzeri lirizmiyle Namık Kemal'in *İntibah* (1873) adlı eserindeki ünlü Çamlıca pasajıyla yakın paralellikler taşır. Eser, ahlâkî bir anlatıcı sesi, “ilk görüşte aşk” motifi ve deneyimsizliği Ali Bey'i çağrıştıran deneyimsiz genç erkek kahraman tipiyle *İntibah* ile belirgin benzerlikler gösterirken; Sezai'nin *Sergüzeştinden* (1887) sınırlı gerçekçiliği, asgari psikolojik derinliği ve seyrek mekânsal ayrıntılarıyla ayrılır-kısa “on odalı, kuzey-güney yönelimli” ev betimi erken gerçekçi denemenin bir örneğini oluşturur. Galib'in de tıpkı merkezdeki Tanzimat romancılarının çoğu gibi bir gazeteci-yazar olması, Osmanlı romanının basın kaynaklı doğasının Kıbrıs'ta da tekrarlandığını göstererek merkez ile çevre arasında önemli bir paralellige işaret eder. Sonuçta, *Bir Bakış*, sanatsal incelikten ziyade Kıbrıs'ta tefrika romanın yerelleşmesinde temel bir eşik oluşturarak anlatı biçimlerinin merkez-çevre dolaşımını ve erken Osmanlı roman modernitesinin melez karakterini görünür kılması bakımından önem taşır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kıbrıs Türk edebiyatı, Osmanlı basın tarihi, tefrika roman, Muzaffereddin Galib, Tanzimat romanı, merkez-çevre ilişkileri, *Bir Bakış*

Cyprus passed under Ottoman rule in 1571, and its administrative control was transferred to Britain in 1878, initiating a period of profound political and cultural transformation (Berkseel, 2019, p. 7). In light of these shifts, the emergence of modern Turkish Cypriot literature can be understood within the broader social, intellectual, and linguistic reconfigurations that reshaped the island in the late nineteenth century.

Against this background, Turkish-language literary production on the island consisted for centuries almost entirely of poetic forms, particularly

Divan poetry, shaped between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries within a shared Islamic cultural sphere influenced by Arabic and Persian traditions. Characterized by aruz meter, conventional imagery, and established genres such as the gazel and kaside, this tradition—formed through sustained interaction among Turkish, Arabic, and Persian literary cultures—co-existed with folk poetry and reflected both the aesthetic preferences and the oral practices of the Ottoman period (Küçük, 2025, p. 24).

The introduction of printing under British administration in 1878 (Mutluyakalı, 2012, p. 19), followed by the emergence of a Turkish-language press, fundamentally altered this literary landscape. Newspapers such as *Zaman* (“Time”) and *Yeni Zaman* (“New Time”) created a public sphere through which prose genres, reformist discourses, and metropolitan literary models circulated among the island’s Muslim population for the first time.

Within the Ottoman literary system, Istanbul functioned as the empire’s cultural center, where Western-inspired narrative genres—including the novel and modern drama—first emerged, were serialized in major newspapers, and subsequently published as books. These forms developed in the imperial capital before diffusing outward to provincial settings such as Cyprus. Figures such as Namık Kemal played a decisive role in this process: as both a journalist and a pioneering novelist, he introduced Western literary models into Ottoman culture and produced foundational works such as *İntibah* (1873) and early examples of modern Ottoman theatre. His position within Istanbul’s press environment, together with his role in shaping early Ottoman narrative conventions, makes *İntibah* an analytically appropriate point of comparison for *Bir Bakış*, whose hybrid aesthetic reflects the delayed transmission of these metropolitan forms to a peripheral print milieu.

This center–periphery dynamic may also be situated within broader theoretical discussions of cultural asymmetry and literary circulation. As Casanova (2004) argues, literary production operates within a hierarchical world literary space dominated by metropolitan centers, while peripheral literatures emerge through processes of delayed reception and adaptation. Similarly, Even-Zohar (1990) emphasizes that peripheral literary systems adopt and transform models originating in more dominant centers. The emergence of *Bir Bakış* within a developing Cypriot press environment can thus be understood as part of a patterned process of literary transfer from center to periphery.

Within this context, the serialization of Muzaffereddin Galib’s *Bir Bakış* (“A Glance”) in 1892 marks a pivotal moment. Rather than representing a fully developed novelistic achievement, the text constitutes the first sustained encounter of Turkish Cypriot readers with Western-style

narrative prose. Its hybrid form-combining meddah-like commentary, Divan-derived poetic imagery, Romantic sensibilities, and emergent realist techniques-demonstrates how imported literary practices interacted with Ottoman aesthetic conventions. At the same time, its unfinished structure and technical limitations reflect the constraints of a developing provincial print culture.

Accordingly, this study employs the notion of “first” not as an aesthetic judgment but as a historically contingent category grounded in publication context. Because terms such as “first serialized novel,” “first novel,” or “first example of modern prose” imply different evaluative criteria, the specific sense in which *Bir Bakış* is considered pioneering requires clarification. Here, “first” refers to the earliest known Turkish-language serialized novel published in Cyprus, as established through a systematic survey of all accessible nineteenth-century Turkish-language newspapers printed on the island. The archival corpus includes extant issues of *Zaman*, *Yeni Zaman*, and *Kıbrıs* (“Cyprus”), examined issue-by-issue in Cypriot collections and digital Ottoman press repositories. This definition acknowledges the epistemological limits imposed by incomplete archives while distinguishing between publication history and literary form.

To support this framework, the article adopts a systematic mode of close reading in which narratorial interventions, meddah-style commentary, and classical diction are documented through representative evidence. By presenting selected narratorial signals and examples of Divan-derived vocabulary in a structured manner, the study demonstrates the consistent presence of these stylistic features across the serialized narrative.

Building on this framework, the article examines the historical milieu of Ottoman Cyprus, the emergence of its Turkish-language press, and the narrative features of *Bir Bakış* to show how modern prose developed in a peripheral cultural setting. Through a contextual historical approach integrated with close reading, the study clarifies why *Bir Bakış* constitutes a foundational text of Turkish Cypriot prose literature and how its publication illuminates early literary modernization on the island.

Turkish-Language Literature in Cyprus During the Ottoman Period

Prior to the British period, Turkish-language writing in Cyprus was overwhelmingly poetry-centered. Following the Ottoman conquest of 1571, the settlement of Turkish-speaking Muslim populations on the island naturally brought with it the poetic traditions current in the imperial capital and Anatolia. Consequently, both Ottoman court poetry (Divan literature)

and folk poetry took root in Cyprus. In this early phase, Turkish Cypriot poetry can therefore be divided into two broad streams: Divan and folk.

Because literacy among Muslims on the island remained relatively low and printing had not yet been established in Cyprus, the written record that has survived to the present is predominantly Divan-oriented. It is also notable that many of the island's Divan poets held religious posts or were affiliated with the Mevlevi lodge that began operating in Cyprus from the seventeenth century onward. As the researcher-writer Harid Fedai has documented, the earliest evidence reaches back to the late sixteenth century. The Ottoman biographical anthology *Tuhfe-i Naili* (1949 ed.) includes Cypriot poets such as Misali (d. 1607), Mehmed Zekai Efendi (d. 1648), Şeyh Mustafa Siyahi Dede (d. 1710), Naib (d. 1717), Şeyh Arif Efendi (d. 1725), Hızir Dede / Handi (d. 1727), Musib (d. 1754), Hasan Hilmi Efendi (d. 1847), Hasan Tahsin Bey (d. 1865), Ziya Efendi (d. 1869), Necib (d. 1902), and Asım Efendi (d. unknown) (Fedai, 2005a, pp. 449-454). No complete divan (a compiled book of a poet's collected poems) has been securely identified for these poets, with the partial exception that selections from (Müftü) Hilmi Efendi's poetry were published (Fedai, 1987). Fedai also notes an increase in the number of Cypriot Divan poets in the nineteenth century and, in a manuscript source titled *Defter-i Sureyya* ("Notebook of Sureyya") (from his private archive), identifies additional names—Hakkı, Hatif, Kerim, Salim, Sezai, and Teki Efendi—of whom only Sezai's divan is extant (likewise in his private archive) (Fedai, 2003, pp. 125-138). Beyond these, Fedai mentions Handi (originally from Eski Zagra, today in Bulgaria), who produced a divan while serving in Cyprus, as well as Mehmet Şem'i, a shaykh of the Hala Sultan Tekke in Larnaca, and Müftü Raci Efendi, the successor to Müftü Hilmi Efendi—though the existence of complete divans for the latter two remains uncertain (Fedai, 2003, p. 450; Ezilmez, 2019, pp. 15-16).

By contrast, written examples of folk literature from the island are scarce, a paucity attributable to the oral basis of the folk tradition and the limited literacy of the general population. It is therefore reasonable to infer that most Ottoman-period folk works were either never committed to writing or, if they were, have not survived. Fedai emphasizes the relative richness of anonymous folk materials in Cyprus while noting that the âşık tradition (*the minstrel tradition*) did not take firm root on the island (Fedai, 2005a, p. 450). In Turkish folk literature, the *âşık tarzı* (the âşık style, a form of minstrel-poetry tradition) refers to poems composed by traveling poet-singers who perform with a saz, using a simple, direct language and predominantly syllabic meter (Küçük, 2025, p. 57). These *âşıks* wander

from place to place with their instruments, reciting or singing their verses. Some of these poems are transmitted orally through the performances of the âşiks, while others are preserved in cönk, handwritten notebooks in which such poems were traditionally collected.

In the literary history of Cyprus, Âşık Kenzi is widely regarded as the island's sole identifiable representative of the âşık tradition. Born in Hijri 1210 (c. 1795–1796 CE) and passing away in Hijri 1255 (c. 1839–1840 CE) at the age of forty five, Kenzi appears to have travelled extensively, visiting major cultural centers such as Istanbul, Athens, Edirne, and Antalya. Although he died prematurely, he left behind an incomplete divan that nonetheless encompasses a diverse array of poetic forms, including şarkı, semai, koşma, türkü, tarih, and destan (Fedai, 1989, pp. 15–28).

Among his extant works, the *Kıbrıs Destanı* (“*The Cyprus Epic*”, h. 1249/1833 CE) holds a particularly prominent place in discussions of Cypriot literary culture. Its importance lies not in stylistic innovation but rather in its engagement with the social and political upheavals of its time. Addressing the Christian–Muslim uprising of 1833—initiated by the Infidel Imam of Paphos and the monk Ioannikios (Fedai, 2005b, pp. 349–366; Michael, 2021, pp. 127–147)—the poem adopts a rhetorical register shaped by Divan aesthetics, suggesting Kenzi's familiarity with and possible affinity toward urban literary elites.

Ezilmez (2019, pp. 14–15), however, advances a different perspective by identifying Kenzi as the only folk poet thus far documented in Cyprus. He argues that the *Kıbrıs Destanı* and Kenzi's other epics illuminate the island's sociopolitical climate during their composition and contends that these works possess significant artistic merit. Ezilmez also underscores Kenzi's affiliation with the Bektashi order, emphasizing his synthesis of folk and Divan poetic modes and the strong Sufi sensibility permeating his verse.

Within the broader Ottoman context, Turkish literary production in Cyprus developed in parallel with trends in Anatolia—particularly in Istanbul—albeit on a considerably smaller scale. The island's relatively small Turkish population and the correspondingly limited output of literary, especially written, works hindered the emergence of a corpus comparable in breadth or influence to that of the imperial center. This peripheral status is reflected in Âşık Kenzi's self-aware poetic lines, and the subsequent couplet reinforces the impression of a poet acutely conscious of the cultural hierarchy that marginalized Cyprus even as he asserted his own singular presence within it.

“Dimişler şair-i meydan çıkar mı şehir-i Kıbrıs'da /

Didim Kenzi hakikatdır fekat bir dane ben çıkdım” (Fedai, 1993, 14)

(“They claimed, ‘A poet cannot arise from the city of Cyprus.’

Kenzi responded, ‘That may be so—but I alone have come forth.’”)

A parallel case is Müftü Hilmi Efendi, the first and only Cypriot poet to be summoned to Istanbul and granted the title “Sultan of Poets” after composing a panegyric celebrating the library built in Nicosia at the behest of Sultan Mahmud II. Unable to establish himself in the capital, he returned to Cyprus, whereupon the Sultan appointed him mufti of the island. His couplet—echoing an ambivalent provincial consciousness—reads:

“Egerçi hak-i Kıbrıs maden-i zat-i hakirem /

Veli ba fazl-i Mevla tab’-i suh u mu’teber darem.” (Fedai, 2000, 69)

(“Though the soil of Cyprus may seem the ore of my lowly self,

by God’s grace I still possess a lively poetic temperament and a respectable persona.)

Finally, the temporary presence of two major literary figures of the Tanzimat era—Ziya Pasha (1825–1880), who served as *mutasarrıf* (district governor) in 1862, and Namık Kemal (1840–1888), who lived on the island during his exile (1873–1876)—enabled direct engagement with the reformist literary movements of the period and allowed the local Muslim community to benefit from their intellectual influence and experience (Serdar, 2000, pp. 11–12; Yıkık, 2025).

The Emergence of Publishing and the Arabic-Script Turkish Press in Cyprus

With the arrival of the British on the island, a development of great significance occurred—one that would be used not only for political purposes by both the Orthodox Christian (Greek) and Muslim communities, but also for cultural ends. This major development was the establishment of the first printing press in Cyprus in 1878, founded in Larnaca by Henry S. King and Co. In the same year, the island’s first newspaper, Cyprus / Kıpros, was published on 29 August 1878. Its first two pages appeared in English and the remaining two in Greek. Thus began the history of the press in Cyprus (Sophocleous, 1995, 89-103). This moment not only marked the birth of print culture on the island but also created the infrastructural foundations that would eventually make serialized Turkish prose fiction—such as *Bir Bakış*—possible.

The first Turkish-language newspaper published on the island was *Ümid* (“*Hope*”), printed in Larnaca in 1879 (or possibly 1880) by Alexan Sarafian, an Armenian from Istanbul (Demiryürek, 2004, p. 120). The newspaper survived only a few months before being shut down by the British administration. The cause of its closure appears to have been an article in its fourth issue, which argued that Cyprus had effectively been handed over to the British by the Ottoman government as a form of bribe (Demiryürek, 2004, p. 121). The newspaper survived only a few months before being shut down. This incident demonstrates that the repressive censorship policies of the Abdülhamid regime exerted influence on the Turkish press in Cyprus from the very outset. It is also noteworthy that the British authorities on the island did not ignore demands arriving from Istanbul—an indication that Ottoman influence persisted indirectly through pressure on the press. Later, on 16 June 1889, Sarafian published another newspaper titled *Dik-el-Şark* (“*The Rooster of the East*”). Interestingly, neither of these two newspapers is mentioned in local official Cypriot sources (Mutluyakalı, 2012, p. 10). Despite their short lifespan and fragmentary archival legacy, these early initiatives represent the first steps toward forming a Turkish-language public sphere—an essential precondition for the later appearance of serialized literary texts.

The first Turkish-language newspaper recorded in local official sources (and therefore the third Turkish newspaper overall when the earlier ones are taken into account) was *Saded* (“*The Issue*”). It also holds the distinction of being the first newspaper published by a Muslim, Ahmet Emin Efendi. According to Great Britain (1890, p. 417), *Saded* was a weekly Turkish-language newspaper. It was published between 1 July and 14 November 1889, producing a total of 16 issues before ceasing publication. Its closure may be attributed to low readership or financial difficulties. An interesting point of debate among researchers concerns the place of its publication: Cobham states that it was printed in Nicosia, whereas Ünlü argues that it was more likely printed in Limassol (Cobham, 2013, p. 504; Ünlü, 1981, pp. 15.16). No copies of the newspapers mentioned above have survived to the present day (Yıkık, 2020, pp. 354-355). It is therefore possible—though unprovable—that these newspapers may have included literary sections and serialized short stories or novels. The absence of surviving issues makes the extant installments of *Bir Bakış* uniquely valuable for reconstructing the early history of Turkish prose in Cyprus.

The first books printed in Cyprus during this period also deserve mention. The first book published on the island was the second edition of Archimandrite Kyprianos’s *Istoria hronologiki tis nissiou* (“*A Chronological*

History of the Island”), printed in Larnaca in 1880 (its first edition had been printed in Venice in 1878). As its title suggests, it was a historical work (Kehagioglou & Papaleontiou, 2010, pp. 258-259). The second book printed in Cyprus was the *Cyprus Guide and Directory*, published in Limassol in 1885 and printed in English (Pavlidis, 1998).

The first Turkish-language book printed in Cyprus, however, differs significantly from the earlier Greek and English works. Published in 1892 at the Zaman Press in Nicosia by the Osmanlı Kıraathanesi, this work was Emin Nihat Efendi’s *Müsameretname* (“*Night Conversations*”), completed between 1873 and 1875 (Fedai, 2005c, pp. 199-200). The title, meaning “nightly conversations,” refers to a collection of six stories. As Tanpınar explains:

“Müsameretname belongs to a tradition found in both the East and the West, consisting of stories narrated within a gathering of friends as personal experiences, as events heard secondhand, or as incidents observed from a distance.” (Tanpınar, 1988, p. 289)

The fact that the first Turkish-language book printed in Cyprus was a literary work—rather than an administrative, religious, or practical text—demonstrates how prose forms that had developed in Istanbul, the imperial literary center, had begun to disseminate into the Cypriot periphery. *Müsameretname*’s appearance in 1892 thus reflects the gradual transmission of Western-influenced narrative practices, which had gained momentum in Ottoman literature since the 1860s with the adoption of European genres such as theatre, the short story, and the novel (Enginün, 2012). Its initial print run of 300 copies further indicates the presence of a Muslim readership receptive to prose fiction, suggesting the emergence of an early literary interest on the island and helping create the social conditions that made the serialization of *Bir Bakış* possible later that same year.

The Newspaper “Zaman”

The oldest surviving newspaper in Cyprus—held today in archives both in the island’s south (Press and Information Office, Nicosia) and north (Milli Arşiv ve Araştırma Dairesi, Kyrenia)—is *Zaman*, first published in Nicosia on 25 December 1891. Its importance lies not only in being the earliest extant newspaper but also in its remarkable longevity: *Zaman* continued to appear regularly until 2 September 1900, issuing a total of 428 numbers over nine years. This duration is particularly striking given that earlier Turkish-language newspapers on the island survived for only a few months at most.

The emergence of *Zaman* can be interpreted, at least in part, as a reaction to contemporary political developments. The Turkish population of Cyprus had become increasingly dissatisfied following the island's transfer to British administration, particularly as Greek Cypriot newspapers openly expressed desires for Enosis (union with Greece) and claimed that Cyprus was inherently a "Greek island." In response, Muslim intellectuals felt compelled to assert both their presence on the island and the continuing Ottoman sovereignty over Cyprus, to audiences both within and beyond the island (Faustman, 2008, pp. 45-62). To this end, a group of Muslim intellectuals began meeting at a venue known as the Osmanlı Kiraathanesi (Ottoman Reading Room), where they debated and discussed solutions. As Ünlü explains:

"This reading room had been established years earlier as a counter-action to the Greek Reading Room (Kipriakos Silogos). The Osmanlı Kiraathanesi was a club, a local gathering place, not a political party. It had no secret organizational links, no charter, and no registered members. It functioned as a political forum for a small group of Ottoman intellectuals concerned about the island's future." (Ünlü, 1981, p. 17)

This intellectual milieu not only generated a political counter-discourse but also created the cultural and organizational infrastructure necessary for the emergence of a Turkish-language public sphere—an environment in which literary serialization could later take root. It was in this environment that the idea of founding a newspaper took shape. Under the leadership of Tüccarbaşı Hacı Derviş Efendi, the group collected funds and established the first Muslim-owned press in Nicosia, the *Zaman* Printing House, in the Laleli quarter. The proprietor of *Zaman* was Hacı Derviş Efendi, while its chief editor—brought from Istanbul specifically for this task—was Muzafferredin Galib Bey. Other writers of the period included Hafız Ziyai, the head teacher of the *Rüştiye* (secondary) school, as well as Müftü Ali Rifki and Hilmi Bey. In addition, Istanbul-educated Cypriots such as Boyamyalızade Şefket Bey and Ahmet Bey also made noteworthy contributions to the local literary milieu (Ünlü, 1981, p. 20). The involvement of Istanbul-trained editors and contributors positioned *Zaman* as a conduit through which metropolitan literary norms and stylistic conventions flowed into the Cypriot periphery, thereby facilitating the delayed transmission of Western-inspired prose genres such as the novel and short story.

In its first issue, *Zaman* reported that nine newspapers were being published on the island at the time. These included: in Nicosia, the Greek newspapers *Foni tis Kipru* ("The Voice of Cyprus") and *Evagoras*, the English-language *Avil*, and the trilingual (Turkish-Greek-English) Official Gazette. In Larnaca, the Greek newspapers *Ethnos* ("Nation"), *Eno-*

sis (“Union”), and *Horkatis* (“Villager”); and in Limassol, *Alithia* (“The Truth”) and *Salphinks*. The first issue also contained pointed critiques of contemporary Greek newspapers. One editorial remarked: “They wish to give voice to the Greek cause in Cyprus and spread their hateful unionist claims wherever they can; yet, like the cry of an owl, their voice finds no pleasing echo.” (Ünlü, 1981, p. 19)

The editorial further criticized Greek newspapers for lacking the essential qualities of proper journalism, suggesting that the absence of trained correspondents might be to blame. It is evident that *Zaman* aimed both to counter Greek Cypriot political claims and to compete with Greek newspapers in journalistic quality. Importantly, the newspaper’s writers—like many educated Muslims at the time—were sufficiently fluent in Greek to follow and respond to the arguments made in Greek-language newspapers.

A structural analysis of *Zaman* reveals that it was published weekly as a four-page periodical. The first page typically opened with an editorial titled *İfade-i Mahsusa*, usually authored by Muzafferredin Galib. This was followed by cultural essays grouped under the heading *Ahval-i Âlem*, while local developments and updates were presented in the section *Havadis-i Cezire*. Together, these components shaped the newspaper’s characteristic layout and conveyed its dual focus on cultural discourse and local news.

The second page generally presented foreign news under *Havadis-i Hariciye*, along with reports from Istanbul and the wider Ottoman world in the section *Su’uat-i Osmaniye*. The third page featured the literary section, *Kısm-i Edebi*, as well as scientific notes grouped under *Kısm-i Fenni*. The fourth page carried public notices (*İlanat*). Although the sequence of these sections occasionally shifted, the overall structural arrangement of the newspaper remained largely consistent. Such structural consistency made it possible for the literary section to become a recognizable and anticipated space for readers—an essential condition for the reception of serialized prose. In this way, *Zaman*’s literary section functioned as the primary medium through which Western-style narrative conventions entered Cypriot Muslim reading culture, preparing the ground for the island’s first serialized Turkish novel.

Of these sections, the *Kısm-i Edebi* is of particular importance, as it laid the groundwork for the rise of modern Turkish Cypriot literature. The emergence of modern Turkish Cypriot prose parallels developments in the Ottoman mainland: just as the Tanzimat-era *Tercüman-ı Ahval* (“Interpreter of Public Affairs”) (1860-1866) marked a turning point in Istanbul, *Zaman* (1891) played a comparable role in Cyprus. Both newspapers fostered clearer, more accessible prose and introduced readers to Western literary forms such as the novel and the short story.

Through *Zaman*, Cypriot Muslims encountered Western-style literature for the first time. Their earliest exposure to the novel also occurred in its pages, where Muzafferredin Galib's *Bir Bakış* was serialized. Owing to a technical error, the serialization began not with the opening section but with the seventh episode, published in issue no. 2 (1 January 1892). This mistake was corrected in issue no. 3 (8 January 1892), where both Galib's preface and the actual opening section appeared. The remaining installments were published in issues 3, 4, 6–12, 14, and 16–28, after which the serialization came to an abrupt end following Galib's departure from the newspaper.

A comparison of the different installments suggests that the misplaced seventh episode was originally intended to appear after the installment published in issue no. 9. This raises a further question regarding the novel's compositional history: Had Galib completed the entire text before arriving in Cyprus, or was he writing it incrementally? The incomplete state of the published preface reinforces this uncertainty; its missing opening portion likely resulted from a technical omission during printing. Moreover, in issues 5 and 13, *Bir Bakış* did not appear at all—either due to additional technical difficulties or because the author had not supplied the next episode in time. The irregular publication pattern of the installments illustrates the practical limitations of a developing provincial press, highlighting the infrastructural differences between the imperial center—where serialized fiction was institutionalized—and the Cypriot periphery, where such practices were only beginning to take shape.

The political climate explains this departure. After Sultan Abdülhamid suspended the First Constitutional Period in 1878, the empire entered a tense era defined by censorship and political persecution. Supporters of constitutionalism—the Young Turk—were exiled or imprisoned, and the Sultan closely monitored the press. Muzafferredin Galib was sympathetic to Young Ottoman ideas, and, as Ünlü notes, *Zaman* began to use terms such as “rights,” “law,” “freedom,” “constitution,” and “justice,” alongside its rebuttals to Greek claims. This aroused suspicion in the Yıldız Palace. As a consequence, Hacı Derviş Efendi's title of pasha was revoked, after which he began intervening in editorial matters. Displeased, Galib and like-minded colleagues resigned (Ünlü, 1981, p. 22). Political fragility thus directly shaped literary production: the same tensions that drove Galib from the newspaper curtailed the island's earliest experiment in serialized fiction.

Despite the departure of Muzafferredin Galib and his colleagues, *Zaman* continued publication. According to Demiryürek, Hacı Derviş Efendi

was regranted the title of pasha in 1895, a recognition attributed to his loyal stance toward the Sultan (Demiryürek 2004, p. 123). This loyalty also helps explain the paper's unusually long lifespan: unlike many short-lived Turkish-language newspapers in Cyprus, *Zaman* consistently avoided criticizing the Ottoman government and openly articulated its allegiance in print. In this regard, Demiryürek's account appears more reliable than that of Ünlü. Whereas Ünlü suggests that Derviş Efendi had already obtained the title of pasha during the period when Galib was working for *Zaman*, Demiryürek supports his claims with explicit archival references and specific documents, which strengthens the credibility of his chronology. The archival evidence thus indicates that Ünlü was mistaken in placing Derviş Efendi's acquisition of the pasha title during Galib's tenure at the newspaper.

Editorially, the newspaper remained consistent after Galib's departure, and its literary section continued to publish poems, short stories, and other materials. On 8 August 1897, another novel, *Saika-i Sevda* ("The Lightning of Love"), began serialization, though it was left unfinished for unknown reasons. Like *Bir Bakış* and *Yadigâr-ı Muhabbet* ("The Remnant of Love"), this novel also takes place in Istanbul, following Fikri—the only son of a wealthy family—who falls in love with Nihal, a young woman living with her mother in the Anadolu Hisarı district. However, Nihal simultaneously maintains a flirtation with another young man, Sadettin, creating emotional tension that evolves into a destructive love triangle (Mustafa Sadreddin, 1897a, 1897b, 1897c, 1897d). The repeated use of Istanbul as the narrative setting underscores how Cypriot prose continued to orient itself toward the imperial center, both imaginatively and structurally, reflecting the asymmetric cultural flow from center to periphery.

These literary publications fostered public appreciation of new literary forms and encouraged local authors to experiment with prose. In this respect, *Zaman* played a key role in cultivating modern literary consciousness—especially modern prose—among Turkish Cypriots. By 1901, *Zaman* ceased publication, once again for reasons related to its literary content. Demiryürek reports, based on an Ottoman archival document, that Hacı Derviş Pasha was dismissed on 6 April 1901 because of certain "treasonous verses" published in the newspaper, after which *Zaman* voluntarily withdrew from circulation (Demiryürek, 2004, p. 123). By the time it closed, however, *Zaman* had already established the textual habits, reading practices, and discursive frameworks through which modern Turkish Cypriot prose would continue to develop in the early twentieth century.

The Newspaper “Yeni Zaman”

The first issue of *Yeni Zaman* was published on 22 August 1892 by several writers who had resigned from *Zaman* together with Muzafferredin Galib. Like its predecessor, the newspaper was printed at the Kırathane-i Osmaniye Press, meaning that the same intellectual circle came to publish two separate newspapers that—on certain issues—represented diverging ideological orientations. The proprietor of *Yeni Zaman* was Sandıkemini Kufizade Asaf Bey, and Muzafferredin Galib served once again as the chief editor. It was a weekly paper, issued on Mondays, and in terms of both form and content, it closely resembled *Zaman*. This continuation of the same intellectual and institutional infrastructure demonstrates how the nascent Turkish-language press in Cyprus remained concentrated around a single Ottomanist milieu, which enabled literary serialization to persist despite political ruptures.

One of the most notable features of *Yeni Zaman* was its strong polemical engagement with the Greek Cypriot newspaper *Foni tis Kipriou*, which at the time was actively campaigning for the island’s union with Greece. According to Ünlü, the frequent use of terms such as “constitution” and “constitutional monarchy” in *Yeni Zaman* articles displeased the Ottoman authorities, contributing to the newspaper’s closure on 27 February 1893 (Ünlü, 1981, p. 23-25). This polemical posture shows that, much like *Zaman*, *Yeni Zaman* positioned itself both as a political counter-voice and as a vehicle for articulating modernizing Ottoman ideas—an environment directly shaping how prose fiction was framed and received.

During its first three issues, *Yeni Zaman* continued the serialization of Muzafferredin Galib’s novel *Bir Bakış*. However, the serialization ceased with the fourth issue. The reason for this interruption becomes clear in a letter published in the newspaper’s fifth issue, on the fourth page under the section Havadis-i Cezire (*Yeni Zaman*, 1892, no. 5). The letter, written by Galib, functioned essentially as a farewell message. Addressing the members of the Osmanlı Kırathanesi, he stated that he had fulfilled his goal of helping to establish a printing house and a newspaper in Cyprus, yet now felt morally obliged to return to his homeland. He explained that he had left Nicosia the previous Friday and expressed the hope that, if his efforts had been appreciated, he would be remembered kindly; and if he had made any mistakes, they would be attributed to his good intentions. The letter was dated 11 September 1892. In this way, Galib himself provided the explanation for the unfinished serialization of *Bir Bakış*. Interestingly, although Galib played a pioneering role in the establishment of two local newspapers, his farewell letter mentions only one—a curious omission

that remains difficult to account for. This abrupt ending underscores how fragile literary serialization could be within a developing provincial press, where individual departures had immediate structural consequences—a sharp contrast with the more institutionalized serialization practices of the imperial center.

Following Galib's departure, the fifth issue of *Yeni Zaman* began serializing another work, *Âdem-i İhtiyat* ("The Absence of Precaution"), a long story by Kaytazzade Mehmed Nazım (*Yeni Zaman*, 1892, no. 5). This serialization concluded in the thirteenth issue (Fedai, 2002, p. 9; Yıkık, 2022, pp. 92–94). Reflecting narrative elements shaped by the influences of the *Arabian Nights*, this extended tale aims to impart a moral lesson while portraying the humorous situations into which the young ruler Kamuran falls due to his youth and inexperience. The story also bears striking similarities to Andersen's *The Emperor's New Clothes*, itself rooted in motifs that travelled from Arabic literature to the West (Yıkık, 2017, p.156-159). The adoption of such hybrid narrative materials illustrates how Cypriot authors creatively adapted transregional story traditions within the limited but growing literary space offered by the provincial press.

In the fourteenth issue, the newspaper began serializing yet another novel by the same author: *Yâdigâr-ı Muhabbet* ("Remnant of Love"). This work is particularly significant as the first novel written by a Muslim Cypriot author. When *Yeni Zaman* ceased publication on 22 February 1893, the serialization had not yet been completed. However, the newly established *Kıbrıs* newspaper continued the serialization, and once finished, the novel was later published in book form (Nazım, 2004). Thus, *Yâdigâr-ı Muhabbet*—a novel about a young man in his early twenties, Mucib, who discovers the photograph of a young girl named Nevber in his sister's room while searching for pen and paper, falls in love with her, and ultimately dies of tuberculosis because he is unable to unite with her—became not only the first novel authored by a Muslim Cypriot but also the first such work to appear in book format (Genç, 2009, p. 24). Subsequently, the *Kıbrıs* newspaper also serialized another novel by Kaytazzade Mehmed Nazım, *Leyle-i Visâl*, although this second work appeared in only twelve installments before the serialization was discontinued (Atun, 2011, p. 33; Aylanç, 2017, pp. 18-21; Yıkık, 2020, pp. 356-371). These serializations demonstrate that, even after Galib's departure, the ecosystem initially shaped by *Zaman* and *Yeni Zaman* continued to nurture prose experimentation, enabling local authors to participate in broader Ottoman narrative trends despite Cyprus's peripheral location.

Muzafferredin Galib as a Journalist-Author in a Peripheral Ottoman Context

Unfortunately, very little information about Muzafferredin Galib is available in the sources. Almost all existing accounts repeat the same limited details, which researchers themselves derived primarily from the pages of *Zaman* and *Yeni Zaman*. Summarizing these findings, we know that Galib came to Cyprus from Istanbul at the invitation of the members of the Osmanlı Kiraathanesi, with the specific purpose of helping establish a printing press and launching the newspaper *Zaman*. This suggests that he likely possessed prior journalistic experience in Istanbul. His immediate appointment as chief editor, as well as his significant contributions to the structure and content of the newspaper, further reinforce this inference.

Another defining feature of Galib's profile was his interest in literature. Given that he personally prepared the literary section of *Zaman* and authored what became the first serialized novel published in Cyprus, it is reasonable to conclude that he kept abreast of literary developments in Istanbul and attempted—albeit in an amateur capacity—to produce works within this emerging literary milieu. Unfortunately, his name does not appear in standard histories of Tanzimat and post-Tanzimat Ottoman–Turkish literature. The reasons for this absence remain unclear: he may have failed to produce noteworthy works after returning to Istanbul, abandoned writing entirely, or perhaps passed away soon afterward. Since no documentation has survived, we can only speculate. His arrival from Istanbul positioned him as a cultural mediator who carried metropolitan narrative practices into a peripheral press environment that lacked its own established prose tradition.

Galib's views on the novel and the literary movement to which he belonged can be gleaned from a short preface-like text published in the literary section of the third issue of *Zaman* (*Zaman*, 1892, no. 3), immediately before the serialization of *Bir Bakış* began. Unfortunately, the opening portion of this preface is missing—likely due to a technical printing error. In the surviving fragment, Galib states that when a novel's characters and events correspond realistically to the period in which the story is set and align with the real world, such a work may be considered a form of “moral history.” He concludes the preface by declaring:

“Since I am among those who believe that the art of storytelling (the novel) must serve morality, I have written this little tale of mine, titled *Bir Bakış*, in order to offer solace to the heart—occasionally allowing my characters to speak in verse. It is of little value; yet I hope that the countless faults found in every line will be pardoned on account of the

extraordinary effort that surpasses my limited skill.” (*Zaman*, 8 January 1892, no. 3)

At the time, the terms “hikâye” (short story / tale) and “roman” (novel) had not yet acquired distinct meanings; *hikâye* served as a broad umbrella term encompassing what would later be recognized as the novel (Korkmaz, 2005, 59). From the passage above, it becomes clear that Galib embraced the early Tanzimat literary doctrine summarized as “art for the people.” For him, literature should be beneficial, instructive, and capable of guiding individuals toward moral improvement. This understanding aligns with the approach of authors such as Ahmet Mithat Efendi (1844-1912) and Namık Kemal, both of whom regarded the novel as a form of morally edifying entertainment. Such a perspective also resonated with the traditional narrative culture of the East, where stories frequently aimed to impart a “kıssadan hisse” (moral lesson) (Akyüz, 1995, pp. 65-78).

Galib also emphasized that the characters and events of a novel should possess credible, realistic qualities rather than the extraordinary or fantastical traits typical of folk tales, epics, or legends. This preference indicates an aspiration toward Realism. Although first-generation Tanzimat novelists such as Namık Kemal and Şemsettin Sami (1850-1904) tended toward Romanticism, Galib’s orientation suggests an affinity with the emerging realist tendency represented by writers such as Sami Paşazade Sezai (1859-1936) (author of *Sergüzeşt*, 1888), Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem (1947-1914), and Nâbizâde Nâzım (1862-1893). Taken together, these qualities show that Galib represents a transitional figure: shaped by the literary norms of the imperial center yet working within the material limitations of a provincial press, his prose both reflects and mediates the asymmetrical cultural flow between Istanbul and Cyprus.

Narrative Outline of *Bir Bakış*

Before turning to a stylistic and narratological analysis of *Bir Bakış*, it is necessary to outline the surviving plot in order to clarify the narrative materials through which Galib’s metropolitan literary influences and provincial constraints are articulated. In *Bir Bakış*, an omniscient narrator recounts the romantic experiences of a young man. As the novel remained unfinished, the fate of this love story is left unresolved. The plot may be summarized as follows:

The protagonist, Nuri Bey, a young man not yet twenty-three years old, lives in a luxurious mansion overlooking the Bosphorus on the Marmara shore. Although he rarely leaves his neighborhood, one day he ventures out and goes to a coffeehouse in the Kâğıthane district, where he meets Nahid Bey. Struck by Nahid Bey’s pleasant manner, Nuri Bey returns to the same

coffeehouse a second time, this time accompanied by his close friend Halil Efendi. On this occasion, Nahid Bey introduces them to Süleyman Bey, who subsequently invites the group to his mansion for an evening gathering.

The turning point of the novel occurs at Süleyman Bey's residence. As Nuri Bey enters the house, his gaze falls on Fahriye Hanım, who is sweeping the hall near the door of the women's quarters while singing. She notices him as well. In that moment, both characters fall in love—"at a glance," as the title of the novel suggests. Later that evening, while Nuri Bey and his friends are enjoying themselves in the men's quarters, he recites a poem that implicitly reveals his feelings. Listening from the women's quarters, Fahriye Hanım realizes that her affection is reciprocated.

The next morning, the four friends depart the mansion. Süleyman Bey and Nahid Bey go to the government office where they work, while Nuri Bey and Halil Efendi return to the coffeehouse. Süleyman and Nahid discuss their positive impressions of Nuri Bey. Meanwhile, at the coffeehouse, Nuri Bey delivers a long monologue to Halil Efendi on the nature of love.

In the final surviving installment of the unfinished novel, we learn that a week has passed, yet Fahriye Hanım is still tormented by her inability to express her feelings. She confides in her nurse, Dîlfûruz Kalfa, and the two attempt to devise a solution. They agree that the best course of action is for Fahriye Hanım to write a letter and have Dîlfûruz deliver it to Nuri Bey. As Fahriye Hanım begins writing the opening lines of the letter, the serialization abruptly ends—leaving the story and the fate of the lovers forever incomplete (Yıkık, 2021, 25-26).

Analysis

To provide a firmer analytical basis and to avoid the impression of selective citation, this section relies on a clearly articulated evidentiary approach. All issues of *Bir Bakış* published in 1892 have been reviewed, and two illustrative datasets have been assembled to make the novel's stylistic tendencies visible in a transparent and systematic way. The first dataset (Table 1) offers a representative selection of intrusive-narration instances, recording issue number, date, expression, and rhetorical function—such as moral judgment, direct address, or explanatory clarification. The second dataset (Table 2) presents examples of Divan-derived diction and ornate prose, demonstrating the recurrent presence of classical vocabulary and metaphorical structures without claiming quantitative completeness. Together, these datasets supply the empirical grounding for the close-reading analyses that follow, showing that narrative intrusion, meddah-style

commentary, and classical poetic lexicon appear not as incidental moments but as structurally consistent features across the serialized text. This evidentiary foundation then enables a contextual reading of *Bir Bakış* that situates Galib's stylistic choices between metropolitan literary models and the material constraints of a provincial Ottoman press environment.

Table 1

News - Intrusive Narrator: Examples by Issue

Issue No. & date	Expression (Original)	Meaning	Function
Issue 3, 1 January 1892	Ahlaka hidmet itdiğine akil olanlardan bulunduğum için	since I am among those who serve morality	Establishing moral authority; normative judgment
Issue 4, 15 January 1892	bedihidir ki, düşünölsün	it is self-evident that one should reflect	Addressing the reader; prompting reflection; explanation
Issue 6, 29 January 1892	malumdur ki	as is well known	Creating common ground; reinforcing narratorial authority
Issue 18, 22 April 1892	İşte bu karide	at this point	Directing attention; signaling narrative transition
Issue 19, 29 April 1892	addolunamaz	cannot be regarded as such	Definitive evaluation; authoritative commentary

As the representative entries in Table 1 indicate, intrusive narration in *Bir Bakış* is not incidental but part of a recognizable pattern. This positioning resonates with broader tendencies in early Ottoman serialized fiction, where authors—often bureaucrats or journalists—frequently adopted an evaluative and guiding narratorial stance (Küçük, 2025, p. 78). In this respect, Galib's practice aligns with well-documented Tanzimat-era conventions, in which the narrator routinely steps forward to interpret events, offer moral commentary, or direct the reader's response (Esen, 2012, pp. 15-17; Parla, 2004, p. 66). The observed intrusions thus reflect both the serialized

medium and the hybrid narrative models shaping Galib's prose.

The novel's most distinctive feature is its narratorial voice. Although it formally adopts a third-person omniscient perspective typical of nineteenth-century Ottoman prose, the narrator consistently assumes a meddahl-like, performative stance, stepping forward at key moments to shape the reader's interpretive position. Expressions such as "*teşbihi sakil olmazsa*" ("if the metaphor is not awkward") and "*düşünülsün*" ("let it be considered") exemplify this tendency, marking points where the storyteller momentarily suspends the narrative to guide the reader's emotional and moral response (Yıkık, 2021, p. 28). This mode of address reflects the influence of Ottoman oral storytelling traditions and aligns Galib with the didactic orientation articulated by Namık Kemal and other early Tanzimat writers, for whom authorial intervention served as an essential narrative principle (Yıkık, 2021, p. 27; Enginün, 2012, p. 32; Tanpınar, 1998, p. 405; Finn, 2003, p. 50).

A systematic review of the serialized text shows that narratorial interventions recur with notable consistency. Early installments feature meta-narrative asides such as "*teşbihi sakil olmazsa*" ("if the metaphor is not awkward") and direct exhortations like "*düşünülsün*" ("let it be considered"), both of which exemplify the narrator's tendency to step outside the story and steer the reader's interpretive stance. As the serialization progresses, these intrusions broaden into interpretive glosses—such as fate-framed explanations of "*ilk görüşte aşk*" ("love at first sight")—moral judgments (for instance, assessments of *Halil Efendi'nin intikamcı mizacı* ("*Halil Efendi's retaliatory disposition*"), and brief philosophical digressions that temporarily halt narrative momentum. Taken together, these interventions form a coherent rhetorical pattern rather than isolated stylistic gestures, positioning the narrator throughout the text as both storyteller and moral guide.

Hybrid Descriptive Aesthetic and Divan-Derived Lexicon:

The novel's descriptive passages articulate a hybrid aesthetic. The opening depiction of the Marmara shoreline draws heavily on Divan poetic lexicon, using expressions such as *âşık-maşuk* (lover-beloved), *âfâtâb-ı muhabbet* (sun of love; radiant sun of affection), and *sefine-i allâme* (vessel of erudition). This highly ornamented style evokes classical lyricism. To illustrate the patterned recurrence of this ornate diction, Table 2 provides representative examples of Divan-derived vocabulary drawn from across the issues (without claiming quantitative completeness).

Table 2*Divan-Derived Lexicon: Selected Examples*

Issue No. & date	Original term	Meaning	Context	Function
Issue 3, 8 January 1892	Tûr-u dil-efrûz	a radiance that kindles the heart	Description	Creating a romantic atmosphere; evoking luminous emotional imagery
Issue 5, 22 January 1892	Âfitâb-ı muhabbet	the sun-bright visage of the beloved	Description	Constructing a romantic–affective tone; idealizing the beloved
Issue 6, 29 January 1892	Şîr-i jiyân	the furious, roaring lion	Description	Building psychological tension; character intensification
Issue 10, 26 February 1892	Âfât-ı kalbiye	the ruinous sorrows of the heart	Description	Conveying inner turmoil; articulating emotional distress
Issue 14, 25 March 1892	Setre-i mâtem	the veil that cloaks one in mourning	Description	Creating a mournful emotional atmosphere; reinforcing thematic grief

The lexical patterns exemplified in Table 2 are elaborated more fully in the novel's descriptive passages, such as the well-known Marmara scene:

““The gently blowing morning breeze infused life into one's very soul; the tulip's verdant leaves resembled an emerald necklace, and the birds' morning songs echoed with the exuberance of a wedding celebration.” (Yıkık, 2021, pp. 27–28)

A systematic stylistic survey of the Marmara passage and adjacent sections reveals recurring mazmuns (*conceits*; e.g., the beloved's sweat, bridal ornament imagery), classical metaphors (love as cosmic illumination), personification (birds adding musical “modes”), and nesib-type (*amatory/descriptive prelude*) pastoral sequencing. These recur across the serialized

installments, showing that the ornate lexicon is not decorative excess but a structural narrative device. The descriptive mode mirrors classical Divan conventions by transforming physical landscape into an emotional and aesthetic tableau. This rhetorical structure resembles a nesib prelude of a classical kaside (*panegyric ode*). Such features align *Bir Bakış* with a nineteenth-century literary continuum in which prose remained indebted to Divan poetics. The influence of Namık Kemal is especially apparent. His Çamlica description in *İntibah* (1873) exemplifies this inherited poetics:

“Those who have seen Istanbul know well that the Çamlica Pavilion yields nothing to spring itself in the delight it brings to the soul, nor does it fall short of the wonders carried by the breeze. Leaving aside the building, its location alone is one of the most exceptional points of Istanbul; and Istanbul, a sovereign of the sea of beauty, is such that the serenity of the waters gliding mournfully along its shores is sufficient to prove the matchless nature of this place in the entire world. (...) Çamlica is that viewpoint of contemplation where, should one step up to the fountain in springtime, lift one’s head and gaze around, one beholds before one’s eyes another world composed of countless natural, artistic, and scientific marvels.” (p. 13)

As Enginün (2012, p. 32) and Tanpınar (1998, p. 405) emphasize, this passage echoes the nesib of a classical kaside—an aesthetic logic mirrored in Galib’s Marmara scene.

Shift Toward Proto-Realism

This oscillation between ornate poetics and early novelistic technique becomes clearer in the description of Nuri Bey’s house:

“The house, situated within a garden measuring five hundred arşın, was a wooden structure with ten rooms; four of the rooms on the northern side faced the street, while the six on the southern side overlooked the sea.” (Yıkık, 2021, p. 54).

Here, the description is limited to orientation and room count, lacking sensory detail typical of later Tanzimat realism. Writers like Şemseddin Sami (Taaşuk-ı Talat ve Fitnat, 1875) and Sezai (Sergüzeşt, 1887) developed far richer realist textures. Galib’s prose therefore remains transitional—still shaped by classical aesthetics while only partially adopting emerging realist descriptive strategies.

Plot Progression and Folk Narrative Patterning

The plot unfolds linearly over nine days. Nuri Bey, confined to his Bosphorus-facing home, visits a coffeehouse in Kâğıthane, meets Süleyman Bey and Nahid Bey, and is taken to Süleyman Bey’s mansion. While sweeping and singing, Fahriye Hanım briefly meets his gaze; both

experience overwhelming attraction. This “first sight love” motif echoes long-standing folk romances such as Tahir ile Zühre, Leylâ ile Mecnun, and Ferhat ile Şirin (Alptekin, 1997, pp. 375–377).

Characterization in *Bir Bakış* likewise reflects its transitional literary moment. Nuri Bey exemplifies the archetype of the refined yet sheltered young man—commonly encountered in meddah tales or in Arabian Nights. The narrator emphasizes both intellectual brilliance and social isolation:

“Although not yet twenty-three, he possessed such sharp intelligence and such a strong memory that even those who had studied for many years envied him; it was evident from the praise he received from learned men of letters and poets in elite circles. Yet his only peculiar habit was never leaving his own neighborhood, living in a world of his own within his home, and conversing only with close friends when they visited him.” (Yıkık, 2021, p. 55).

This depiction underscores not only his exceptional talent but also his lack of real-world experience, a contrast that situates him within the conventional Ottoman trope of the secluded, inexperienced youth. The novel’s omission of any reference to his father further signals a structural gap, suggesting an incomplete adoption of Tanzimat-era narrative conventions, in which paternal loss is typically foregrounded.

The section in which Nuri Bey is introduced clearly demonstrates the author’s reliance on the summarizing (telling) technique. Moreover, this passage provides strong evidence that Galib was influenced by *İntibah*, as Nuri Bey’s characterization echoes that of Ali Bey in Namık Kemal’s novel. In *İntibah*, Ali Bey is introduced as:

“Ali Bey was a young man of twenty-one or twenty-two from a wealthy family. As he was the beloved only child of his mother and father—and because his father was truly someone who understood a child’s worth—his education was attended to with as much care as that given to the sons of the most distinguished officials, even though they lived in Istanbul. At that age he already spoke several languages; among men of letters, he was regarded as one of the most capable young minds of learning.” (Kemal, n.d., p. 16).

The similarity in age, talent, and social positioning strongly suggests direct intertextual modeling. In *Bir Bakış*, the narrator frames Nuri Bey through repeated evaluative commentary—praising his intellect, emphasizing his isolation, and highlighting his lack of social experience. A systematic review of these passages shows that such evaluative intrusions are not incidental but recur throughout the serialized text, forming a continuous rhetorical strategy that constructs Nuri Bey as both gifted and vulnerable, much like Ali Bey in *İntibah*.

Secondary characters likewise exhibit minimal development. Halil Efendi is the only figure whose physical appearance is described, and his moralizing temperament and advisory role closely parallel Mesut Efendi in *İntibah*, further indicating Galib's patterned use of Tanzimat prototypes (Kemal, 1873/n.d.). He is portrayed in a succinct, judgment-laden manner:

"Halil Efendi was of medium height, with a black mustache, twenty-eight years old, somewhat thin, and inclined by nature toward retaliation; whatever good or harm was done to him, he made it a habit to return it in kind." (Yıkık, 2021, p. 61).

Such morally coded descriptions are typical of early Ottoman prose, in which characters often function more as ethical foils than as psychologically complex individuals. The same pattern appears in the portrayals of Nahid Bey, Süleyman Bey, and both mothers, who serve primarily as plot facilitators rather than interiorized figures. Their limited development confirms Galib's prioritization of moral instruction and structural efficiency over psychological depth. This tendency is reinforced by the novel's descriptive strategies: despite being set in Istanbul, *Bir Bakış* offers few concrete spatial details. The city appears not as a lived environment but as a sentimentalized backdrop filtered through Divan-style lyricism, with interiors scarcely furnished in prose and streets or neighborhoods left unnamed or vaguely referenced. A close stylistic review shows that this descriptive abstraction consistently coexists with ornate classical diction, revealing that Galib had not yet adopted the observational habits associated with Western realism. Instead, setting operates symbolically, reinforcing the narrative's emotional and atmospheric tone rather than anchoring characters in a tangible urban world.

Thematically, *Bir Bakış* combines Romantic sentimentality with Sufi metaphysics. Galib devotes an extended meditation to the nature of *aşk*—love infused with spiritual longing—arguing that only mystics truly comprehend its essence. He writes:

"Love is such an exalted and astonishing thing that calling it the integrative and creative cause of the universe is not entirely accurate, yet not wholly wrong either. To behold the appearance of a marvel of creation, to listen to birds singing in a beautiful rose garden as the morning breeze brings life to the soul—these are among the spiritual delights known to those who possess love, impulses as compelling as they are irresistible." (Yıkık, 2021, p. 70)

This dual framing—at once Romantic and mystical—echoes Divan poetry's conception of love as a metaphysical force. The philosophical digression in which this meditation appears disrupts narrative progression, functioning as an authorial intervention that foregrounds theme over plot. It highlights Galib's difficulty balancing inherited poetic discourses with

emerging novelistic expectations.

Taken together, *Bir Bakış* illustrates both the aspirations and limitations of early Ottoman novelistic experimentation. Its moralizing narrator, ornate descriptions, sentimental intensity, and reliance on traditional motifs reveal a deep attachment to classical forms, while its linear plot, incipient psychological attention, and partial attempts at realism signal an emerging engagement with Western narrative conventions. Although Galib does not achieve the structural polish or psychological sophistication of contemporaries such as Namık Kemal or Sezai, *Bir Bakış* remains a significant example of literary modernization in motion—capturing a moment when old and new aesthetic impulses coexist in an illuminating and productive tension.

Conclusion

This study shows that the emergence of modern Turkish Cypriot literature must be understood not as an isolated phenomenon but as the outcome of complex cultural, political, and literary interactions that unfolded in Cyprus from the late Ottoman to the early British period. By tracing the island's poetic heritage, the rise of the Turkish-language press, the intellectual milieus formed around spaces such as the Osmanlı Kıraathanesi, and the activities of figures like Muzafferredin Galib and Kaytâzzâde Mehmed Nâzım, the research illuminates the gradual transformation of a predominantly oral-poetic tradition into a written, prose-oriented literary sphere. Within this trajectory, *Bir Bakış* occupies a foundational, though technically imperfect, position. By defining “first” through an archive-based methodology, the study clarifies the historical positioning of *Bir Bakış* and shows how the emergence of serialized prose in Cyprus can be traced through verifiable print records rather than retrospective assumptions.

The historical reconstruction presented throughout the article demonstrates that Ottoman-era Turkish writing in Cyprus remained largely peripheral in relation to the imperial literary center. Its production was shaped by limited literacy, the absence of printing facilities, and the small size of the island's Muslim community. The introduction of printing under British administration, along with the heightened political tensions between Greek and Turkish communities, catalyzed the establishment of local newspapers. These newspapers—especially *Zaman* and subsequently *Yeni Zaman*—did not merely report news but functioned as vehicles of cultural modernization, disseminating Western literary forms and cultivating a readership receptive to narrative prose. In this context, the serialization of *Bir Bakış* in 1892 marks a turning point, as it provided Cypriot Muslims with their first sustained encounter with the novel as a genre.

The examination of Muzafferredin Galib's life and intellectual orientation further underscores that *Bir Bakış* was the product of a writer positioned between tradition and modernity. Galib adhered to the Tanzimat-era conception of literature as morally instructive and socially beneficial, while simultaneously aspiring to emulate Western narrative models. His preface reveals a modest yet earnest attempt to produce a "moral history," and his narrative technique evidences both the didactic voice of the *meddah* tradition and an emerging awareness of realist sensibilities. The novel's incomplete structure, limited characterization, and descriptive shortcomings confirm Galib's own admission of inexperience, yet they also offer valuable insights into the challenges faced by early Ottoman prose writers operating outside the imperial center.

The literary analysis of *Bir Bakış* reveals a work situated at the crossroads of classical Ottoman aesthetics and Western novelistic conventions. Its poetic descriptions, moral commentary, sentimental tone, and reliance on familiar narrative motifs reflect the persistence of older literary habits, while the linear plot, interior monologues, and attempts at psychological depth indicate evolving narrative expectations. The intertextual parallels with Namık Kemal's *İntibah*—particularly in the portrayal of the young male protagonist—point to Galib's engagement with contemporary Ottoman fiction, even if his technical command remains limited in comparison with central figures in Istanbul. In its unfinished state, the novel nevertheless illuminates the early stages of prose fiction in Cyprus and shows how Western literary forms were appropriated and adapted in peripheral regions of the empire. Taken together, the narrative intrusions, *meddah*-style interventions, Divan-derived descriptive idioms, and proto-realist gestures documented in the analysis section indicate that Galib's stylistic hybridity is structurally patterned and characteristic of peripheral literary modernization in the Ottoman world.

Ultimately, the significance of *Bir Bakış* lies less in its artistic accomplishment than in its documentary and historical value. Serialized at a time when Turkish Cypriots were just beginning to encounter European literary genres, the novel represents the birth of serialized fiction in Cyprus and the initial formation of a local prose tradition. It marks the moment when the island's Muslim community—still defining itself primarily in religious terms—first entered the orbit of modern Ottoman literary culture. In this context, *Bir Bakış* illustrates how narrative modernity in Cyprus emerged through asymmetrical cultural flow—from the imperial center to the provincial periphery—mediated by local print culture and the agency of individual journalist authors. Seen from this perspective, the case of Cyprus highlights the uneven trajectory of narrative modernity across the Ottoman

world, while also resonating with broader theoretical models of center-periphery literary dynamics that emphasize asymmetrical circulation and uneven literary exchange.

In this respect, the work stands as a crucial case study for understanding how literary modernization unfolded in peripheral Ottoman geographies and how print culture enabled new aesthetic possibilities. It also underscores the need for further comparative research. Situating *Bir Bakış* within the wider constellation of Ottoman peripheral literatures—such as those produced in the Balkan provinces, including Salonica, or in the Arab provinces of the empire, such as Cairo and Baghdad—would enrich our understanding of how authors operating outside the imperial capital negotiated center-periphery dynamics and adapted metropolitan literary forms to their own cultural and political contexts. Likewise, comparison with contemporary serialized novels from other Ottoman regions could illuminate patterns of influence, divergence, and local innovation, contributing to broader discussions on the diffusion of narrative modernity across the Ottoman world.

Etik Beyan: Çalışma hazırlanırken bilim ve etik ilkelerine uyulmuş ve yararlanılan çalışmaların tamamı kaynakçada belirtilmiştir.

Yapay Zekâ Kullanımı: Çalışma hazırlanırken yapay zekâ destekli herhangi bir araç veya uygulama kullanılmamıştır. İçerik, yazar tarafından bilim ilke ve yöntemleri doğrultusunda hazırlanmıştır.

Etik Komite Onayı: Araştırmada etik kurul iznine gerek yoktur.

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Çıkar Çatışması: Yazar, çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan eder.

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Extended Summary

This article examines *Bir Bakış* (A Glance), serialized by Muzafferredin Galib in 1892, as the earliest known Turkish-language serialized novel published in Cyprus. Rather than approaching the notion of a “first novel” as an aesthetic category, the study treats it as a historical and bibliographical question grounded in surviving archival evidence. Through a systematic examination of nineteenth-century Turkish-language newspapers published on the island, the article identifies *Bir Bakış* as the earliest extant example of serialized Turkish fiction in Cyprus and situates it within the broader development of modern Turkish Cypriot literature. More broadly, the study contributes to discussions of literary modernization in peripheral Ottoman settings.

The study begins by reconstructing the literary environment of Cyprus before the emergence of print culture. During the Ottoman period, Turkish literary production on the island was overwhelmingly dominated by poetry, particularly Divan poetry and, to a lesser extent, folk literature. Although Cyprus produced a number of poets whose names survive in biographical sources, written prose remained comparatively limited. This situation changed significantly after the arrival of British administration in 1878 and the introduction of printing technology. Newspapers created new channels of communication, facilitated intellectual exchange, and enabled Western-inspired literary forms to reach local readers. The emergence of prose genres, especially the novel, should therefore be situated within the wider technological, political, and cultural transformations that reshaped the island during this period.

Particular attention is devoted to the development of the Turkish-language press in Cyprus. Newspapers such as *Ümid*, *Dik-el-Şark*, and *Saded* represent important milestones despite their short lifespan and fragmentary archival survival. More significant were *Zaman* and later *Yeni Zaman*, which provided a relatively stable platform for literary publication. Through their literary pages, these newspapers introduced readers to serialized fiction and helped create the conditions for the emergence of modern Turkish Cypriot prose. Within this environment, *Bir Bakış* became the first sustained encounter of Turkish Cypriot readers with the novel in periodical form. Importantly, its publication illustrates how print culture facilitated the transmission of new literary forms to a developing provincial literary sphere.

The emergence of *Bir Bakış* is also examined through a center–periphery framework. During the late Ottoman period, Istanbul functioned as the empire’s principal literary and cultural center, while provinces such as Cyprus occupied a peripheral position. Literary innovations generally appeared first in the capital before spreading through newspapers, intellectual networks, and the circulation of texts. Viewed from a center–periphery perspective, *Bir Bakış* reflects this broader process of literary transfer. The novel demonstrates how narrative models developed in the metropolitan center were reconfigured within a provincial environment characterized by different institutional and social conditions.

A substantial section of the article focuses on Muzafferredin Galib. Nevertheless, biographical information about the author remains limited. Available evidence suggests that he arrived in Cyprus from Istanbul as a journalist and intellectual connected to contemporary literary developments. His surviving preface reveals a conception of literature as morally instructive and socially beneficial, reflecting key assumptions of early Tanzimat literary thought while simultaneously engaging with emerging Western narrative practices. In this respect, Galib appears as a transitional figure positioned between inherited Ottoman literary traditions and newer prose models.

The article subsequently analyzes the surviving installments of *Bir Bakış* through close reading supported by representative textual evidence. To avoid impressionistic interpretation, the study presents examples of recurrent narratorial interventions and Divan-derived vocabulary in tabular form. The evidence indicates that intrusive narration, direct reader address, moral commentary, and highly ornamented language are not isolated stylistic features but recurring patterns throughout the text. Galib fashions a narrative voice that blends elements of the traditional Ottoman *meddah* storyteller with techniques associated with early prose fiction. As a result, the narrator frequently assumes an active interpretive role, guiding readers' responses to characters and events.

The analysis further reveals that *Bir Bakış* exhibits a distinctly hybrid literary aesthetic. While many descriptive passages employ the vocabulary, imagery, and rhetorical conventions of classical Ottoman (Divan) literature, the novel simultaneously shows an awareness of emerging narrative techniques associated with modern prose fiction. Expressions drawn from the traditional poetic repertoire, together with elaborate prose, transform physical settings into emotionally charged literary landscapes. The opening description of the Marmara coast, for example, relies on metaphorical language and poetic imagery reminiscent of the *nesib* sections of classical Ottoman poetry. Yet the novel also displays features associated with modern narrative prose. Its linear plot structure, attempts at characterization, and occasional efforts to provide concrete spatial detail suggest a gradual movement toward novelistic representation. The coexistence of these tendencies makes *Bir Bakış* a transitional work situated between classical Ottoman aesthetics and the conventions of the modern novel.

The article also identifies important intertextual connections between *Bir Bakış* and Tanzimat fiction. Similarities with Namık Kemal's *İntibah* are especially evident in the characterization of the young protagonist, the use of moral commentary, and the emphasis on themes such as love at first sight. By contrast, the novel differs considerably from later realist works such as Sami Paşazade Sezai's *Sergüzeşt*. Psychological depth, social observation, and detailed environmental description remain comparatively underdeveloped. These features place *Bir Bakış* within an intermediate stage of Ottoman prose fiction, where older literary conventions coexist with emerging novelistic practices.

Viewed as a whole, the evidence presented in this study underscores the importance of *Bir Bakış* for understanding both the emergence of prose fiction in Cyprus and the circulation of literary forms across the Ottoman world. In this respect, the novel reveals how newspaper culture enabled narrative models to travel from the imperial center to provincial literary environments. As the earliest known Turkish-language serialized novel published in Cyprus, *Bir Bakış* occupies a significant place in Turkish Cypriot literary history. Beyond its local importance, it offers a valuable case study for examining how literary modernization unfolded in peripheral regions of the Ottoman Empire and provides a useful point of departure for future comparative research on Ottoman provincial literatures.