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History and Literature in the Plays of Cypriot Poet Özker Yaşın: An Analysis of *The Flag Bearer Song* and *Victory and Forgiveness*

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Abstract

Özker Yaşın, who spent time in both Cyprus and Turkey, earned his fame, particularly for his poems related to Cyprus and Turkish Cypriots, and has become renowned as the poet of Cyprus nation. In his poetic drama entitled *The Flag Bearer Song*, Yaşın gives an account of the attacks and violence faced by the Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus in 1958. It is composed of three acts, which have been performed by Turkish Cypriot Institutions Federation Representative Branch and students of the Atatürk Institute at the Zafer Cinema on 29 May 1959, marking the day of conquering Istanbul. In *Victory and Forgive-*

ness, Yaşın talks about the order to conquer Cyprus issued by Sultan Selim II and the struggle to conquer this land. Thus, the conquest of Cyprus becomes the most important historic topic of the play. In the foreword of the play, Yaşın highlights the significance of the historic struggle and draws attention to the lands won through battles not being surrendered in negotiations. This study aims to analyze these two plays written by Özker Yaşın in the light of history-literature relations.

Keywords: Özker Yaşın, Victory and Forgiveness, The Flag Bearer Song, Play, Cyprus.

*The two works examined in this study are verse plays written in Turkish. The Turkish title of The Flag Bearer Song is Bayraktar Türküsü, and the Turkish title of Victory and Forgiveness is Zafer ve Bağış.

1. INTRODUCTION

Though history and literature differ from each other in several aspects like methodology, purpose, etc., it seems that these fields have some common points which make them connected. History needs archives, documents, testimonies, and other sources in order to explain historical events and their reasons as well as consequences. On the contrary, literature tends to place great emphasis on aesthetics, imagination, emotion, and representation of human experience. Novels, poems, plays, epics, and other written genres of literary expression play a crucial role in providing us with the information about the human aspect of certain events and eras. Writers who belong to certain societies are inevitably affected by the era in which they live and try to turn their personal experiences into a literary product.

The authors who are eager to compose good pieces about past events need profound knowledge about the field of history. Examining successful historical novels such as *Devlet Ana*, *Osmancık*, and *Şu Çılgın Türkler* written in Turkish literature, one can come to the conclusion that the creators were aware of certain historical moments and periods. Those literary products give readers a different picture of periods and present historical experience not only as a sequence of events but also as a world full of emotions, contradictions, values, and other human aspects.

If historical writing provides the readers with some facts concerning certain historical events in chronological order and explains them, then literary writing goes further. It shows reality by means of fictitious recreation of all kinds of difficulties, emotional atmosphere, and human aspect of those events [1, p. 35]. For this reason, literary works can reveal us some details which are not mentioned in historical books. In other words, they help connect the past with the future and develop national identity.

The examples from Turkish literature prove this connection between literature, history, and national identity very well. The worldview of people living in Anatolia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is immortalized in the hymns of Yunus Emre. The feelings of the Turkish people towards their homeland (their patriotism) are expressed in the songs of independence through the symbolism of a flag (Mehmet Akif). The liberation struggle and everyday life of Anatolians were also reflected in the novels and stories of Yakup Kadri and Halide Edip [2, p. 439]. Thus, literary products may preserve historical awareness and add emotional aspect to national memory.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to distinguish between historical and literary realities. Readers are able to learn something concerning historical reality through interpretation of historians, yet they should take into account the fact that literary works are not real historical facts [3, p. 53]. One should not confuse the reality of life with the reality of art. According to Aktaş, the event reflected in a literary work differs greatly from the historical reality since the reality is turned into another form when entering the literary world [4, pp. 14-15]. Thus, literary works emerge due to a creative transformation of historical and imaginative facts.

On the basis of what has been said above, it is evident that literary reality is a kind of transformation of objective reality. According to Gezer, when it comes to literary genres like novels, epics, and stories, real facts borrowed from outside world become perception and are presented as literary reality [5, p. 297]. In literature, the representation of historical events takes place under the influence of the emotions, imagination, and intuition of a narrator. Hence, literary works about certain events do not only provide information but also allow the reader to perceive the atmosphere of the era.

There exists also a connection between literature and history when it comes to works devoted to such historical phenomena as wars, oppression, exile, and assimilation. For example, Cengiz Dağcı and Chingiz Aitmatov managed to reflect the hardships caused by wars and assimilation policy in their literary products more effectively and convincingly than many history books [6, p. 1141]. As Şener notes, starting with *Gulsarat*, Chingiz Aitmatov composed works that were against the Soviet exploitation policy and developed the discourse of criticism towards the regime. Cengiz Dağcı, particularly in the novel *They Were Also Human*, showed the cruelty of the Russian government toward the Crimean Tatars [7, p. 181].

From this point of view, literary writing is very important for Turkish Cypriots. There are cases when history did not manage to cover some aspects of the liberation struggle of Turkish Cypriots and their sufferings. As for Turkish Cypriot literature, there were quite many writers, poets (Ahmet Gazioğlu, Süleyman Uluçamgil, and others) who addressed the liberation struggle of Turkish Cypriots in their works. Through description of hardships brought by war, conflict, and political pressure, they made a great contribution to the formation of national consciousness at that time.

Özker Yaşın was born in Nicosia in 1932. He became famous for his literary achievements, especially poetry. Throughout his works, Yaşın depicted Cyprus and its inhabitants, Turkish Cypriots and their historical experience. Cyprus shaped the life, art, and poetical world of Yaşın. The poet shared his impressions concerning the island, its people, their joys, hopes, and sufferings.

Behçet Kemal Çağlar, in the article on Yaşın, admired the poems of this writer and considered that Yaşın was one of the poets that inspired patriotic feelings of readers as well as artistic taste of them [8, p. 171]. According to Çağlar, Yaşın

belonged to a special group of poets that included Yahya Kemal, Mehmet Akif, Mehmet Emin, and Koroğlu who created heroic and national poetry.

It is evident from the above statements that Yaşın was the poet of his nation and he managed to express the national spirit in his poems in its pure form. Indeed, Yaşın was a witness of the most difficult and tragic period of Turkish Cypriot history and managed to transfer this experience into his poems. Through his literary products, Yaşın reflected Cyprus problem and showed it to people with the help of poetry. During the period between 1963 and 1974, national feelings found their reflection in the poet's lyrics [9, p. 198]. For this reason, Özker Yaşın who immortalized the liberation struggle of Turkish Cypriots through lyrical and epic poetry was called the "National Poet" of Cyprus.

In this article, the two verse plays of Yaşın Özker named "Song of the Standard-Bearer" and "Victory and Forgiveness" will be analyzed considering the interaction between events from the past and their depiction in literary works. It is essential to discuss the method of reconstruction of the past events by Yaşın Özker via poetic language as well as the depiction of Cypriot Turkish identity and its memory.

2. RESULTS

Özker Yaşın's drama "Victory and Forgiveness" includes the story of Sultan Selim II making a decision regarding issuing an edict for the conquest of Cyprus and the political, military, and moral aspects of victory. According to Ezilmez, the plot of this play is developed according to a number of events in history, including the Cyprus Campaign and conquest of the island. In addition to the topic of power represented by the ambitions of Yasef Nasi and his wife Countess Sara, this play touches upon such themes as cultural wealth of the reign of Selim II, represented by the poets Bâkî and Nevî, Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî, a historian, Sheikülislam Ebusuut Efendi, a religious scholar, and Mimar Sinan, an architect. Thus, by involving these characters in his work, Özker Yaşın shows the era of Sultan Selim II as not only the period of politics and military operations but also cultural and artistic achievements [10, p. 50].

In the preface to the drama "Victory and Forgiveness," which was published in Istanbul in 1988 and contains 248 pages, Özker Yaşın emphasizes that territories conquered by means of military victories should not be lost during negotiations. Mentioning the situation when Cyprus was leased to Britain in 1878, Yaşın sees this event as one of the most painful examples of how diplomatic efforts led to the loss of territories conquered by force in the history of Ottoman Empire. By linking conquest of Cyprus in 1570–1571, colonial rule of the Britons, poor political solutions of 1959, and Turkish intervention of 20 July 1974 into the single chain of events, Yaşın comes to the conclusion that victory should not be sacrificed due to political compromises, and what had been won after sacrifice should never be forgiven or abandoned [11, pp. 13–14].

The play called "The Flag Bearer Song" by Özker Yaşın was published in 1959 in Nicosia in the form of a 68-page verse. It describes violent attacks committed against Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus in 1958 in poetic language. It consists of three acts, and was performed by the representatives of the Cyprus Turkish Institutions Federation and the students of the Atatürk Institution on 29 May 1959, i.e., on the anniversary of the capture of Istanbul. In the Zafer Cinema, the money collected from the performance was transferred to the federation. Two years later, the students of the Nicosia Turkish Girls' High School restaged this play. According to Onuş, "The Flag Bearer Song" is a verse play of national character that expresses heroism of Cyprus, and its first and second acts include six scenes, while the third one includes thirteen scenes. All the characters are used by the author as his spokespersons who voice their wishes concerning the intervention of Turkey in Cyprus, the arrival of the Turkish troops to the island, and free life of Turkish Cypriots under the Turkish flag [12, p. 447]. The historical elements revealed in both dramas can be discussed in terms of several topics.

2.1. VICTORY AND FORGIVENESS

2.1.1 The Campaigns at Mohács and Szigetvár

The campaign against Hungary was ordered by Suleiman the Magnificent in order to thwart any effort to establish a political power, which is influenced by the Holy Roman Empire and is Christian in character. In the Battle of Mohács, which took place on the Mohács Plain, the Ottoman army achieved a crushing victory over the Hungarian army. As a result, there was no political and military power left in Central Europe, which can threaten the expansion of the Ottomans for a long time to come. According to Yaşın in his book *Victory and Forgiveness*, this event serves as a clear example of the military genius of the Ottomans. The writer says that despite the smaller numbers of troops in comparison to the Hungarians and the inferiority of the artillery and other military equipment, the Ottoman army defeated its enemies in a very short time thanks to their commanders' skills and military strategy of Suleiman [11, pp. 142–143].

Hence, the play makes a reference to the Battle of Mohács in order to show the military power, leadership, and superiority of the Ottomans. Recalling commanders like Bali Bey and Hüsrev Bey, Yaşın shows the connection between military victories and bravery, religious faith, and strict military discipline. Thus, this historical reference is necessary since it prepares the reader to the subsequent mentioning of Cyprus, another location where military and political power

of the Ottomans is depicted.

Szigetvár is a city in Hungary. The most historically significant building here is Szigetvár Castle, which passed under the control of the Ottomans during the siege of Szigetvár. This siege was the last military campaign conducted by Sultan Suleiman. The Siege of Szigetvár resulted in the capture of the city on 7 September 1566; however, Sultan Suleiman never saw the final outcome, since he died before then. In his *Victory and Forgiveness*, Yaşın states that Sultan Suleiman died in Szigetvár and emphasizes that this information was only revealed to his son, Selim II. This makes the connection between the death of a king who was a great power with that of another's coming to power and also with the conquest of Cyprus in general Ottoman history.

2.1.2 Historical Figures Mentioned in the Play

Özker Yaşın has made mention of many historical personalities belonging to the period in question in *Victory and Forgiveness*. These figures include Sultan Selim II, Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, Mimar Sinan, Lala Mustafa Pasha, Piyale Pasha, Nurbanu Sultan, İsmihan Sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent and Mehmed the Conqueror. With regard to these individuals, Yaşın manages to reconstruct not only the political and military environment of the campaign, but also its culture and intellect.

Among the historical figures mentioned in the play is Sultan Selim II, the ruler who ordered the conquest of Cyprus. In the play, Sultan Selim is portrayed as a kind-hearted Sultan and a sultan who was not keen on war. He is also shown as the first Ottoman emperor who led the army without personally taking part in the battles. In addition, Yaşın also points out that Selim II appointed Sokollu Mehmet Pasha as the Grand Vizier, yet still retained control over the administration of the state. Here are some lines about Sultan Selim:

“He was a gentle sultan; he was the first Ottoman emperor who did not lead his army on campaign. He was always in favor of peace. He gave his seal to Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, a talented statesman, upon becoming Sultan. . . However, he did not relinquish control. He did not become a tool of the Grand Vizier’s jealousy and hatred. He did not fall for gossip; he protected his pashas and beys. He did not have any brothers, sons, grandsons, or viziers strangled. His reign was an era of bloodless justice. He was kind and merciful; he clothed the naked and fed the hungry. He ordered the conquest of Cyprus! Yemen and the island of Cyprus were added to Ottoman territory during his reign.”

[11, pp. 232–233]

Nevertheless, despite the fact that Yaşın portrays Sultan Selim II as an extremely kind and just sultan, he also does not forget to mention the weaknesses of the ruler in some cases, such as his fondness for wine.

Another historically significant person included in *Victory and Forgiveness* is Sokollu Mehmet Pasha. He was an important Ottoman statesman, having served in office both as the Grand Admiral of the Ottoman Navy and the Grand Vizier. Additionally, he was also the last Grand Vizier of Suleiman the Magnificent. A man of great work and great courage, Sokollu dedicated all his efforts to making the Ottoman Empire stronger. In *Victory and Forgiveness*, Yaşın also describes Sokollu Pasha as an experienced politician and as a man with outstanding political talent. Even though Yaşın says that he was sometimes ruled by ambition, at the same time, he acknowledges him as a statesman who rendered important service to the state.

As for the actions of Sokollu Pasha with regard to the conquest of Cyprus, Yaşın tells that Sokollu initially did not want this conquest to take place and tried to stop it. However, when Selim insisted on conquering the island of Cyprus and issued the decree of conquest, he supported the order of the Sultan and sought to help the Ottomans conquer it successfully. According to Yaşın, after this happened,

“It is known that Sokollu did not want the conquest of Cyprus and tried to prevent it. Nevertheless, when Selim refused to listen to his Grand Vizier and issued the decree of conquest, he also did his best to ensure the Ottoman victory. . . After the conquest of Cyprus was completed, he was the first Grand Vizier to oppose the declaration of Yasef Nasi, a Jew who was the Sultan’s leg, as King of Cyprus.”

[11, p. 12]

Another historically famous personality, Sultan Selim, is often referred to in the play. In it, Yaşın refers to him as “Great Suleiman”, “Suleiman the Magnificent” or “the Conqueror of Hungary”. However, despite the praise he receives, the author does not hesitate to criticize this historical character. Thus, even though he calls him “Sultan the Great”, he points to the tragedy in his family due to the rivalry within it. As is known, one of his sons, Beyazıt, killed his two brothers and became the heir to the throne. When Suleiman learned of this crime, he had his son put to death, along with his children. This sad story is described by Yaşın as follows:

*“Now, let us get to the conclusion!
Ladies and gentlemen! Ladies and gentlemen!
The result is a complete tragedy.
The executioners of Suleiman the Magnificent beheaded Prince Bayezid,
and his four sons. . .
The hands of Suleiman the Magnificent were stained not only with the blood of his children,
but also with the blood of his grandsons.” [11, p. 128]*

In the long forty-six-year rule of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire reached its peak. Numerous scholars agree that this period can be considered the golden age of the Ottoman Empire. Being provided with a profound scientific, historical, literary, religious and military education since childhood, Sultan Suleiman ascended the throne in 1520 and aimed to make the Ottoman Empire flourish. As a result of the battles conducted by the Sultan in his reign, Ottoman Empire’s sphere of influence covered most of the Middle East. Furthermore, his rule brought the expansion of the Ottoman state’s influence on Northern Africa and Algeria and made them a naval superpower of the Mediterranean, Red Sea and Persian Gulf. For nearly another hundred years the Ottoman Empire managed to extend its territories [13, p. 207].

In *Victory and Forgiveness*, Yaşın also mentions the death of Sultan Suleiman during the Siege of Szigetvár. He is called the “Magnificent Sultan”, “Conqueror of Hungary” or “Sultan the Magnificent” in the drama. These epithets, on the one hand, show the greatness of this personality, and on the other hand – reflect his accomplishments.

Moreover, in the play Yaşın emphasizes the military talent of Suleiman the Magnificent by referring to such event as the Battle of Mohács. This battle is shown in the play in order to illustrate the superiority of the strategy used by the Ottomans. Thus, in *Victory and Forgiveness*, it is said that

*“ . . .
When he set out on the Mohács campaign,
The Ottoman army numbered
Less than one hundred thousand men;
The Hungarian army numbered,
More than one hundred and fifty thousand men. . .
Moreover, the Hungarians,
With their cannons and weapons,
were far superior to the Turks.
Ali
Historians write that this battle was won,
In just two hours.
Is that true?
Piyale Pasha
Of course it is true!
In just two hours,
The Ottomans defeated the huge Hungarian army. . .
May his place be in Paradise,
Sultan Suleiman Khan,
His unparalleled military genius.” [11, pp. 142–143]*

Moreover, Yaşın also mentions some other figures associated with the conquest of Cyprus. First of all, he refers to Lala Mustafa Pasha as a foresightful commander, to Bâkî as the sultan of poets and to the unnamed soldier who was the first to ascend the Costanza tower and put the flag there, and who later became known as Bayraktar. Thus, in *Victory and Forgiveness*, Lala Mustafa addresses the soldiers before the storming of Nicosia and promises them reward and the title of Banner Commander should someone be the first to do this and climb the battlements of the castle. The speech of the commander aims at enhancing the soldiers’ spirits:

*“Look, Pashas! Know this,
The soldier who is the first to climb the Nicosia fortresses in this final assault,
And the first to plant our flag on the battlements,
Will be rewarded!
Whoever that brave man may be,
Will be appointed as the Banner Commander!
I want you to convey this to the soldiers under your command quickly,*

*So that they may attack the fortresses with more enthusiasm,
Moreover, fight the enemy with more faith. . .* [11, pp. 170–171]

Another historical personality depicted in the play is the famous poet of the 16th century, Nev'î. Affected by the death of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, he talks to his fellow poet Bâkî, calling him "Master" in *Victory and Forgiveness*:

*"I want,
From the heart of Europe,
To the shores of India,
From the Azerbaijani plateaus,
To the outskirts of Marseille,
From the Crimean plains,
To the interior of Abyssinia,
The Ottoman Empire, in all its glory,
To come alive in the verses of that lament. . .
Ebusuut
You must write that lament, Bâkî.
Nev'î
You will write it, my Master,
You will definitely write it."* [11, p. 40]

Therefore, as a result, one can say that in his play Yaşın succeeds in presenting the historical facts and personalities associated with them. The play vividly reflects the spirit of the epoch and introduces the viewer to the leading figures of this period such as the resolute Lala Mustafa Pasha, successful naval commander Piyale Pasha and Müezzinzade Ali Pasha.

On the whole, the play "Victory and Forgiveness" presents the reader with a remarkable dramatic narrative that makes history come to life on the stage. Indeed, all the main persons involved in the capture of Cyprus are emphasized by the author, while the atmosphere of the era is successfully conveyed. The play focuses specifically on such heroes as Lala Mustafa Pasha, the leader whose strength and firmness led to victory; Piyale Pasha, who made his contribution in terms of the sea power of the Turkish fleet; and Müezzinzade Ali Pasha, another important contributor to the capture of the island. Thus, the author does not only present facts, but rather conveys ideas of sacrifice, dedication, and faith.

2.1.3 Architectural Structures

Özker Yaşın in his play "Victory and Forgiveness" mentions Selimiye and Süleymaniye Mosques. According to Yaşın, Sinan the architect made Sultan Selim II promise to construct a more beautiful mosque than Süleymaniye. "Sultan Selim had informed Sinan that there is no need for Istanbul having any other mosque but Süleymaniye, so he wanted the Selimiye to be constructed in Edirne" [11, pp. 73-74]. Selimiye mosque was constructed to be bigger in size and more beautiful than Süleymaniye. Moreover, the funeral ceremony of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent took place in Süleymaniye Mosque, which was an architectural marvel created by Sinan in the stage of apprenticeship. He says that it was the day of judgement in the Süleymaniye [11, p. 38]. The opening location in the play is described as the Topkapı palace.

2.1.4 The Conquest of Cyprus

The Catholic Venetians were harassing and persecuting the Orthodox Christians who were Greeks from Cyprus. To get out of the oppression and suffering, the Greek Cypriots turned to the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus. It was regarded by them as the conquest of justice and religion. The request for the conquest of Cyprus was forwarded to Sultan Selim II through the Bey of İçel [14, p. 1]. This was followed by the conquest of the island and its capture after the capture of Famagusta on 1 August 1571. In his analyzed work of play, Özker Yaşın objectively discusses the conquest of Cyprus. The play mentions that the Jewish Yasef continuously offered Cyprus wine to the Sultan, tempted him to seize Cyprus and wished to become king of Cyprus. Moreover, the play discusses the reasons behind the conquest of Cyprus from the historical perspective, saying: "Attacks by Venetian pirates on our pilgrim and merchant ships going towards Egypt, plundering our merchant ships of goods during the bad weather in Cypriot harbors and kidnapping our treasurer in Egypt" [11, p. 109]. According to Yaşın, attempts were made to solve these negative incidents peacefully through sending envoys but no results were obtained. Years passed, but the problem persisted and consequently war became unavoidable [11, p. 110].

2.1.5 Ottoman Justice and Tolerance Policy

One of the most fundamental characteristics of the Turkish people is their helpfulness, even in difficult situations, and they do not hesitate to help those who take up arms against them. The Turkish people are mature, brave, just, and tolerant.

These are the most fundamental characteristics of Anatolian culture. In his work, Özker Yaşın emphasizes that after the bloody battles in 1571, when the Ottomans took the island from the Venetians, the people of Cyprus lived a happy life far from war. However, the artist states that the Turks treated those who surrendered mercifully and did not interfere with anyone's religion or faith [11, pp. 93, 165].

2.1.6 Ottoman Settlement Policy

After the Ottomans conquered Cyprus in 1571, many Turks from various regions of Anatolia, from every art and profession, were settled there. These people, of course, brought with them Turkish traditions, customs, culture, and art. With the island's incorporation into Ottoman rule in 1571, the Anatolian people who spread throughout Cyprus in large waves preserved the social and cultural values they brought with them, and also added new ones influenced by their environment. Özker Yaşın also states in the aforementioned play that Sultan Selim Han decided to make Cyprus his homeland with this settlement policy [11, p. 242].

2.2. THE BALLAD OF BAYRAKTAR

2.2.1 The Conquest of Cyprus

In this work, which deals with the attacks and violent events experienced by the Turkish Cypriots in the 1950s, Özker Yaşın also includes the conquest of Cyprus and Bayraktar, one of the important heroes of the conquest.

During the conquest of Cyprus, it was necessary to breach the walls to take Nicosia. Therefore, fierce battles raged in front of the walls surrounding Nicosia. On the morning of 9 September 1570, a Turkish soldier, whose name we do not know, climbed the walls and managed to plant the flag he was holding on the Kostanza tower. However, at that very moment, he was martyred by the enemy at the place where he planted the flag. Our soldier was buried in this place where he was martyred, and later a tomb and a mosque were built there. The Turkish Cypriots gave the name "Bayraktar" to this soldier who planted the flag on the Kostanza tower, and the mosque built in his name was called Bayraktar Mosque [15, p. 331]. Özdemir, one of the play's heroes, referring to Bayraktar, who displayed great heroism during the conquest of the island, stated that the Turkish Cypriots would be saved from these hardships and sufferings thanks to the Turkish army, and that the glorious flag would wave on the walls [16, p. 15]. Again, in the sixth scene of the play, Özdemir described the Ottoman army that conquered Cyprus as a colossal and magnificent army to which three continents bowed [16, p. 37].

At the end of the first scene of the play, Yaşın emphasizes the heroism shown by Canbolat Pasha during the conquest of Famagusta with the following lines:

*"Before the Famagusta fortresses, the Turkish army,
The ambush you set for us, Venetians, did not succeed,
Canbolat Pasha suddenly attacked the fortress,
He entered through the gap with his pure white horse,
The enemy was astonished by this majesty,
They saw that the headless hero was attacking."* [16, pp. 26–27]

2.2.2 Desire for Turkey and the Turkish Army

Turkey has supported the Turkish Cypriots in all fields from the past till today. The writer Yaşın always mentions in his works that Turkish Cypriots have had a desire for their Motherland, Turkey since ever: "One day my flag will rise in these skies,

The wish of the martyrs lying in these lands,
Will surely come true when the Turkish army arrives" [16, p. 11].

The twelfth scene of the play *The Flag Bearer Song* also highlights the point that Turkey has been accompanying the Turkish Cypriots always and those bad days will soon be gone, and the flag of Turkey will fly on the island [16, p. 60].

2.2.3 Historical Figures Who Have Been Mentioned in the Play

"The Turkish Cypriots, who had watched the Anatolian War of Independence in its entire course with enthusiasm and admiration, were deeply devoted to Mustafa Kemal, the triumphant general of Çanakkale, as he could save the Turkish homeland. Even during the most miserable moments, their belief in Mustafa Kemal never waned" [17, p. 95]. There is deep love in Turkish Cypriots for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the person who reformed Turkish Nation. "The Turkish Cypriots, who had regarded themselves from ancient times as one with the Motherland, followed the national struggle of Anatolia with keenest interest, and each victory of Mustafa Kemal and Anatolia gave them new hope" [18, p. 363].

Emine, one of the characters of the play "The Flag Bearer Song", displayed the photo of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who was a victorious commander, on the wall of the school she worked in a mountain village in Cyprus and discussed Atatürk to her pupils anytime she could. Emine's speeches reveal Turkish Cypriots' point of view about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: "Atatürk means homeland, Atatürk means: Flag" [16, p. 49].

Özker Yaşın has composed several poems about Namık Kemal who is among significant figures of Turkish literature. For Turkish Cypriots, Namık Kemal represents freedom. Ozker Yaşın, who has composed several poems for Namık Kemal, has collected them all in his book "Namık Kemal in Cyprus". While he composed poems for Namık Kemal, he has also revealed in those poems the appreciation of Turkish Cypriots for him. Pictures of Namık Kemal, who was regarded by Turkish Cypriots as a freedom figure, hung on the walls of houses in the 1950s [16, p. 22].

2.2.4 Patriotism

Turks have great devotion to their native land to which they are bonded by historical heritage, and are ready to sacrifice their belongings, as well as their lives for their homeland when needed. Such an act is perceived as a divine responsibility too. One of the renowned poets of Turkish Cypriot literature is Özker Yaşın who reflects this sensitivity in his poems. For example, in his song "The Flag Bearer," Özker Yaşın expresses his devotion to his native place as well as to Motherland Turkey where he lived some of his years:

*"I am a simple poet, my homeland is Turkey,
Its name is mentioned in every song that I write.
My sweet father rests in its soil,
The blood in my veins flows through Turkey's water.
Turkey is a great homeland, Turkey is fertile,
The people of Turkey are magnificent like mountain ranges. . . "* [16, p. 21]

Once again in the sixth episode of the drama, Özker Yaşın expresses his devotion to his native place in these verses:

*"You are the homeland where I was born,
You are the homeland where my father and mother were born.
I walked across you step by step,
From Famagusta to Paphos.
Villages amidst lush green valleys,
Their minarets can be seen from far away,
All of the villagers turn out to be relatives,
Their eyes greet me affectionately."* [16, p. 50]

2.2.5 EOKA

Since attacks launched by the terrorist organization called EOKA had started since 1 April 1955, Dr. Küçük and his friends got worried. Later with time, smaller national resistance movements started taking shape with various names, aimed at protecting the lives, honor, and belongings of the Turkish Cypriots. But as the attacks intensified, the Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT) was founded two and a half years later than the EOKA. TMT never attacked any Greek villages during its operation period. It trained young Turks in how to defend themselves and gave them necessary weapons.

The Flag Bearer Song, which is written by the Turkish poet Özker Yaşın, reflects events of 1958, when EOKA launched its attacks on the Turkish Cypriots. During these times, as a result of attacks of two Turks by EOKA members [16, p. 30] whom Özker Yaşın calls "criminals" on the road to Paphos, conflicts arose in Cyprus. Then, as a result of Father Makarios, whom Yaşın referred to as a "devil and murderer" [16, p. 36], Cyprus became inhabitable for Turks.

3. CONCLUSION

Literature and history are the two domains, the knowledge of which helps societies preserve their collective memory. These two domains are always nourishing one another. History narrates stories about past events, wars, migrations, and socio-economic changes on the basis of documents; literature tries to reproduce impressions and thoughts of human beings caused by those events using a special artistic language. Therefore, literature works are not just creative activities but reflections of the society of their time, as well as its socio-cultural and political life. With the help of literary works, history reaches people in a more lively and vivid form. On the other hand, literature takes place on the basis of historical events and heroes because the tragic events or historical moments, combined with imagination of writers, create immortal literary works. Thanks to this strong connection between literature and history, people can not only learn something new but also feel the epoch through art. For this reason, along with history, literature is also essential for the formation of the

national identity. Examining the literary works of Turkish Cypriots, especially of Süleyman Uluçamgil, Ahmet Gazioğlu, and Özker Yaşın, it can be said that, generally, these authors reflect the feelings, thoughts, and pains of their society as well as the sufferings of the Turkish Cypriots historically. Özker Yaşın's plays "The Flag Bearer Song" and "Victory and Forgiveness", in the framework of history and literature, reflect historical facts and the features of their time. In both of these plays, the author describes the facts of history objectively while paying special attention to the cultural specifics of that time. In the play "Victory and Forgiveness", Yaşın also mentions the poets of that era, the architecture, and even the Ottoman Court. According to Özker Yaşın, who said that he read everything concerning Selim II, Yasef Nasi, and the conquest of Cyprus, he presented the characters of historical figures such as Sultan Selim, Suleiman the Magnificent, and Sokollu Mehmet Pasha rather objectively, without concealing any mistakes of these people. In his play "The Flag Bearer Song", Özker Yaşın criticizes Turkish Cypriots who were leaving their homeland because of the conflict with Greeks. Though, there are certain bombastic phrases, he skillfully uses critical approach toward history in his works. In his work "Victory and Forgiveness", Özker Yaşın criticizes the promise given to Yasef Nasi by Sultan Selim as a prince ("I will make you King of Cyprus"). In the second part of the play, he reflects on the inner struggle of Sultan Selim very well. According to Özker Yaşın, Sultan Selim, in the end of his play, gives up from his promise, saying that victory cannot be forgiven, and chooses the true path. Though literary works do not represent historical documents, in both of his plays, Yaşın gives important information about history, makes people love this science and reveals even some details that can never be found in history books. These two literary works of Özker Yaşın, which reproduce historical facts about the conquest of Cyprus and the pain of Turkish Cypriots in 1950s, can be easily used in Cyprus history lessons. There is no doubt that both of Yaşın's works will be of great benefit for history education.

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