History Education and Identity

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Abstract

One of the problems of contemporary history teaching is ethnocentrism. Most researchers in the field of history education believe that style and utterance of history curriculum, textbooks and of teachers should be changed in the modern world. There are a lot of interests in the world about the meanings attached to the concepts of ‘us’ and ‘the other’ and how to construct national history approach in the light of globalisation. There have been an increasing number of research studies on this subject. The main reason for this interest is the new social structure which has became a reality because of new social relations and cultural interactions that also influence traditional history teaching. However, there has been little research on the understanding of perceptions of prospective history teachers about ‘us’ and ‘the other’ in Turkey. So, the aim of this study is to investigate candidate teachers’ perceptions about the above concepts and the meanings attached in the learning and teaching process of history. Then, the research question is ‘What are the perceptions of prospective history teachers about the concepts of ‘us’ and ‘the other’ with which they are confronted in learning- teaching practices?’

Assessment of the action part of the study was made by using qualitative research techniques. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaire questions, notes of interviews with candidate teachers, reflective field notes of the researcher and document analysis.

This study suggests that when historical consciousness is constructed there is a need for skills of critical thinking on the meanings of ‘us’ and ‘the other’. Additionally history teachers should have skills to practice their critical thinking skills effectively in coherent and unbiased ways.

Key words: History, History Curriculum, History Teaching, Teacher Education, Educational Sociology, perceptions of ‘us’ and ‘the other’

I. Introduction

A society’s identity and interests are formed through inter-societal relations and they are determined within the historical context. The rapidly changing and developing world leads to several complicated problems. The distractions resulting from the ethnic and political disparities that were experienced just before our century brought new problems into the world agenda. Ethnic identities have begun to gain great importance and nation- states have begun to be questioned. Since traditional societies have had customs, everyone living in such kind of societies has known who s/he is. Therefore, there was no identity problem in these societies. Socio-cultural changes have led to the dominance of traditions and then, brought about identity questionings. The identity became an issue and it seems that it will continue to be a problematic issue later. The contemporary identity crisis is both a result and a product of the progress (Güvenc, 1998, p.23).

European countries presume consciously that history lessons have a crucial mission while they are integrating with each other and they are emphasizing the importance of history education in the field of the formation of an “identity of European citizenship”. For this reason, some important decisions which were about what the aims of history teaching should be and what its content should contain in democratic Europe of the 21st century were taken in the Ministry Committee of the Council of Europe in 2001.
History could be defined as the memories of a society and societies in general terms. Teaching of history does not mean the memorization of historical chronologies or facts. It mainly means the act of contributing to the formation and flow of history by making re-use of the universal values, which have been formed after people examine, analyze and understand their pasts. Thus, history is learned truly and the historical knowledge and experience which are taught could be put into action. It must be mentioned that the achievement of cultural development and modernization can be provided through this way (Ata, 2002, p.51).

It is a fact that history teaching includes the basic criteria that the people from different countries need to evaluate each other. Therefore, cultural cooperation attempts must be set up by putting history teaching at the centre of such evaluations and these attempts must also be proceeded by regulatory attempts on history teaching. The fact that history is a cultural accumulation which determines international relations requires that history teaching must be regulated in terms of an 'international' understanding (Safran, 2002).

Every point of world view inevitably brings about a history understanding. The occurrences and happenings of events are explained on the basis of the points of world views. Certainly events occur in time. Therefore, every point of world view is an obvious or an implied history understanding. Our points of views have begun to include whole world history as a result of the increasingly universalisation of the events. And, increasingly realization of the fact that the events we face are the product of international relations causes the breaking up of the suspicions which are about the unity of history and it also brings spread of the idea of the unity of history (Sezer, 1993).

According to Ozbaran (1998, pp.61-69), history teaching-education in Turkey has some problems. These problems are mostly resulted from the fact that nothing more than some regulations about details and forms could be done to improve the history teaching-education in Turkey in the period when some crucial transformations occur in the field of history teaching-education, especially in the West. Then, history teaching and education become closer and more inefficient.

Jenkins concentrates on relationships of history with authority and knowledge. History is never for itself. Neither the formation nor the reading of it is innocent. History is always for someone. History is a political battleground. Either the people who revolt against authority or the people who suppress these revolutions try to get the support of history to their sides. These people think that they can get power in this way.

In the contemporary age within which some concepts like globalization, post-modernism, human rights and world citizenship are increasingly discussed and Turkey’s social structure is questioned being inspired from such kind of discussions, the roles of the history teaching and historical consciousness have gained a greater impetus. This study tries to examine what kind of elements are influential in the formation of identity and historical consciousness in history teaching. It is also tries discover how much the subject matter in textbooks influences the formation of history consciousness. In addition, the influences of the official ideology and the authority towards history writing and history teaching; and also the effects of these tendencies on textbooks are taken into consideration. In the world that is made globalized in some sort of a way, the issues about how national history understandings are constructed and what ‘us’ and ‘other’ mean have become more and more important and consequently, the number of the studies related to these issues is more and more increasing. The main reason of the rise in attention to these issues is directly related to the formation of the new social structure which is formed through different social relationships. This new social structure strongly affects the traditional history teaching. Unfortunately, there are a few studies based on the perception of “us” and “other” of history teachers in Turkey. For this reason, the aim of this study is to examine whether an us and other perception is formed or not in teacher candidates who continue their
education in history teaching departments of faculties of education. Additionally, it is also aimed to determine what these perceptions, if they exist, consist of, and what they constitute with regard to history teaching. In relation to these aims, a research question was prepared, which is; what are history teacher candidates’ us and other perceptions that they face in history teaching-learning fields?

II. Method and the Analysis of Data

The qualitative research techniques were used in this study. In the study, open-ended questionnaire questions were asked to history teacher candidates in order to determine their views about “history education and identity”, and group-focused interviews were made with these candidates. Additionally, the history textbooks and teaching programs which are used in high schools (8th, 9th and 10th grades) were examined. All these means were examined in document and interpretive analysis scope. In order to provide validity of the study, more than one data collection means was used. In order to maintain reliability of the study, the database was examined by another expert and analysis results were compared with the data by him.

III. Sample

The participants of this research were 30 persons (5 teachers and 25 teacher candidates) who studied in history teaching master programs (both with thesis and without thesis) in Marmara University during 2003-2004 school period. All participants in the sample responded to the open-ended questionnaire. Interviews were made in 6 sessions with 5 person groups (n= 5).

IV. Findings and Interpretations

In this section, the findings, which included the perceptions of the teacher candidates about history teaching and identity formation and which were accumulated by means of different data collection techniques, were presented firstly in main us and other categories and later in a thematic manner.

The answers of the open-ended questionnaire questions and the results of the group-based interviews were examined by means of classical content analysis techniques. The main categories of ‘us’ and ‘other’ differences are, in rank order:

1. Religion/ beliefs/ religious sect
2. Race/ ethnic structure
3. Ideology
4. Economic structure
5. Language/ culture/ common historical past
6. Strategic partnership/ geography
7. Science/ technology

Identity and History Teaching

We can talk about personal, individual and national identities. Cultural identities could make an individual come closer to some groups while it could make him/her go far away from other groups. It is an unavoidable fact that the subjects who form a society have various, even opposite, identities. Naturally, there is always to some extent an identity problem in every society (Guvenc, 1998, p.24). When societies’ base of existence is taken as a fact of binary oppositions, the existence of the identity problem is inevitable. Oppositions are inevitable because subjects and groups form their identities with reference to their cultures and histories and they tend to define themselves in opposition relations with others.
Definition, fact and formation of identity seem to have a multi-dimensional structure. Subjects and groups may connect themselves with various identity symbols. Subjects and societies maintain their existence in terms of an ‘us/self against the other’ tendency. This tendency is the easiest way of creating the other. Then, what would balance this opposition? The solution is to strengthen diversity and democratic values, isn’t it? (Güvenc, 1995, p.29).

The ‘diversity in unity’ slogan has been created because it is understood that societal unity and peace could be maintained only through diversity. However this slogan has served to maintain national identity (unity) rather than to protect cultural diversity (identities). The most popular means that modern states use with regard to this aim is official and national history (Güvenc, 1998, p.27).

As long as the people who make an ‘us and other’ difference have agreed on fundamental principles, no serious crisis occurs. The acceptance of the existence of ‘the other’ helps to choose and continue an identity. However if one of the identities does more things than refusing the existence of the other and this identity tries to push the other to accept another identity, then an identity crisis could happen. This is the “identity crisis” which modern nation-states face in the age of democracy and human rights (Guvenc, 1998, p.25).

In this study, the questions like ‘Does history teaching contribute to identity formation?’ and ‘How do you feel about and perceive the use of ‘us’ and ‘other’ constructions in history?’ were asked to 30 students who graduated from different Turkish universities and who continue their education in master degree program (both with thesis and without thesis) in the Department of History in the Marmara University. The answers given by these students are summarized below.

Most of the participants stated that the most important disciplines in the formation of a nation are history, religion and literature and they mentioned that the most prominent of these three is literature. They said that the identity formation could be strong or weak depending on the content of subject matter and the teaching type of these subject matters. According to the participants, the state wants to maintain an awareness of a Turkish identity by means of using history textbooks and one thirds of these students mentioned that the state can achieve this aim partially. Most of the students said that this approach of the state creates chaos and does not form an identity consciousness. One of the students suggested this strategy in the formation of the identity; ‘the us must mean our identity and the other must not mean our enemy’. Some of the answers given these students to the questions which are about identity, ‘us and the other’, are like this.

The ones who criticize the approach of the state mentioned their thoughts like this: ‘History programs, textbooks and the personal pasts and cultural backgrounds of teachers could develop or harm the meanings of us and other’; ‘There are also differences within us. We behave ourselves as if it were the other. We make even ourselves the other’.

The ones who think that global threat could harm the national unity stated their thoughts in the following manner: ‘If a national consciousness is established, it must be done by the history’; ‘There must be a perception of us in order to set up unity and togetherness’; ‘History lessons are very influential in the formation of the national consciousness’.

One of the students showed his emotional reaction in this manner: ‘History teachers and textbooks consolidate and sharpen ethnical differences’.

Most of the students suggested that secularism, Ottoman heritage, religious requirements and Ataturk’s principles must be harmonized in order to form a healthy identity formation in the modern Turkey. They stated that unless it is achieved, a problematic identity crisis exists.
The national consciousness begins to be formed in primary education by people. History lessons are very influential in this process. Students reflected their opinions in parallel to this issue in the following manner:

The common past, which is a very significant matter in the formation of the national consciousness, is not emphasized in primary education. Additionally, the people who are in secondary education are not very interested in the content that is related to common past because social environment is more influential on this age group than the school.

One of the most interesting comments about the concepts of ‘us’ and ‘other’ was the following one: ‘Although the USA is the biggest other for all nations, it makes whole world Americanized and this process destroys us. This shows that the USA is small America and the whole world is big America’.

Furthermore the students emphasized that political and ideological history subject matters must be lessened and cultural and social matters must be considered more in order to establish a healthy us without alienating the others. Students also stated that the historical understanding that is based on good ‘us’ and bad ‘other’ must also be given up in order to achieve above-mentioned aim. As Kicir and Aksoy (2004) mentions in their study which is based on the formation of the cultural identity:

People have different identities as a social being. These identities are formed in social groups and here, peoples’ status, beliefs, sexes, and jobs are very determinant factors. Cultural identity refers to the identity which people gain by connecting voluntarily themselves to the values and living styles of the social group to which they feel belongingness. In this type of identity, there is no room for the elements resulting from race or geographical features. When people connect themselves to the social environment within which they are living, they acquire their cultural identities.

Kicir and Aksoy (2004) continue in relation to cultural identity as follows:

There must be a harmony and continuity in history subject matters in order to establish a history consciousness. It is very arguable how a history consciousness can be established when there are contradictory statements even in the one textbook. Since history does not mean story-telling and wars, the history teaching approach which includes only story-telling and wars must be quitted and a social and cultural history approach must be set up in order to provide the establishment of a history consciousness and cultural identity. The another reason lying behind the inability to establish a history consciousness is that there is an incompatibility between the historical knowledge which is given to students in schools and the historical knowledge that they acquire in their social environments. For this reason, students tend to see history lessons as the lessons that are only necessary to continue to their education and they do not give importance the subject matters of these lessons.

The environment within which history consciousness could not be established affects the structure of the cultural identity negatively. If a nation does not have a cultural identity, the issues like social integration and harmony become questionable in this nation. Therefore, it is very important to engage deeply with this issue. In history teaching, the knowledge which is too utopian and has exaggerated values must be given up and history must be accepted in its own reality. This premise is very crucial in establishing the history consciousness and national culture (Kicir and Aksoy, 2004).

History Consciousness and History Teaching
As occurred in various states, history teaching is given with social aims in Turkey. One of the mentioned social aims is to give the subjects the past’s values which are necessary for them to understand the time period they live in (Aslan, 2000, p.203). Dilek (2001, p.32) points out that
history teaching is used on the basis of three main aims which are; to provide the personal developments of students; to provide the socialization of them by explaining cultural heritage to them; and to give citizenship education to them. One of the aims of the history teaching must be to develop historical thinking skills in students. However, the main aim of this teaching is seen as to give the citizenship awareness to people in Turkey. The approach which expects from students to memorize historical events can be given up and the history teaching that will provide students to act with a history consciousness can be adopted.

To have a history consciousness refers to be aware of the historical construction. History consciousness enables people to get whole knowledge of humanity. The concept which constitutes the basis of the history consciousness is the time concept. The construction which is comprised of the interpretation of the past, the perception of the today, and the expectation of the future form the history consciousness. In this construction; knowledge, historical theories, social science theories, and values and ideologies are established. A close tie between history consciousness and the identity, which is aimed at being established, comes into being. In this manner, the suitable environment for the completing of socialization process of the subject comes into existence (Dilthey, 1999).

The participants generally answered the question, 'Does history teaching form a history consciousness?' in the following way:

‘Teachers do not move out from what is true for them’; ‘Teachers do not allow the creation of discussion environments’; ‘Teachers ignore the negative sides of our history’; ‘Some historical events are given differently from the reality’; ‘The number of the subject matters that will enable students to form a history consciousness is very low and wars are generally told to students in history lessons’; ‘The subject matters are full of connotations to the Grand Turkish nation but there is no explanation about why our country is not a developed country’; ‘Emotionality is a dominant figure in history teaching and historical events are learned without giving connections between these events’; ‘History lessons are full of details and this prevents thinking’; ‘The history of humanity is not considered in the history lessons’; and ‘The insistence on some wrong statements is still a big problematic issue’. When these answers are evaluated, it can be stated that the history teachers in Turkey have too much ‘us’ concerns which are resulting from emotional reactions rather than logical ones. Obviously these teachers who are suffering from the lack of self-confidence, which is resulting from not taking place in developed countries club, are trying to compensate this feeling by making huge references to the ‘grand’ past.

The Role of Textbooks in the Formation of the Cultural Identity
One of the problematic features of the history textbooks is that they lack a historical perspective. The reason of this is that historical knowledge is presented as the knowledge that must be memorized. However, the price of the making of the past a taboo is very high and it takes a long time to get even with the past. This has both a personal dimension and a collective dimension. At this point, we can state the thoughts of Guvenc (1997);

If there is the society which still searches for its identity and is still suffering from an identity crisis in spite of the presence of various information about wars, the Sultanate, acquired lands or the relations with other states, this situation could be explained only by means of the fact that the cultural history has not been read, understood and inserted deeply and this is very unfortunate.

The participants generally answered the question, which is, ‘What is the effect of textbooks in the formation of the cultural identity?’ in the following manner.
‘Us’ and ‘other’ concepts are seen as meaningless in the formation of the cultural identity in objective history textbooks while they are seen as meaningful in political history textbooks; ‘It is perceived by people that it is the mission of the history to give values to young people’.

‘The history told in textbooks is not loved but the books which have a historical content become best-sellers’; ‘These best-seller books are the ones that are written by the authors who are not historians. The reason for this is that history books do not have a literary language’; ‘There are historical perceptions that are full of ideological connotations in textbooks’.

The problems related to the textbooks which are determined by these students are also present in textbooks of Greece. According to Fangoudaki (1998: 96), the history textbooks in Greece had included numerous distortions, mispresentations and harsh political propagandas until 1974. All these acts were justified with following principles:

- The unity constitutes the social base of the nation.
- It is a compulsory act to be responsive to the ‘other’ who threatens our cultural characteristics and the right to determine our future. Additionally, we must resist to the other in order to protect our cultural characteristics and the right to determine our future.

Such tendencies have also been experienced by Turkey and the history writing has begun to be evaluated as a source for giving ideological orientations. The incomplete information and theoretical contradictions in history textbooks have prevented the formation of the history consciousness that involve a strong and creative construction. In short, political events are primary figures in textbooks and socio-cultural events have of secondary or lower importance.

The National Self and National Other in History
One of the primary problems in teaching is the ‘self and us centralism’. Another problem is that contemporary events cannot be compared with past events and all the past and contemporary events cannot be filtered in a critical manner. The reason of this is that the development of questioning and creative skills is not being allowed.

The history has become a means that determines peoples’ expectations about their social identities and their futures with the birth of modernity concept (Tekeli, 1998a, p.117). There is dilemma between traditional and modern in the foundation of the modernity. This dilemma is the first element that is emphasized in terms of the transformation process which Turkish society experiences.

The position that the West set up against the East is a product of the birth of otherness concept in history. The main basis of the Orientalism is the presentation of Europeanization as an identity project and the consolidation of this project (Yavuz, 1999, p.34). Europe needed an ‘other’ in order to establish its own identity. This other is the East. Ironically, this differentiation, which was experienced by the West during the nationalization process, affected strongly Turkey’s creating of an ‘other’ in its national identity formation process. This tendency of Turkey has paved the way for both a process of making the West the other and a process of enmity towards the West.

The participants’ answers to the questions including ‘Who is self, and who is the other?’, ‘Does the emphasis on these terms in history lessons create a contradiction?’, ‘Does any situation that requires the emphasis on these terms exist?’ are classified in following way.

Most of the history students questioned the difference between us and other in group-focused interviews. The statements that the students gave are in the following manner.

‘Us and other continuously may substitute each other and change in historical periods. We see such kind of changes in Turkey when we examine pre-republic period, post-republic period and new world order. Today who constitutes the ‘us’? And who is the other?’
The most prominent conflict points are ethnical origins and religious sects; ‘It is a compulsory act to be objective in us and other formation’; ‘The differentiation between Shiite and Sunni is sharper than that between Muslim and Christian’; ‘Us does not love the other’; ‘The negative side of the us concept is its being emotional and also being far away from objectivity’; ‘The friends and enemies are created’; ‘These seem that there is some sort of society engineering act’; ‘The concept of us is changeable and it differs according to time, place, social structure-environment, or events’; ‘The us and the other is formed on the basis of one’s own ideology’; ‘The Dardanelles War has a strength to transform a group of people into a society’. There must not be an us and other concept in history because if it exists, history would not be a realistic history. If such a concept exists, an ideological history is formed and it becomes very difficult to find the reality in this type of history.’

Some students who believe in the necessity of an us and other differentiation in order to protect national unity mentioned their opinions in the following manner.

‘There must be an us and other differentiation’; ‘The state is forming an us and other perception in a conscious manner’; ‘When the war of independence is occurring, it is necessary to know who is the friend and who is the enemy’; ‘What happiness for the one who says s/he is a Turk’; ‘The others are the ones who attack the homeland’; ‘When history is taken into consideration, I support my own side, my ideology, identity, cultural identity/ beliefs, etc.’

The answers of the two students whose feelings about us and other differentiation were the strongest were like this; ‘Am I from others?’; ‘I feel myself from others.’

As Tekeli (1998b) stated: ‘It is a social process to create an ‘other’ against ‘us’. The concept of other, which is created on the basis of a superiority claim or is created in order to claim superiority, is considered as long as it could be used to control others and to exploit others. Lots of negative social acts and realities which were done on the basis of the concept of other could be stated. These negative acts can be exemplified as racism, genocide, ethnocentrism, monoculturalism, the hatred towards foreigners, etc. It is very difficult to imagine a society in which there is no ‘other’. The ethnocentric history teaching and publications, through which the perception of the difference between the chosen people and poor people is established, brings about conflicts and struggles.”

According to another point of view, it is impossible to talk about identity and social groups in a society in which there is no other. The existence of an ‘other’ not only causes conflicts; but it also brings about competition, which is the basis of creativity, and even a positive cooperation. It is very nonsense to search for a society in which there is no other. The meaningful search is to search for how the understandings of the other, which are not exclusive and are peaceful, could be established. The key concept here is that the ‘we’, who create ‘the other’, must not have any claim of superiority. There will be no problem when ‘us’ and ‘other’ are constructed in a way that diversity does not constitute a reason for the claim for superiority. Accordingly, these concepts must be refined with regard to internal and external critics and they must turn into a source of diversity rather than of conflicts.

At this point, we can state Yediyildiz’s (Ata, 2002, p.52) comment: ‘In order to get an awareness of European Union citizenship, we firstly have to get an awareness of Turkish citizenship. The person who does not have an awareness of Turkish Republic citizenship could not have an awareness of European citizenship’.

Students demand rational statements and to get them is their rights. The establishing of an ‘other’ is an obstacle in front of the knowledge acquisition and it is very harmful for intellectual development.
The students answered the questions, which are: ‘Do history teachers use us and other concepts in a conscious manner?’, ‘Is it necessary to make an emphasis on ‘Us’ and ‘Other’?’ in the following ways.

Some of the history students explained the real incentives behind the formation of an ‘us’ and ‘other’ differentiation but they do not make any comments about whether there must be an emphasis on these concepts or not.

‘The tendencies like not to accept today’s realities and to make strong references to the heydays of the past bring about an ‘us’ and ‘other’ differentiation an ‘us’ and ‘other’ differentiation’; ‘The state policy is directing the masses to make such a differentiation and the masses do so’; ‘New regime and the old regime strengthen and sharpen this differentiation’; ‘It is inevitable to make such a differentiation because friends and enemies are determined through this way in the continuous historical context.’

Some of the students agreed on the fact that objective history does not create these concepts. Accordingly, they mentioned that such a differentiation between these is nonsense: ‘It is not necessary to make a differentiation between us and other. I am against such kind of a differentiation. It could be very difficult to reflect an objective point of view; but we must to protect this kind of point of view’; ‘The subject matters that are given in history lessons are definitely subject matters of the ‘us’. The most objective ways of presenting historical facts must be chosen.’

Some students made very speculative explanations about us and other differentiation: ‘To create an enemy properly is the main basis of nationalism. The enemy is the other’; ‘We never do wrong things’; ‘Greeks are enemies’; ‘Everyone makes wrong things to us.’

In conclusion, to introduce and present us and other concepts as mythical oppositions to high school and even to university students cause these students feel negative things about history science, history lessons, teachers and the school. Furthermore, the students believe that the history knowledge, which is very crucial in understanding the past and today, must be used in history teaching-learning processes.

V. Conclusion and Suggestions

- In order to form the history consciousness, a modern approach must be adopted. However this approach is not to be one approach which is taken from Europe or from anywhere and is adopted into Turkey’s own conditions. The mentioned modern approach must be consistent with the personal characteristics and cultural traits of Turkey and it must also include whole world history.

- The explanations, attitudes and behaviors of the teachers and administrators who do not have academic thinking and behaving skills affect history teaching negatively. The acts of such kind of people cause the consolidation of the type of historical understanding that supports the continuity of the society’s static structure. Especially history teaching programs must include contemporary world realities and must have potential to solve history teaching problems.

- Historical events, facts and concepts must be given as objectively as possible in textbooks.

- A new understanding and model in history teaching must be adopted and the dominance of the ethnocentric model must be come into an end.

- History teachers must provide opportunities to their students to investigate and examine the past and to form views about today and the future.
• There are some mistakes and inefficiencies in the field of the formation of the history consciousness due to the above-mentioned problems. For this reason, some problems in the area of the formation of the cultural identity are also being experienced. History teaching plays a very influential role in making acquisition of history consciousness and cultural identity. A proper history teaching must exist in order to be able to achieve this.

• In history teaching, it is very difficult to make people aware of the main epistemological points and to teach people to read several and diverse resources. Here, the cognitive skills of the students must be developed and an understanding skill which is based on cognitive awareness must be given.

• Some serious measures which will make the teachers to direct themselves towards other resources other than the textbooks must be taken because inefficiencies of the teachers in the fields of academic backgrounds or teaching styles cannot be cured through only textbooks or similar other methods.

• In addition to the opinions of the teachers, the history lessons' education-teaching programs, which will provide the application of these opinions, are also very important. The education-teaching program has been formed in order to give students an awareness of citizenship.

• The history classes must include the techniques that stimulate and motivate the students to think and interpret; that stimulate discussion environments; that put the students at the centre; that involve visual means; that emphasize the social history and interpretative thinking; that support the use of different sources; and that put emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches.

• History textbooks are full of dogmatic and ‘definite’ statements and the approach of using them must be given up. Instead of this approach, the new ones that support the relative and critical thinking ways.

• Turkey, which is on the road of entering the European Union, must resolve the dilemma that it experiences between the West and the East; it must filter cultural essences; it must reconsider its own past properly; and it must shape its future policies and plans.

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