Students Discuss People:

Usage of Biographical Content in History Lessons

Thesis for the degree of

"Doctor of Philosophy"

By

Michal Honig

Submitted to the senate of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

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This work was carried out under the supervision of

Dr. Dan Porat

Abstract

This study examines the educational significance of incorporating biographical content in history teaching. It explores various ways in which history teachers referred to well-known historical figures and ordinary people in history lessons, and how their students responded to deliberate integration of biographical texts in these lessons. The objective was to examine the outcomes of including such content in history teaching, both in developing disciplinary skills and in creating a basis for student engagement in history lessons.

This qualitative study was conducted in eleven high-school classes in five state schools in Israel. Data were collected from history lesson observations, interviews with teachers, and focus groups in which students were exposed to biographical contents. The data were documented both digitally and in field diaries. Data analysis was conducted in four stages. 1. Initial reading of the transcriptions of the lessons to identify relevant discourse units. 2. Constructing an initial coding scheme based on the themes emerging from the transcriptions. 3. Examining the coding scheme by additional readers and revising it following their comments. 4. Analyzing the transcriptions by several readers to construct common interpretative lines.

The study comprises three articles, each of which uses a different prism and theoretical framework. The first article explores how teachers use different methods of talking about famous and ordinary people in history lessons. It examines the connection between the ways people are discussed and the aim of developing multiperspectivity in students. The second article examines different approaches to teaching difficult events as reflected in how teachers referred to famous Israeli historical figures: David Ben Gurion and Menachem Begin. Finally, the third article explores students' responses to biographical texts about Theodor Herzl read in history lessons and examines the disciplinary skills displayed.

The key findings were as follows. First, the teachers observed made scant references to famous historical figures and to ordinary people in history lessons. They frequently referred to people using generic people, general categories, and personification of historical objects such as "nation" or "government". Second, when key historical figures were placed at the center of lessons dealing with the difficult past, the ensuing class discussion focused on the controversial aspects of the historical affair. When the historical figures were sidelined, the controversial aspects of the

affair were blurred. A selective approach mitigated the controversial aspects of the affair and emphasized national cohesion. Finally, many students opposed the use of biographical content in studying history. Their opposition indicated the application of one vital disciplinary skill – inferential sourcing – at the expense another – corroboration.

The study's makes three key contributions. First, the use of biographical content in high-school history lessons may promote the goals of history education in developing disciplinary skills: highlighting multiperspectivity as a feature of the discipline, identifying source features, and critical reading of sources. It may also help develop students' engagement: emphasizing multiperspectivity as a civic approach, identifying the relationship between the acts of individuals and broader historical processes, and distinguishing between an individual's viewpoint and generalized, simplified or racist approaches. Second, the development of disciplinary skills or fostering of learners' engagement in learning cannot be achieved by "name dropping". The potential benefit of incorporating biographical content can only be achieved through in-depth study of biographical content, and judicious choice of the type of content and the way of teaching it, in accordance with the teacher's educational goals. Finally, teachers who are aware of their position at the juncture between disciplinary history and life practices will make optimal use of biographical content, potentially serving as a helpful mediator between history as an academic discipline and a public interest, thereby also enhancing students' engagement in history studies.

A letter of contribution

I, Michal Honig, whose signature appears below, hereby declare that:

1. I have written this Thesis by myself, except for the help and guidance offered by my Thesis Advisors.
2. The scientific materials included in this Thesis are products of my own research, culled from the period during which I was a research student.

Date: 24.6.2019

Name of the student: Michal Honig

Signature:

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

1 Introduction

Servants talk about People: Gentlefolk discuss Things. (Young, 1953/1936, n.p.)

This quote from G. M. Young's *Victorian England – Portrait of an Age* was the starting point for my study. The significance of this maxim extends far beyond its literal meaning. At the simple level, it represents the assumption that social classes are distinguishable by their conversation subjects: lower-class servants talk about people, whereas upper-class gentlefolk discuss things. However, the Victorian adage further implies that talking about people is *less* significant than discussion things. In the current study, I wish to explore this premise from the vantage point of history education by asking the following questions:

1. How do teachers talk about people in high school history lessons?
2. What are the various approaches to people's role in history, as reflected in the daily practice of teachers and students in history lessons?
3. What is the educational significance of the way teachers talk about people in history lessons, in the context of promoting disciplinary skills[1] and fostering involvement among the students?

These questions are explored below by reviewing the relevant literature, and the findings of a field study based on observations, interviews, and focus groups.

1.1 The Research Problem

This study is based on my personal experience as a history teacher. For almost twenty years, I have come across intelligent and curious teenagers and seen how the sparkle in the eyes of many dies when they hear the word "history". This study is an attempt to understand this phenomenon more deeply and to suggest a method of developing students' personal and intellectual involvement in the study of history

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[1] The roots of the phrase "disciplinary skills" in history education lie in the well-developed concept of "historical thinking" (e.g. Lévesque & Clark, 2018; Wineburg, 2001). Not all researchers agree about the content of this phrase (e.g. den Heyer, 2018, p. 246), and not all consider developing disciplinary skills in students as a central goal in history education. For example, researchers from the "democratic citizenship education" approach (Lévesque & Clark, 2018) claimed that the importance of history studies lay only as part of a broader set of social studies, while it served as a cultural tool contributing to civic life (e.g. Barton & Levstik, 2004; Thornton & Barton 2010). In this work, I followed the "historical thinking literacy" approach that emphasizes developing specific disciplinary skills in order to achieve both civic and intellectual goals (e.g. Lévesque & Clark, 2018; Monte-Sano, De La Paz & Felton, 2014; Nokes, 2013; Reisman, 2012; Wineburg, 2018).

In "Crazy for History", Sam Wineburg (2018) describes the concern seen in the American media with the results of periodic tests which constantly show students' ignorance about American history. The Israeli media reflect a similar public concern (Druker & Rosental, 2012). Studies show that the students' ignorance is not only expressed in lack of factual knowledge, but also in their lack of disciplinary skills. Many students find it hard to use basic skills related to history learning such as textual analysis, distinguishing between different perspectives, and comparison and critical evaluation of sources (Nokes, 2013; Paxton, 2002; Wineburg, 1991, 2018).

The public concern with students' historical ignorance may be explained by the value attached to studying history in the modern nation state. Studying history is considered a tool for promoting socio-cultural cohesion among state citizens (Ahonen, 2018; Bekerman & Zembylas, 2016; Kizel, 2015; Porat, 2001; Wassermann, 2018). The public value of studying history from a nationalist point of view may be supplanted by a civic point of view arguing that studying history can develop the students' civic engagement, not in the narrow nationalist context, but in the wider context of social responsibility and the "common good" (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Seixas, 2012; Thornton & Barton 2010; Wineburg, 2018).

An additional value of studying history is seen in history education research. Many researchers who study how history is taught in schools show how teachers can cultivate disciplinary skills and even general literacy (e.g. Britt & Aglinskas, 2002; De La Paz et al, 2016; Nokes, 2013; Reisman, 2012; Wineburg, 2001). Some scholars also claim that these skills are vital for the development of civic engagement and a critical approach to events in the public sphere (e.g. Barton & Levstik, 2004; Seixas, 2012; Wineburg, 2001, 2018).

Thus, one of the problems faced by history education researchers is the gap between the historical perception of policymakers in many of the democratic states, who attach political and disciplinary value to the subject, and the fact that many students are insufficiently familiar with the content and lack the skills of the history discipline. In recent decades, the academic world has invested resources in preparing and developing a research-based curriculum aimed at creating a basis for teaching and studying history. This curriculum is designed to foster the development of disciplinary skills among students and draw them toward civic engagement (e.g. Britt & Aglinskas, 2002; College, Career, and Civic Life Framework Social Studies State

Standards, 2013; De La Paz & Felton, 2010; De La Paz et al, 2016; Nokes, 2013; Reisman, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2014; Wineburg, 1991; 2018).

The current study contributes to this effort by examining various aspects of the presence or absence of biographical content in history lessons, different methods of talking about people in history lessons, and how these methods facilitate the development of disciplinary skills and reinforce civic involvement. I investigate this subject through the prism of biographical content to show how its use in history education straddles the juncture between disciplinary history and life practice.

1.2 History Education: At the Juncture of Disciplinary History and Life Practice

History education in state schools embodies an inherent tension. On the one hand, history teachers work according to the rules of the history discipline as an academic field. Having studied history at a university or college, teachers are supposed to be familiar with the historian's methodology and evaluation of sources and of the critical aspect of academic research methods. They are also required to keep abreast of the latest historical research findings. On the other hand, educational policymakers in many states require history teachers in state schools to reinforce societal perceptions that policymakers deem to be important and to shape a collective memory that reflects society's values in the nation state (Ahonen, 2018; Bekerman & Zembylas, 2016; Clark, 2009; Kizel, 2015; Yogev, 2013). In practice, teachers are expected to emphasize the nationalist or civic significance of the historical events and concurrently, to direct their students toward applying critical disciplinary skills concerning the very same events.

A practical expression of this tension may be seen in history curricula when academic-analytic goals are discussed. Curricula tend to stress the goal of congruence between the latest academic historical content and the research methodology used in history research, and the history content and methods studied in history lessons. Thus, the *History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools* (California Department of Education, 2000) requires that "Students construct and test hypotheses; collect, evaluate, and employ information from multiple primary and secondary sources; and apply it in oral and written presentations" (p. 40). Similarly, the Israeli Ministry of Education (2014) states that, among other goals, history education in Israel is aimed at "promoting the student's ability to handle an

independent research task: to make decisions about choosing a topic, ask and examine questions, search for an answer, collect data from different sources, organize and present the information in a clear, understandable manner and understanding that historical research is influenced by the historian's viewpoint" (p. 3).

Concurrently, history teachers are required to foster nationalist and civic values and sentiments. The California Department of Education (2000) states that:

> These standards emphasize historical narrative, highlight the roles of significant individuals throughout history and convey the rights and obligations of citizenship. In that spirit, the standards proceed chronologically and call attention to the story of America as a noble experiment in a constitutional republic. They recognize that America's ongoing struggle to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution is the struggle to maintain our beautifully complex national heritage... (p. v).

The California policymakers instruct the teachers to endow their students with a broad civic perception, along with the values that the policymakers identify with the distinct U.S. heritage, reflecting a clear nationalist approach. This pattern is also seen in the declared goals of the Israeli Ministry of Education (2014):

> Familiarity with the cultural heritage of the Jewish people, an ability to conduct a dialogue with the heritage and values of Israeli society in the past and present […] with the goal of forming an identity based on Jewish and Zionist values, fostering a sense of belonging to the State of Israel, the Jewish people and the cultural heritage of the Jewish people […] understanding the dangers facing the individual, society and the state due to violent behavior and intolerance […]. Understanding the importance of evaluating people according to their deeds and not on the basis of their group affiliation (race, ethnicity, sex, nationality, religion or standing), recognizing that there are different viewpoints and approaches to every topic, event or process. (pp. 4-5)

In this case as well, policymakers direct teachers to convey nationalist perceptions as well as broader civic values through the content of history lessons.

The relationship between the academic and public aspects of history education may thus be viewed as an internal conflict between the goal of creating a collective narrative or inculcating of values deemed important to policymakers, and the academic goal of critical dialogue surrounding that same collective narrative (Naveh and Yogev, 2002). This may also be observed by considering history education as part

of ongoing system of relationships between the public sphere and the academic world. Peter Seixas' (2018) History/Memory Matrix for History Education model illustrates this as a circular and ongoing cause-and-effect relationship between "life practice" and "disciplinary history" (p. 74). Seixas argues that the starting point of the relationship between the academic history and public spheres is peoples' wish to know about their past. To meet this need, professionals are active in the disciplinary history field to provide answers to questions of historical interest. The historiography created by historians returns to the public in different ways and lays the foundations for the development of collective memories. Additional questions continue to arise, which often undermine the previous narrative, and which must be answered by professional historians. The historians' output influences a renewed or revised way of defining the collective memory, which in turn leads to new questions. Seixas suggests that history teachers may find themselves at the juncture between the two halves of the circle: disciplinary history and life practice, as demonstrated in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1: History education at the juncture of disciplinary history and life practice. Based on Seixas, 2018.
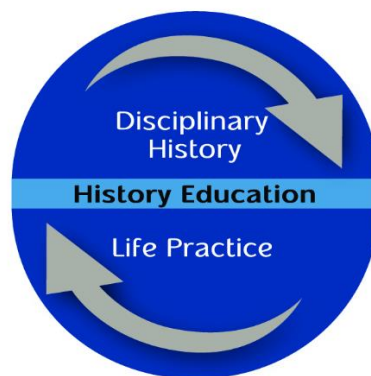
At this juncture, teachers are required to act as mediators between the goal of making public (nationalist or civic) use of history and remaining faithful to the disciplinary approach based on a critical view of sources and past events. Viewing history teachers as mediators between two worlds and not as being in a constant internal conflict does not eliminate the challenge but makes it workable.

1.3 The Biography: At the Juncture of Disciplinary History and Life Practice

Studying biographical content as part of history learning is not self-evident: it is a controversial issue, with attitudes toward it changing in keeping with current trends. Although this study is not concerned with the history of the biography, I will present a short overview of the main changes in attitudes to the biographical genre as a background to examining biographical content in history teaching.

Since the dawn of history, historians have written about people's lives. The term "biography", however, only became a distinct English language unit in the 1600s. Caine (2010) claims that allocating a distinct term to the familiar genre of writing about peoples' lives is proof of a fundamental change in approach to studying people in history. She ascribes the positioning of the biography as a distinct writing genre to contemporary humanist attitudes that placed the individual at the center.

In the 19th century, several humanist historians and intellectuals argued that biography had a significant place in history research and study. For example, British historian and philosopher Thomas Carlyle (1843/1907) argued that "History is the essence of innumerable biographies" (p. 56). In a similar vein, American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson (1841/1940) claimed that: "'There is properly no history; only biography…The roots of all things are in men" (pp. 123-125).

Toward the end of the 19th century and during the first half of the 20th, historians began developing a different conception of the biographical genre, with many considering it inferior and not worthy of the attention of "gentlefolk" historians, to resonate our opening quote. The roots of this negative attitude may be found in the profound influence of the "father of modern historiography", Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886). Ranke was one of the contributors to the establishment of history as an objective and universal source-based science, which studies human groups rather than individuals.

Keeping this approach in mind may explain the criticism levelled by 20th-century British historian Edward H. Carr (1964): "Carlyle was responsible for the unfortunate assertion that 'history is the biography of great men'" (p. 42). Responding to the question whether the behavior of individuals or the actions of social forces are the subject of history research, Carr argued that believing actual people created historical moves was folklore or childish and was incompatible with the historian's goal of trying to understand the past of large and complex societies. Carr believed that

these societies were mainly motivated by wide and profound historical processes, even if highly influential people were active in these processes.

Another British historian, John Emerich Acton (1863), similarly claimed that "Nothing causes more error and unfairness in men's view on history than the interest which is inspired by individual characters" (p. 219). Many other historians shared this view in the first half of the 20th century, and this was the prominent belief of the Annales school (e.g., Braudel, 1949/1996).

However, not all the historians of that period denigrated biographical content. German historian and philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey, for one, believed that examining the history of people led the researcher to the very essence of any historical event: the human being. He argued that historians had to refer to biographical content within their wider historical context and that examining an individual life story against the backdrop of great historical processes allowed for a fuller and better understanding of the past (Dilthey, 1961). British historian and philosopher, Isaiah Berlin held similar views, which he presented in "Historical Inevitability" (Berlin, 1954), where he emphasized man's influence on the historical event and disagreed with attributing historical processes to "vast impersonal forces" (p. 42).

With the postwar narrative turn (Stone, 1979) many historians began applying Dilthey and Berlin's approach by including the life stories of historical figures in their works (e.g. Darnton, 1984; Ginzburg, 1980; Ladurie, 1979; Zemon-Davis, 1987). One of the foremost examples of this growing trend may be seen in the works of British historian Ian Kershaw. In his introduction to his biography of Hitler, he wrote apologetically: "I had never thought, until a few years ago, that I would write a biography… biography had never figured in my intellectual plans as something I might want to write. If anything, I was somewhat critically disposed towards the genre…." (Kershaw, 1998, p. 4). Despite this apology, and despite Kershaw's constructivist attitude in most of his work, he considered it valuable to write a biography in order to understand the historical phenomenon of Nazism. Kershaw is not alone. Alongside expressions of concern and doubts about the value of the biography as part of history research (Barman, 2010; Nasaw, 2009), many historians have recently written biographies (e.g. Gauvreau, 2017; Wright, 2015). Indeed, "the biographical turn" (Hamilton, 2018; Meister, 2017; Renders, de Haan, & Harmsma, 2017a, b) is characterized by efforts to strike a balance between the historical agent and the context in which he acted (Loriga, 2017).

The reading public shows great interest in biographical content and many biographies become instant bestsellers (Caine, 2010; Lee, 2009). Vansover (2016) suggests that the interest in people's life may be because they enable readers to discover the human aspects of the historical figures, including mythical or esteemed heroes, and to learn about their strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, as opposed to historical research literature, biographies can easily be read by laypersons and they enable readers to draw closer to historical events through the familiar, human aspect.

The changes in how biographies have been perceived within the context of historical research over the years and their popularity in the public sphere place biographical content at the juncture between disciplinary history and life practice and as a mediating element between the two. This can be seen in Fig. 2.

Fig. 2 The biography at the juncture of disciplinary history and life practice
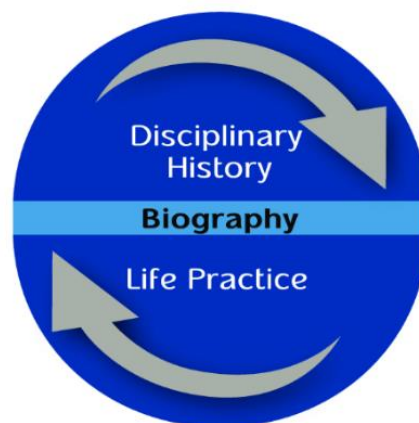
We can also apply Seixas' suggestion that history education bridges the gap between life practice and academic history research to biographical content. Although many historians have reservations about the biographical genre, the connection between this genre and the world of history research is clear. Biographical content may also be a tool for transmitting academic content to the public sphere. Many people become interested in historical content through the human story, without having to plough through academic writing. Public interest in biographies has also influenced the writing style of historians, who write historically based biographies, making history more accessible (Lee, 2009).

Biographical content has a special status at the juncture between the world of academic history research and the public sphere where history teachers are positioned.

In this study, I will examine whether, if at all, biographical content can help history teachers promote disciplinary skills, as well as reinforce student engagement.

1.4 The Status of Historical Figures in History Education

Policymakers of history education in many countries aim to incorporate biographical content in history studies, at least at the declarative level. For example, in the California Board of Education (2000) declared that "The use of biographies, original documents, diaries, letters, legends, speeches, and other narrative artifacts from our past is encouraged to foster students' understanding of historical events by revealing the ideas, values, fears, and dreams of the people associated with them" (p. vi).

The Israeli Ministry of Education (2014) similarly declared that one of the aims of history studies was "To become familiar with the most important people in the history of the Jewish people and of the world, to understand the reciprocal relationship between the people and their environment and their unique contribution […] to understand the premise that the present reality is influenced by past processes created by people." Similar examples may be found in policy documents from other countries (e.g. The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 10. 2013, p. 9; National Curriculum in England: History Programs of Study, 2013; Kansas Standards for History Government and Social Studies, 2013, pp. 10-12).

However, a detailed examination of high-school history curricula reveals that despite the policymakers' declarations about the importance of studying people in history lessons, historical figures occupy a very limited place in the actual curriculum modules (Barton, 2012). Although changes have been made in history curricula in the past decades, and although the individual now has a greater role in history studies (Barton & Levstik, 2004), the majority of learning modules are still geared toward studying collectives (such as "the British", or "the proletariat"); abstract entities ("the Church" or "the Soviet Union"); socioeconomic constructs ("feudalism", "the free market"); and cultural beliefs ("heresy", "anti-Semitism"). History teachers are explicitly instructed to focus on actual historical figures only in a small number of topics.

The limited place of historical figures in the history curriculum of many countries is even more pronounced when considering the term "historical agency", which is frequently emphasized in history education literature (e.g. Barton, 2012; den

Heyer, 2018; Peck et. al., 2011; Seixas, 2012). Hewson (2010) claims that there are three main types of agency: individual; proxy, referring to individuals acting on others' behalf; and collective agency, in which individuals collaborate in order to create an active entity. The common denominator between these three types is the emphasis on people's actions.

In the field of the history education, the term "historical agency" includes all three types of agency and is central. Barton (2012) argues that there is a civic and democratic value in exposing students to the actions of famous as well as anonymous actors from the past in order to enable them to understand that people create historical events. Barton asserts that many teachers tend to talk about abstract entities, rather than individual or collective agents. He emphasizes the moral danger of attributing human actions to amorphous entities, and the moral value of understanding the connection between decisions and actions of individuals and groups, and historical processes.

Not all researchers emphasize the added value of referring to the historical agent, however. For example, den Heyer (2018) argues that learning history through the individual point of view might be an excellent tool for teaching history, as long as one aware of the fact that it is one point of view, and recognizes the interests involved in selecting that particular perspective on historical reality. Without awareness of the meaning of the individual agent narrative, students might adopt the historical hero point of view on history, without any critical approach to the content of the story, or to the interest of those who have seen fit to incorporate it in history lessons (den Heyer, 2018).

From another point of view, Seixas (2012) points to both the importance and the complexity of discussing agency in history education; he argues that one of the tasks of history teachers is to instill in students "healthy concept of historical agency" (p. 549), as opposed to the dichotomy between "agency" and "structure". According to Seixas, the role of history education is to discuss the question of historical agency and develop students' awareness of their ability to influence the reality in which they live and to understand the limitations of this ability (Seixas, 2012).

Only a few academic studies examined the place and meaning of historical agency in history lessons empirically. Most of these studies were conducted in elementary and junior-high schools and pointed at the risks and opportunities involved in incorporating biographical content in history teaching. On the one hand,

many students were more engaged when historical figures were incorporated in the lessons; they did not take a deterministic view of historical events and they understood the connection between human actions and historical processes (Brugar, 2013; Fertig, 2008). On the other hand, some students displayed a simplistic understanding of historical events and made direct and unequivocal connections between the historical figure's action and the historical process (Fertig, 2008). The participants' young age may have influenced how they related to the biographical content, and Fertig's findings are similar to those of other studies that note that elementary school students have difficulty understanding wider social aspects of events and tend to explain historical events from the individual's point of view (Barton, 1997; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Brophy & VanSledright, 1997).

The current study examines high school students' responses to the presence and absence of historical figures in history lessons as well as the educational significance of different ways of studying historical figures in high school history lessons. The limited place of people in history curriculum usually means overemphasis of famous figures. Given that this study based primarily on the existing reality in the classroom, two of the three articles it comprises ("The British, the Tank and that Czech: How Teachers Talk about People in History Lessons" and "Reading Biographical Texts: A Gateway to Historical-Disciplinary Reading") focus on famous figures, while the third ("Fight, Flight or Light: Three Approaches to Teaching Difficult Past Events as Reflected in Historical Figures") documents both historical figures and ordinary people, according to the classroom findings.

1.5   Methodological Overview

The current study comprises three papers that approach the issue from different angles. The following is not meant to replace the methodology chapters in each article, but to highlight the fact that despite the different data collection and analysis methods used in them, there is a broad denominator common to the entire study. All three articles are based on the ethnographic tradition (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Schwandt, 2007; Till, 2009). This tradition is based on the following principles: 1. Emphasis on the study of the nature of social phenomena; 2. Working with unprocessed data; 3. Narrowing the gaze to a number of research cases 4. Using an interpretive analysis of the data; and 5. Presenting the products of the analysis through verbal descriptions and explanations. Through these, ethnography is aimed at

understanding human behavior within its cultural context (Sabar Ben-Yehoshua, 2006).

Following Geertz (1973), the aim of this research is to interpret what teachers and students did and said in history lessons, and search for its meaning using descriptive tools without any attempt to reach any universal generalization. My decision to use the ethnographic approach and qualitative-interpretive methods that focus on interpreting the participants' words and actions in their natural environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) was designed mainly to match the research subject with the research method. Given that the study aims to recognize and analyze different ways in which teachers talk about people in history lessons and analyze students' reactions to biographical content, I chose the qualitative-interpretive research method that focuses on the participants' words and attempts to find their meaning.

Setting and participants. All the data used in this study were collected from five Jewish-Israeli public high schools. The study was conducted in eleven classes. A total of eight teachers (some of them teachers of more than one class in the research) and 311 students took part in it. All the participating classes were studying toward the state matriculation exam in history and they were heterogenic classes, with no selection based on academic ability.

The decision to conduct the research in schools that share these features stemmed from the assumption that studying special education schools or schools for gifted students would prevent me from drawing conclusions applicable to most students.

Data collection. All the data in this study was collected using qualitative research tools (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Josselson, 2004; Wiggins & Riley, 2010). These included observations of history lessons, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews with students and teachers, and student focus groups. The two papers that examined how teachers spoke about people in history lessons were based primarily on an analysis of the observations (Evertson & Green, 1986). The paper that examined students' reactions to biographical content was based on observations and focus groups (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001; Finch, Lewis & Turley, 2014).

The decision to use these research tools stemmed from an attempt to conduct research as close as possible to the educational field. My basic assumption was that research in education would be more meaningful when based on information collected

in classrooms in routine learning situations. Therefore, the first and second article were mainly based on a thematic analysis of observation transcripts.

From an early stage, I found that most teachers rarely used biographical content in history lessons. Therefore, the study also included an intervention through focus groups instructed by research assistants (Article 3). The focus groups were conducted in order to expose students to biographical contents. Obviously, students' responses in the focus groups were affected by the groups' moderator, but I hope that the guidance given to the research assistants (see Appendix 4) minimized this affect.

All the lessons used in the study were recorded with audio equipment and documented in field diaries. The lessons in the first and third studies were also videotaped.

Data analysis. The data was analyzed using interpretative tools. The lesson recordings and focus group observations were fully transcribed and analyzed using coding schemes constructed separately for each paper. Triangulation between researchers (Golafshani, 2003) was used for data analysis in each.

Following my first reading of the transcripts, I identified the main themes that became the subjects of the three articles: 1. How teachers talk about people in history lessons; 2. How different approaches to teaching difficult past events are reflected in teachers' ways of talking about historical figures; and 3. How high school students respond to biographical texts and what are the implications of their responses for developing historical-disciplinary skills.

After sorting the materials according to the different themes, I reread the relevant transcripts for each theme and recognized categories and subcategories, which served as the basis for constructing the initial coding scheme for each article. At the next stage, research assistants were asked to read and analyze some of the transcripts using coding schemes, to test the validity of the initial schemes and the extent to which the categories they contained were compatible with the analysis. I met the research assistants to fine-tune the names of categories and sub-categories and to create the final coding schemes. After the coding schemes were finalized, the research assistants and I separately read all the transcriptions relevant to each paper and met again to share our interpretations and examine the patterns in the study material.

1.6   Articles Summary

The British, the tank and that Czech: How teachers talk about people in history lessons. This paper is focused on the different ways teachers talk about people in history lessons and the connection between the different ways of talking about people and the presence of multiperspectivity in class. The two main research questions were: (1) How do high-school teachers talk about people who lived in the past? And (2) How do these teachers engage in or shun from aspects of multiperspectivity as they talk about people in the past?

The paper is based on forty hours of observations of regular history lessons in five classes in three Jewish-Israeli schools. Analysis of the observation data shows that the teachers often avoided talking directly about actual people and referred to human actions using generic people, general categories and personification of historical objects. In light of these findings, I argue that using generalization and personification, as well as talking about actual people and generic people as representing historical phenomena, is likely to hamper students' ability to discern the various perspectives concerning the historical situation. Furthermore, using these forms of speech may reinforce one-dimensional, stereotypical or racist perceptions about the people involved in historical events, and promote nationalist goals and at the expense of the broader disciplinary and civic goals of history education. Conversely, in-depth study of historical events from the point of view of actual or imagined historical figures may lead the students to discern between different perspectives of past events and see how different people who lived in the past perceived historical reality in different ways. This approach to talking about people is likely to promote both the disciplinary and civic goals of history education.

Fight, flight or light: Three approches to teaching difficult past events as reflected in historical figures. In this paper, I examined different approaches that history teachers used when talking about historical figures who took part in difficult historical events. The two main research questions were: (1) How do teachers refer to historical figures when teaching difficult past events? And (2) Which approaches to teaching difficult past events are reflected in teachers' ways of talking about historical figures?

Three teachers in two Jewish-Israeli high schools were observed. In these schools, controversial contents were an integral part of the teaching practice. The paper focused on teaching the Altalena Affair (1948), considered a controversial issue in Israeli society. Terms from the automatic physiological responses to danger (fight

or flight) and another response (light) which was seen in the data were used to define different ways in which the observed teachers taught the affair and how they referred to historical figures involved. In light of the findings, I argue that intensive reference to historical figures reflects a head-on, direct approach to the controversy and as a by-product, promotes disciplinary skills as well as student engagement. In contrast, avoidance of direct reference to historical figures or a selective study of these figures is likely to prevent serious coping with the controversy, promote nationalist interests , and distance students from the civic or disciplinary aspects of difficult past events.

Reading biographical texts: A gateway to historical disciplinary reading. In this paper, I examined Jewish-Israeli high school students' responses to biographical content they were given in history classes. The two main research questions were: (1) How did high school students respond to different sub-genres of biography (literary-biographical text; autobiographical text; scientific-biographical text)? And (2) Can exposure to these sub-genres promote historical disciplinary reading in high school students?

Sixty-four students from two Jewish-Israeli public high schools participated in this study. They were given the biographical texts as part of focus groups that included eight to twelve students each. The students were given texts representing two out of the three sub-genres. Each text differed from the regular text schema the students had become accustomed to in their history lessons. I examined the students' responses for expressions of two main historical disciplinary skills: sourcing and corroboration (De La Paz et al., 2016; Nokes, 2013; Wineburg, 1991).

The findings showed that exposure to biographical texts, and especially literary-biographical and autobiographical texts that differed significantly from common school text schemas was likely to help students develop the inferential sourcing skill. On the other hand, no significant contribution to promoting the disciplinary skill of corroboration was seen.

I hope that the conclusions of the current study will help history teachers distinguish between the various options for talking about people in high school history lessons and become aware of the educational significance of how they refer to people during lessons. In this work, I have not fully utilized the potential of biographical content in history education. Nevertheless, I believe that teachers' awareness of the

significance of the issue is likely to help them plan and teach their lessons in a way that promotes disciplinary skills and student engagement.

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2   The British, the Tank and That Czech:

How Teachers Talk About People in History Lessons

Michal Honig and Dan Porat

The Hebrew University, Jerusalem

2.1 Abstract

In this article, we examined how high school teachers talked about historical figures and ordinary people in history lessons and how they engaged in or shunned aspects multiperspectivity as they talked about persons who lived in the past. Based on an analysis of forty hours of observations of five different classes in three Jewish high schools in Israel according to the constructive-interpretive method, we found that in most of the lessons observers, very few references were made to specific individuals. At the same time, many teachers talked about people in history by referring to generic people, to general categories of people, or by using personification.

Using examples, we discuss the educational significance of the different ways history teachers talk about people in history through the prism of multiperspectivity as an aim in history education. We conclude that discussing the connections between the practice of talking about people in history lessons and multiperspectivity during teacher education sessions may contribute to teachers' awareness of another way they can promote multiperspectivity in class.

Keywords: History teaching, History learning, People in history, Multiperspectivity

The good historian is like the giant of the fairy tale. He knows that wherever he catches the scent of human flesh, there his quarry lies.

Bloch, 1953/1992, p. 26

In his metaphor comparing the historian to a hunter of human flesh, Marc Bloch stresses that the human story should be the central focus of historical study. He even claims that a historian who does not operate as such a hunter is nothing but "a useful antiquarian" (p. 45). Bloch's stance is part of an all-encompassing debate between historians who claim that studying historical figures is key to historical research (Berlin, 1969; Collingwood, 1993; Dilthey, 1961) and those who argue that focusing on individuals impedes the ability to discern the broad historical canvas and the processes that shape it (Braudel, 1949/1996; Carr, 1964).[2]

This paper examines the presence and absence of discourse on persons who lived in the past in high-school history lessons. It addresses the following questions: (1) How do high-school teachers talk about people in the past? (2) How do these teachers engage in or shun from aspects of multiperspectivity as they talk about people in the past?

2.2   Literature Review
2.2.1   Historical Figures in Various Official Curricula

For many years, history lessons have been characterized by non-individual narratives. According to the non-individual approach, the historical agents are mainly collective groups ("the British" or "the Proletariat"), abstract entities ("the church" or "the Soviet Union"), social structures ("feudalism" or "the free market"), and cultural beliefs ("heresy" or "antisemitism"). Education policymakers and textbook authors have emphasized the broad historical picture and long-term historical processes at the expense of historical figures (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

Some researchers have criticized the application of the non-individual narrative approach in education. They believe that in order to help students find meaning in history, personal life narratives should be integrated into the curriculum (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Fertig, 2008; Freedman, 1994; Vansover, 2016).

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[2] One of the founders of the Annales school of thought, Bloch notably argued that it was preferable to deal with wide social events than with the actions of individuals. The quote above thus hints at the complexity of the present discussion.

Currently, the policy of history education in many countries, at least in the English-speaking countries, places great importance on studying people. For example, the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards (2013) states that one of the goals of history education is "[to] provide the intellectual context for studying how humans have interacted with each other and with the environment over time." (p. 29). The same principles can be found in the official curriculum of many states (e.g., History-Social Science Content Standard for California Public Schools, 2000; Kansas Standards for History Government and Social Studies, 2013). Accordingly, history textbooks and other teaching materials now include personal stories and documents that represent individual points of view of historical events (Barton & Levstik, 2004). This emphasis is evident also in the National Curriculum in England: History Programs of Study (2013), and the Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10 (2013).

Locally, one of the aims of the Israeli High-School History Curriculum (2014) is for students to understand that "the current reality is influenced by processes that occurred in the past and were designed by people", an approach that will help students develop "the ability to reconstruct the internal world, motives, values, belief systems, and way of life of people living in cultures and periods of time different from their own" (pp. 3-4).

2.2.2 Why people? Theoretical Perspective on People in History and History Education

The non-individual narrative approach has several strong justifications. The roots of this approach may be found in the profound influence of "the father of modern historiography", Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), who claimed that history as a discipline is based on studies of human groups rather than individuals (Ranke, 1981). Keeping this in mind may explain the criticism levelled by some of the 20th century historians towards individual narrative in history. For example, British historian Edward Hallett Carr argued that believing actual people created historical moves is folklore or childish and is incompatible with the historian's goal of trying to understand the past of large and complex societies. Carr (1964) believed that complex societies were mainly motivated by wide and profound historical processes, even if highly-influential people were active in these processes. Other historians shared the

view that studying the individual historical figure's point of view prevented a deeper and broader understanding of history (e.g., Braudel, 1949/1996).

The rationale for the non-individual approach in history education may be found in recent studies claiming that focusing on specific historical figures can lead to their glorification or villainification. The researchers argue that an excessively individualistic approach to history teaching may cause students to attribute historical events to "villains" or "messiahs", and avoid seeing the responsibility of ordinary people, like themselves, for achieving justice or for transforming sociopolitical situations (Brown & Brown, 2010; van Kessel & Crowley, 2017; Woodson, 2016).

On the other hand, there are some justifications for studying individuals in history lessons, one of which being to facilitate historical empathy. There are different ways to define historical empathy (e.g., Barton & Levstik, 2004; Brooks, 2011; Bryant & Clark, 2006; Davis, 2001; Goldberg, 2016; Lee & Shemilt, 2011; Yilmaz, 2007), but many scholars agree that it is an attitude that combines an emotional attitude with cognitive analysis and that the goal of the empathetic learner is to understand history from the perspective of those who lived in the past and their circumstances (Bennett, 2013; Brooks, 2011; Endacott, 2010; Endacott & Brooks, 2013; Harris & Foreman-Peck, 2004; Rantala, Manninen & van den Berg, 2016; Winter, 2016; Yilmaz, 2007). In order to accomplish this in history lessons, students should be exposed to historical figures and to the lives of ordinary people in the past (Endacott & Brooks, 2018).

Another reason for highlighting the individual in history instruction is to hone students' "healthy concept of historical agency" (Seixas, 2012, p. 549), rather than a simplistic dichotomy between historical agency and social structures. According to Seixas, there are two polar consequences for that dichotomy: the omnipotent illusion that humans can change any reality in which they live; and the equally misguided perception of human beings as victims of structures and circumstances. In this context, the role of history education is to discuss the question of historical agency and develop students' awareness of their ability to influence the reality in which they live and to understand the limitations of this ability (Seixas, 2012). In-depth discussion of people who lived in the past enables students to understand the role of historical agency. Studying history with an emphasis on individual actions and motives and applying the critical tools of the discipline to the reading of historical figures as human beings, can enable students to examine how these individuals

contributed to or exploited the basic human aspiration to achieve "the common good" (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Boyle-Baise & Zevin, 2014; Woodson, 2016).

From a more instrumental perspective, some researchers have argued that studying about people who lived in the past increases students' interest in the subject matter. Based on researchers in the field of literature (Oatley, 2002; 2004), Vansover argued that exposure to narratives that include references to past individuals enhances students' ability to relate to them as human beings with vulnerabilities and may generate interest and involvement (Vansover, 2016; see also Fertig, 2008).

2.2.3   The Role of Historical Figures in History Education

Empirical studies analyzed the impact of integrating individual narratives into history lessons, including biographies, fiction, storytelling in class, role-playing and acting out historical events (e.g., Barton & Levstik, 2004; Brugar, 2013; Fertig, 2008; Rantala, Manninen & van den Berg, 2016; Tunnell & Ammon, 1993). These studies have shown that alongside the benefits of reading, talking, and writing about individuals in history lessons, there are also disadvantages and risks that teachers must consider.

Researchers agree that integrating individual narratives into history lessons increases the interest and involvement of students. Both teachers and students have reported that the option to explore the historical event through the prism of individuals helps students relive the past. For example, Fertig (2008) described and analyzed the response of fifth-grade students to learning history through reading biographical texts in small groups. He concluded that using biographical texts helps students in elementary and middle school to humanize the past, to understand that individual people took part in historical changes, and to dispel the misconception that people are helpless victims of history. Fertig also concluded that using biographical texts in history lessons in elementary school may help students relate more closely to the historical subject. Brugar's study (2013) reinforces some of Fertig's findings by demonstrating how reading biographies enables students to develop an understanding of temporal and spatial perspectives and think critically and historically.

Focusing on individual narratives in history lessons also has some clear limitations, however. For example, Fertig (2008) found that fifth-grade students who learned about the rise of the Civil Rights Movement through reading a biography of Rosa Parks claimed that Parks herself created the Civil Rights Movement. Similarly,

students who were exposed to the biography of the Wright brothers claimed that they were solely responsible for the development of human aviation. Thus, when young students learn history through individual narratives they tend to ignore the wider aspects of the event, such as norms, ideologies, politics, or previous events.

In other studies, researchers found that young students tended to speak about historical phenomena in terms of individual experience rather than in broader social terms related to politics, economy, religion, or culture, even when their teachers used these terms during the lesson (Barton, 1997; Brophy &VanSledright, 1997). Researchers concluded that teaching history based on individual narratives to young students might impair their ability to understand the complexity of historical events (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

Another related issue is that presenting historical figures as "superheroes" could undermine students' belief in their own capacity to become civic leaders (Alridge, 2006; Brown & Brown, 2010; Woodson, 2016). Conversely, presenting historical figures as villains may lead students to assume that "evil is other, and not us" (van Kessel & Crowley, 2017, p. 429), and cause them to avoid discussion about ordinary people's responsibility to historical evil.

The studies described above have been performed either inside primary and middle school classrooms, or about high-school students without entering classrooms (e.g., by analyzing textbooks or focus group discussions). Our goal in this study was therefore to examine teachers' practice in high school classes. We focused on the ways teachers talked about individuals in high-school history lessons and on the ways these teachers engaged in aspects of multiperspectivity as they talked about people who lived in the past.

2.3   Theoretical Framework: Multiperspectivity in History Education

The C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards (2013) provides an explicit explanation for to the added educational value of dealing with individuals in history lessons:

> Even if they are eyewitnesses, people construct different accounts of the
> same event, which are shaped by their perspectives (…). It also requires
> recognizing that perspectives change over time, so that historical
> understanding requires developing a sense of empathy with people in the

past whose perspectives might be very different from those of today (p. 47).

This quotation emphasizes the importance of developing students' awareness of different perspectives at three levels. The first is the multiplicity of perspectives among people who took part in past events. The second and third levels focus on the changing of perspectives over time. This may refer either to how historians who wrote between past events and the present viewed the past or to how people today view past events. The term multiperspectivity in history education encompasses all three levels, and in all, it is deeply connected to learning about people (Wansink, Akkerman, Zuiker, & Wubbels, 2018).

The origin of the term *multiperspectivity* is in the field of narratology (Hartner, 2014). In the context of history education, it means the ability and willingness to understand past events while considering others' perspective in addition to one's own (Low-Beer, 1997; Stradling, 2003; Wansink et al., 2018). Multiperspectivity is identified with the approach of "new history" that combines teaching students about the past and teaching them to think historically about the past. It is also identified with the multicultural and inclusive approach, which led historians to focus their research on people who had been ignored for many years (e.g., poor people, children, ethnic minorities, and women). The "new history" approach is based on the assumption that history is an interpretational and subjective discipline, and that particular historical events can always be interpreted and reconstructed from multiple different perspectives. Therefore, multiperspectivity is an integral part of history learning (Stradling, 2003; Wansink et al., 2018).

Exposing students to multiple perspectives should provide students with an opportunity to recognize the complexity of history. However, it is important to remember that not all perspectives are equal in legitimacy or value. While exposing students to a variety of perspectives the teacher is required to direct his students to take a critical approach towards the different perspectives and to consider the legitimacy of each perspective, while exercising civil and moral discretion.

The multiperspectivity approach in history teaching and learning is usually identified with the inquiry method: exposing students to a variety of primary and secondary sources and conducting research assignments with an emphasis on critical thinking and rational discourse (Goldberg, 2018; Levstik & Groth, 2002; McCully, 2012; Stradling, 2003; Wrenn et al., 2007). In this study, we examine

multiperspectivity from a different point of view, not related directly to the inquiry method, but rather to how teachers talk about people in history lessons. We would like to find out how, if at all, teachers engage in aspects of multiperspectivity when talking about people who lived in the past during high school history lessons.

2.4 Method

This qualitative research relies on ethnographic methods (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Schwandt, 2007; Till, 2009). Educational ethnography is based on the assumptions of classical ethnography, that human behavior should be interpreted in context. Unlike classical ethnography which sought to trace exotic cultures (Peacock, 1996), educational ethnography traces existing patterns in familiar educational systems, and reaches insights from a study of what is ostensibly known (Mills & Morton, 2013; Pole & Morrison, 2003). The aim of this study is to reveal existing ways of speaking about people in ordinary history lessons and finding meaning in it.

In selecting the ethnographic strategy, we followed Geertz (1973), who argued that ethnographic research is "not an experimental science in search of laws but an interpretive one in search for meaning" (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). In this study, we describe what we observed by using interpretive and descriptive tools without any attempt to reach any universal generalization. The interpretation is based on transcripts of recorded interactions in observed classroom units. We believe that the educational-ethnographic method, which focuses on interpreting the participants' words and actions in their natural environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), is the most appropriate for examining how teachers talk about people in history lessons.

This article is part of wider research project that included lesson observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and focus group interviews. Although the interviews could enrich the data, we decided not to include them here, and to focus only on teachers' classroom practice. This is consistent with Harpaz (2014):

> When a teacher stands in front of her class, checks homework, lectures,
> writes on the blackboard, tries to calm down, (…), what kind of
> "schooling pictures" she has in her mind? Of course, we can ask her,
> "What do you think about learning and teaching (…)?", but her answers

are less interesting. More interesting are the answers reflected in her

actions" (Harpaz, 2014, p. 101)

We believe that the answers to our research questions are reflected more in teachers' actions than in their stated opinions.

2.4.1 Setting and Participants

In Israel, the state schools in the Jewish sector are divided between religious and secular. Additionally, there are Arab schools. We chose to conduct the study in three Jewish secular public high schools located in two large cities in Israel, which are representative of the majority of schools in the country. No other criteria for selecting the schools were used.

Five classes participated in the study: three 11th grade and two 10th grade classes.   The selection of the classes was based on the following criteria: (1) Use of the national curriculum; (2) Studying for the regular matriculation exam in history; (3) Classes not streamlined according to ability (not special-needs or gifted classes). Each class had between 23-34 students, which is a bit lower than the national average.

We observed the teachers Dina, Julia, David, Ron, and Rachel (pseudonyms, as are all the names in the Findings section; see Table 1). All consented to participate in the study and stated that they enjoyed teaching history and considered their work to be important.

Table 1: Teachers' demographic information

Teacher (pseudonyms)	Age	Teaching experience	Degree	Grades	Field of expertise
Dina	32	7	Doctoral student	11-12	History & Philosophy
Julia	43	15	MA	10	History
David	45	20	MA	10-12	History & Civics
Ron	48	7	MA	10-12	History & Literature
Rachel	62	24	MA	10-11	History

2.4.2 Curricular Context

In Israel, high-school studies are geared towards internal and external matriculation exams. History is one of the compulsory subjects, and all students are required to study two units of the history curriculum to obtain a matriculation certificate. Students usually study for the exam during 10th and 11th grades. The final grade usually consists of an external uniform exam (70%) and internal evaluation (30%). The high school history curriculum includes primarily Jewish and Israeli history themes. The lessons we observed comprised a variety of subjects, including the rise of modern nationalism in Europe, the British Mandate regime in Palestine, the Second World War, the Holocaust and the 1948 war in Palestine. We did not choose which lessons to observe: the observations were conducted along the sequence of lessons during the study period, subject to the constraints of the school schedule.

Most of the items in the Israeli High-School History Curriculum are directed toward studying historical phenomena (e.g., "The Nazi Ideology" or "Nationalist Movements in 19th-Century Europe"), without explicit reference to the people who took part in them. Nevertheless, this could be accomplished easily. For example, in teaching Nazi ideology, teachers could integrate the authors of that ideology, (e.g., Adolf Hitler, Josef Goebbels), or people affected by it (e.g., Hans Fallada, Stefan Zweig). When studying nationalism, teachers could talk about nationalist leaders (e.g., Giuseppe Garibaldi, Otto von Bismarck), or people affected by the emergence of nationalism (e.g., Brothers Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm; Edmondo De Amicis). Therefore, in analyzing the lesson observations, we wanted to find out if teachers who were not obligated to do so talked about people who lived in the past and if so, how they integrated the lives of historical figures lives into the lesson.

2.4.3 Data Gathering and Analysis

The data were gathered during forty hours of observations in five history lessons (eight hours per class). According to the instructions of the Ministry of Education's Ethics Committee, we refrained from video recording in classrooms in which not all of the parents gave their consent. For that reason, the observations in David's class were documented by field diaries and audio recordings, and the remaining thirty-two hours were documented by field diaries as well as by audio and video recordings.

The first stage of analysis was full transcription of two hours from each class (total of ten hours). The principal researcher read the transcripts to draw up main categories and design the initial coding scheme. All quotations that contained any reference to historical figures were marked and divided into two predetermined morphological-deductive groups (Evertson & Green, 1986): (1) Direct reference to historical figures (e.g., "Hitler rose to power in democratic elections "); (2) Indirect reference to historical figures (e.g., "The British succeeded in capturing five Irgun[3] activists"). Within each group, the quotes were divided into descriptive-inductive subgroups (Evertson & Green, 1986) constructed during analysis according to the specific ways in which teachers spoke about people. These subgroups were the basis of the initial coding scheme.

At the second stage, the research assistant analyzed ten additional hours' worth of material using the initial coding scheme to test for reliability. In addition, expressions that deviated from the initially determined categories were marked.

At the third stage, the researchers met to determine the accurate wording of each category and define the precise meaning of each. The inferred units (Evertson & Green, 1986) constructed in this stage served as a basis for the final coding scheme (see Table 2).

Table 2: Analytical categories

Category	Individuals	Generic People	General Categories	Personification
Description	Mention of people by name, discussing their activities, or discussing their life story.	Attributing historical events to representative people who did not actually exist.	Attributing historical events to a broad human category.	Attributing historical events to non-human entities such as states, organizations, or institutions.
Example	"Commandant Victor Mirkin	"Think of someone who	"The British knew that it	"The Church told people

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[3] A Jewish underground active in Mandatory Palestine from 1931 to 1948.

	was one of the most decorated officers in the French army."	has lived for the past two, three years under horrendous conditions in the ghetto."	would obligate them to a certain extent"	what to do and how to act."

The research assistant and principal researcher sorted the data collected according to the four categories and assessed them for dominance. Each wrote an interpretation of the data collected in each category. The researchers then met to discuss their interpretations. The findings reported below are based on their consensus.

2.5   Findings

2.5.1   Individuals

By "individuals" we refer to the extent to which teachers mentioned names of real individuals involved in historical events, discussed their activities, or talked about their life stories. One of the most striking findings was teachers' limited focus on individuals. We found that in 36 out of the 40 hours of observation the teachers referred extensively to historical organizations, processes, and phenomena. However, they devoted an average of less than five minutes in a 45- minute lesson to individuals. For example, in a lesson about the causes of the development of nationalist movements in Europe, David mentioned three historical figures: Kant, Zionism founder Theodor Herzl, and King Herod. The fact that there is no historical connection between these three shows that they were mentioned incidentally and were not an inherent part of the lesson. Furthermore, only their names were mentioned. Less than one minute of the entire lesson was devoted to them.

In some of the lessons, there was no mention at all of any specific individual who lived during the period under discussion. For example, Dina taught a lesson about the struggle of the Jewish community against the British Mandate. The

following short dialogue between Dina and her student, Ben, illustrates the absence of historical figures from the class discussion:

> *Dina*[4]: The British managed to capture five Irgun activists, put them on
> trial, and sentenced three of them to death.
>
> Ben: Some of the streets here in [the neighborhood] are named after them.
>
> *Dina*: Correct.

The three sentenced to death were Avshalom Haviv, Meir Nakar and Yakov Weiss, but Dina did not mention them by name. As we will see, referring to people in general categories ("Irgun activists") is a common practice. Ben mentioned that streets around school are named after Haviv, Nakar and Weiss. Since it is a regional school, it is more than likely that other students in the lesson have heard the three names, but none of the students referred to these people by name. Ben's reference to street names emphasizes the tendency to avoid talking about specific individuals, reinforced by Dina's assertion that he was correct and her failure to talk about them.

The title of some of the lessons we observed had a clear potential for relating to individuals. For example, Rachel taught a lesson on Jewish fighters in the Allied forces, a title that could have opened the gates to learning about specific people who took part in the war. Nevertheless, most of the time was devoted to the number of soldiers who fought and to watching a film about the idea to establish a museum commemorating the fighters. The total time spent talking about actual people in this lesson was approximately six minutes. An analysis of the description of one of the people in the film indicates that the manner of discussing the characters is no less important than the fact that someone talked about them:

> Commandant Victor Mirkin was one of the most decorated officers in the
> French army. A war hero. A brigade commander in de Gaulle's Free
> French Forces. He fought in Syria, Egypt, and Tunisia. Shortly after the
> Invasion of Normandy, he captured a German stronghold with 800
> soldiers almost singlehandedly […]. Mirkin is not the only Jewish hero
> from that war

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[4] In order to focus the gaze on teachers׳ actions we marked their names in italics in all cited dialogues.

The narrator describes Mirkin as a historical object, a hero. His photo in uniform appears in the film, reinforcing this image. However, no expression is given to the multidimensional aspects of his personality. The narrator did not raise any questions such as whether Mirkin had any doubts about fighting in the war, whether he left a wife or children at home, or whether he had any fears. He was discussed in a one-dimensional way, in terms of the role he played in the war and little more.

David's lesson about Nazi ideology also presented a person as a historical object. This was one of the four lessons we observed that dealt with historical figures intensively. Hitler was mentioned 96 times during this lesson, either explicitly or implicitly. Compared to all of the other observations, including David's other lessons, which hardly referred to specific individuals, this lesson was exceptional. However, David's presentation of Hitler in his introduction to the lesson shows that in this case as well the human subject was presented as an object:

> Hitler rose to power in democratic elections [...]. Although he only
> received 24% of the votes [sic], and despite the fact that he did not get a
> majority, he is the majority, I mean, he was the largest party, so the
> president gave him the mandate to form a new government. The first thing
> he did once he formed his new government was to announce that he would
> hold new elections in March. Between January, when he rose to power,
> and the elections held in March, another event occurred. The Reichstag
> was burned down [...]. Hitler would take advantage of this event. In
> parentheses, I will tell you that he took advantage of it until it became
> known that he actually organized the arson.

In this quotation, David referred to Hitler either by name or by reference. In either case, he never spoke about Hitler as a person, but as a symbol of Nazism. Every mention of Hitler could have been replaced by the terms "Nazism" or "the Nazi Party". Thus, both the Jewish hero Mirkin and the nemesis of Judaism were presented as objects or representative figures used to define or illustrate a historical phenomenon. This one-dimensional way of talking about individuals reflects an avoidance of multiperspectivity, since presenting a person only as a symbol prevents the possibility of viewing that person from any other perspective.

2.5.2   Generic People

In 32 of the 40 observed lessons, generic people were described, meaning representative people who did not actually exist. For example, during a lesson on the rise of nationalism, David asked his students:

> That Czech woke up. Until yesterday he told himself that he was a subject of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, that he lived in such and such a village, and worked, let's say, as a tailor. What made him suddenly wake up and declare "I am a Czech"?

This nameless, generic Czech represented 19th century Europeans. "That Czech" was given few human characteristics: he lived in a village, he was a tailor, but he was not a real person. Through the generic Czech, David confronted his students with the question "What were the factors leading to the development of nationalism?"

In other situations, close to home, teachers who used generic people where they could certainly have used actual historical figures. For example, in a lesson about Holocaust survivors who enlisted in the Israeli army, Ron provided the following description:

> When someone comes here [=to Mandatory Palestine], a Jew, an illegal immigrant, 18 years old, who had gone through all the horrors of the Holocaust, with a number tattooed here [he points to his forearm], all members of his family were murdered, and he lost everything. […] He now knows that this is his opportunity to acquire a state, so he is highly motivated.

It is not difficult to find examples of specific individuals who fit the description of this Holocaust survivor, but Ron presented his students with a generic person, tailor-made to fit the historical explanation of the phenomenon under study. He presented a one-dimensional person, and created a coherent and simplistic story, even though the historical reality was much more complicated, since not all the Holocaust survivors were able or willing to enlist. Other human perspectives of this historical phenomenon were not mentioned in class, and none of the students questioned the direct connection that Ron made between the Holocaust and enlistment in the army, so there was no expression of multiperspectivity on their part either.

We observed another example of the use of generic people in lessons in which teachers used an imaginative exercise, such as in David's lesson about the dilemmas faced by Jews in the ghettos:

David: I want you to try to think of a person, a family, an individual, young, old, it doesn't matter […] and think of the decisions he or she faced […]. Think of someone who has lived for the past two, three years under horrendous conditions in the ghetto […]. I am telling you, there is such a person. He lived in the ghetto, he knew that when the Judenrat [=Jewish Council] says that such and such people must assemble at a given time according to Nazi orders, then these transports lead to their extermination.

Dani: But you said that he doesn't know.

David: At first, he doesn't, but later the information becomes known.

In the dialogue between David and Dani, the third person singular form and present tense are used. The exchange shows that they are trying to assess the level of awareness people inside the ghetto had about events taking place outside. The exchange is an expression of historical insight that can form foundations for multiperspectivity, since it reflects an awareness of different perspectives about the events by people who lived in the past. Later in this lesson, this generic man was the basis for further discussion, yet the form of speech when talking of this person changed:

David: So, in order to join the partisans, the first thing you have to find out is where they are […]. Obviously, you have to disconnect from your family. So, the family stays here, and I am almost certain I will not see them afterward […]. What will happen when they demand that X number of people assemble, and a person with a particular name from a particular street will not be there?

Shira: They will harm his family.

David: Exactly. There is some concern about collective punishment. And who can guarantee that I will manage in the forest? […] that I will really be able to fight, where will I get arms?

Tali: And the weather is harsh in the forest.

David: Exactly. Living conditions in the forest are extremely harsh […]. Let's say I managed […] to get to the forests – there are very serious consequences […]. Who can ensure me that I will really manage to join the partisans?

Gilli: It is also possible that the partisans' revolt would be less helpful to the people inside the ghetto or to those you want to help.

David: Correct. It is clear that once you join the partisans, you are tied to

their interests […]. You are joining a fight that is not necessarily yours.

The generic ghetto dweller, who was presented in the third person at the beginning of the lesson, was now described in first or second person. Some of the students recognized the difficulties of the generic individual. This recognition may indicate an initial historical empathy by referring to the unique aspects of the historical event, and by recognizing perspectives of people who lived in the past through talking about a generic man. However, this initial expression of empathy was not further developed. There was no indication in this dialog of multiperspectivity on the complex historical situation, since the teacher and the student talked about a single generic person.

Rachel used a similar tactic of talking about generic individuals during a lesson about the attitude of the local population to the Jews in Nazi-occupied countries. In this case, multiperspectivity was an integral part of the dialog:

Rachel: OK, Ethan, you will be Oleg, a Catholic, and I will be Helena, a

Russian doctor living in Kovno. Any other volunteers? Eric, what do you

want to be?

Eric: Can I be a Nazi soldier?

Rachel: No, no, I want the local population.

Eric: So, I want to be a Lithuanian. Can I?

Rachel: You can; what does this Lithuanian do?

Eric: He murders Jews.

Rachel: No, what does he do in his everyday life?

Eric: Ah, he is an accountant.

Rachel: An accountant, OK. Is he religious? Catholic?

Eric: Of course!

Rachel: OK, good, Eric, […] OK. Let's begin. The German army has

occupied our country and soldiers are beginning to harm Jews. How do

each of us react? Where I live, they have already started driving the Jews

into the ghetto. What will each of you do?

Rachel created a role play based on multidimensional imaginary people representative of the population in Nazi-occupied countries. The students invented names and a life story for each, based in part on previous historical knowledge and partly on their imagination. During the lesson, each of the students described how he

acted in Nazi-occupied countries, based on the person he chose. Eric chose to be a Lithuanian accountant and said, "I decided to join a group of activists who carried out murderous attacks against the Jews." Gilli chose to be a Belgian lawyer and said: "I chose to hide Jews […] if I could, I would have defended them in court." Shira said, "I am not against them, nor do I help them, I […] just turn a blind eye." These descriptions reflect three well-known patterns of behavior of citizens in Nazi-occupied countries toward Jews: collaborators, saviors, and bystanders (Rafter, 2016). Through the roles played by imaginary people, the teacher managed to lead the students to identify the three patterns of behavior, without reading any theoretical material on the subject.

When the students spoke in the first person in the name of their character they discovered different perspectives of people who lived in the past. The uniqueness of the various perspectives helped the students recognize the complexity of the historical situation they discussed. This effect of role plays on recognizing different historical perspectives is in line with previous research about historical simulations as a tool to achieve multiperspectivity (Rantala, Manninen & van den Berg, 2016)
The tactics that David and Rachel used in asking their students to act the part of a historical person are controversial, especially when dealing with the extreme conditions of the Holocaust (Diner, 2000; Goldberg, 2016; Schweber, 2003; Totton, 2000). We should also pay attention to the fact that both David and Rachel didn't use historical sources as a base to the role-play they activated in class. Using roleplay without basing it on reading historical sources might lead to poor teaching and students may imagine themselves in the past without connection to historical facts (Harris & Foreman-Peck, 2004). However, through a detailed role play using generic or imaginary people, Rachel managed to bring her students closer to multiperspectivity. The one-dimensional role-play in David's lesson did not achieve this goal.

The above examples show that the way teachers use generic people in their lesson may be significant. Using generic people openly (e.g., in a diverse role play situation) may promote multiperspectivity in class. On the other hand, using generic people as "tailor-made" individuals may lead a one-dimensional presentation of the past.

2.5.3   General Categories

One of the most common ways of studying people in history lessons is through the use of general categories. This tendency is not unique to history lessons – it is an integral part of everyday language as well as curricula, textbooks, matriculation exams, and historical research. Perhaps this is why general categories were used constantly, in every lesson. For example, in a lesson discussing the background of the development of nationalism, David made the following statements: "The nobility did not give up on their status so quickly"; "The simple masses understood that it was not good for them, but they did not have the tools to effect any change"; "Philosophers led to the founding of a new school of thought."

In Julia's lesson about the 1917 Balfour Declaration in which the British undertook to create a "national home" for Jews in Palestine, we observed another facet of using generalizations. She said, "The British knew that it would obligate them to a certain extent", and later on, "The Jews have the Declaration and then say: look, you promised", and "The Arabs living in Palestine are displeased with the Declaration. They do not want to have a Jewish homeland here." In this lesson, historical events were presented through the prism of national generalizations. There was no reference to the British individuals involved (e.g., Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour or Prime Minister Lloyd George), to Lord Rothschild, the recipient of the declaration, or to Jews or Arabs who reacted to the Declaration or were opposed to it (e.g., David Ben Gurion and Jamal al-Husseini). The lesson on the Balfour Declaration was presented as a group of closed statements such as "The British knew", "The Jews say", and "The Arabs are displeased". None elicited discussion of the different perspectives of the actual people involved in the event or the ways they influenced the process.

Another kind of general category was observed in Rachel's lesson about Jewish fighters in the Allied forces during the Second World War. She said, "The role of women in the Red Army was exceptional. Women reached positions of great importance; women served in the army, and when it was over, women were awarded the Iron Cross". The entire sentence used "women" as a general category. No woman was mentioned by name. No specific acts by any woman were described, and nothing to distinguish among the acts of different women was presented to the students. Diversity, which is essential for establishing a multiperspectivity (Levstik & Groth, 2002), was not reflected in these cases of using general categories.

The texts above are based only on teachers' statements because these statements did not evoke any response from students. However, there were lessons in which a lively classroom discussion ensued using general categories. In Ron's lesson about the 1948 war between the Jews and the Palestinians, the following discussion took place:

Beni: Why did they [the Palestinians] want a state in this place of all places?

Ron: That's a good question.

Ariel: If they aren't fighting with us, they fight among themselves.

Ron: They were here […] we were here, it doesn't matter who was here first.

Ariel: We were; we were.

Roy: They were always cowards, weren't they?

Ron: You asked what bothered them? The same thing that bothers them to this very day. Some of them feel that we have no place here, that we came here with the First Aliyah[5] or shortly before and took land that belonged to them.

Roy: In short, they are bored with life.

In the discussion of this conflictual issue, the participants used the wide general categories "they" and "us" as accepted code names for referring to national groups. These exchanges show that the students were highly involved in the lesson: they discussed the events in the first person, asked questions, and expressed feelings. However, they also revealed their animosity towards Palestinians and did not identify any different perspectives within this group, or within their own. When talking about the Palestinians as "they", the students also blurred the distinction between past and present perspectives. In statements like "they were always cowards", or "they are bored with life", some students created a common identity between their perspectives of the Palestinians in the present on the one hand and historical events on the other, while ignoring the unique characteristics of the people living in the past, and the unique perspective of individual Palestinians. Moreover, they used general categories as a tool to project negative feelings from the present to the past.

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[5] The first wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine, 1882-1904.

The use of the general category "we" to describe Jewish people from the past also blurred the boundaries between past and present. In sentences such as "They are fighting with us" or "We were [here first]", the students talked about people who lived in the past as if they were part of the current group of learners or Jewish Israelis more broadly.

The teacher, Ron, also referred to "us" and "them" when speaking about Palestinians and Jews. He did not generate a discussion on the way students talked about the Palestinians, or about the significance of speaking in first person plural about people who lived in the past. The generalization of "us" and "them" in Ron's lesson evoked emotional hostility and did not facilitate a multiperspective approach to past events.

Considering that one of the purposes of history education is to build collective affiliation and ingroup loyalty (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2016; Kizel, 2015; Wassermann, 2018), using general categories as way of talking about people may serve educators who wish to reinforce political and social affiliation. Additionally, talking about people through general categories is a very common way of speaking in everyday life. However, the use of generalization in history lessons might also reinforce superficiality and prejudices and undermine the multiperspectivity of the historical events.

2.5.4 Personification

Personification is the attribution of human actions to objects, organizations, institutions, or countries. It is another form of language used in teaching history and in everyday speech, curricula, textbooks, matriculation exams, and historical research literature. Personification was used in 37 of the 40 lessons we observed. For example, when David taught about the ideological causes of the development of nationalism he said, "The Church told people what to do and how to act"; "The Enlightenment took people who were not happy with their lives and gave them a direction and definition"; "Democracy says that the people have a say about things"; "The nation has difficulties and has the right to choose."

It may be assumed that high-school students understand by themselves that it was actual people who acted and not the Church, enlightenment, democracy, or the nation. Therefore, the use of personification without adding meta-cognitive markers (e.g., "as if" or "like") is permissible (Pramling, 2006). In this case, personification

was used as an illustrative tool in a lesson that dealt with the abstract historical phenomenon of the development of national identity. In this case, as well as in other similar cases, using personification might be considered highly reasonable.

Personification was also widely used in lessons focusing on tangible issues. For example, in a lesson on the Balfour Declaration, Julia said, "She [=Great Britain] has no possibility of passing through Palestine [on the way to India]. She simply does not have this option. So, where does she go?" Julia attributed human actions such as walking or planning through-routes to Great Britain. Similarly, in a lesson about the Jewish resistance to the British Mandate, Dina said, "Great Britain gradually lost the desire, the will and the legitimacy to be here". She added "The United States and Great Britain's policy of appeasement and isolationism, all of France's concessions, and all those states who signed that they have an ideology of not going to war, led to mass killings." Dina attributed human characteristics such as desire, will, concessions or forming an opinion to countries and states, without using meta-cognitive markers.

In these quotations, the historical processes attributed to non-human objects included historical concepts such as imperialism, wars and mass killings. It may be assumed that high school students understand that "Great Britain", "the United states" or "France" are collective agencies (Seixas, 2012) that represent actions actually carried out by people. We assert that there is educational significance to the fact that teachers presented violent human actions using personification, which blur the connection between human actions and their historical consequences. The fact that no questions and no discussions have arisen regarding the moral aspects of these difficult acts reinforces this belief.

We observed an extreme example of personification in a lesson about the 1948 war, in which Ron described an event that occurred in the battlefield:

Two tanks had deserted the British Army […] these two tanks are moving forward and then one of the tanks has a technical problem. There was a lot of smoke and dust, and this tank, because of lack of communication with the second tank, because no one spoke Hebrew. [They spoke] English, Yiddish, Russian, Polish. One tank turned around. All the infantry troops walked behind the tank. Suddenly the cloud of dust cleared, and the tank sees that it is alone. The tank turned around, didn't report to anyone, no one knew, there was a lack of communication […], he turned around and he left all the fighters at the front.

In telling his students about an incident in which commanders abandoned their soldiers on the battlefield, Ron attributed the acts of humans to two tanks. Eleventh-grade students know that people, not tanks alone, acted in the battlefield. Nevertheless, in relating the historical event this way, the option for discussing the different perspectives of the people who took part in this event was denied from the outset. Indeed, no student responded or asked any questions regarding Ron's description.

This is in direct contrast to the way Bertolt Brecht described the relationship between man and a tank in his poem: "General, your tank is a powerful vehicle/ It smashes down forests and crushes a hundred men. / But it has one defect:/It needs a driver" (Brecht, 1976, p. 289). Brecht emphasized the connections between the individual as a historical agent and events on the battlefield. Ron blurred this connection by omitting people from his description.

This was the only example of personification of an object we observed. In our opinion, it is illustrative of the personification trend common in history lessons. We assume that teachers do not use this form of speech consciously or intentionally when explaining historical phenomena, as it is part of a wider trend of using personification in everyday discourse. In an educational setting, this form of speech may distance students from recognizing the range of human perspectives on historical events, and from recognizing people as historical agents in wartime.

An exceptional case was observed when a teacher refused to let a student use personification. In a lesson about the dilemmas of Jewish police officers in the ghettos during the transportations to concentration camps, David read aloud an excerpt from the diary of Josef Zelikovitz[6] from the Lodz Ghetto and then asked his students a question:

David: Who is in a quandary here?

Yonatan: The Jewish police.

*David***:** The Jewish police is an institution. An institution does not know how to be in a quandary.

Roni: The leaders.

Sharon: The Jews themselves.

Mira: The Jewish police officers.

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[6] More information about Josef Zelkowicz can be found in
http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%205556.pdf

The first response to the David's question attributed a human action (being in a quandary) to an organization. Although David had used personification more than once, in this instance, he pointed out the problematic aspect of this form of speech to his students and directed them to look for an answer that would connect a historical act and the human agents. By telling the students that "An institution does not know how to be in a quandary", David let his students know that in moral dilemmas like the one they were discussing, doubts and decisions should be attributed to people.

The students' responses to David's comment were based on general categories ("the leaders", "the Jews", "the officers"), attributing responsibility to collective agencies. However, their answers in the second stage expressed a basic understanding that people were responsible for historical events. Moreover, the various groups mentioned by the students indicated that they were capable of understanding and identifying a variety of human perspectives on this specific historical event. In this sense, the transition from speech in the form of anthropomorphism to the speech of people, albeit through general categories, opened the class door to multiperspectivity.

2.6 Discussion and Conclusions

Researchers have pointed to the tension between focusing on a specific person for learning about historical phenomena and describing historical events using amorphous entities such as "the society" or "the British" (Brown & Brown, 2010; van Kessel & Crowley, 2017; Woodson, 2016). In the current research we tried to examine this tension through the prism of multiperspectivity and outline the educational meaning of the practices teachers use in talking about people in history lessons.

We found that during history lessons, teachers used four ways to refer to peoples:(a) reference to specific individuals, (b) reference generic people, (c) reference to general categories of people, and (d) personification. Overall, they rarely talked about specific figures in the history lessons we observed. The few figures who were mentioned were usually representative of a phenomenon or concept, and no reference was made to their perspective on the event in question.

The limited focus of teachers on specific individuals who played a role in history and the tendency to focus on phenomena or to view people as historical objects may be a result of the Israeli curriculum which requires teachers to discuss only a few historical figures. It may also be the result of efforts to build foundations

for general terms and conceptual frameworks that are vital for understanding historical events in their wider context (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Carr, 1964), or a result of time limitations. The risks involved in portraying characters in a particularly messianic or heroic way, or as exceptional villains (Brown & Brown, 2010; van Kessel & Crowley, 2017) may also be a reason for the limited talk about specific historical figures.

Whatever the reason, this limited focus on specific individuals may be an obstacle in developing multiperspectivity in students, since the different perspectives on history are rooted in people (Low-Beer, 1997; Stradling, 2003). Still, not all ways of talking about people promote multiperspectivity. For example, focusing on a single individual and presenting him or her as a "villain" or as a "hero", without talking about other historical agents (personal or institutional) can lead to one-dimensional and single-perspective point of view on historical events. Discussing only extraordinary political leaders can prevent students from seeing viewing events as a multiperspective reality (Rantala, Manninen & van den Berg, 2016). Just mentioning names of many people who lived in the past is also insufficient because it does not allow students to understand the human perspectives on historical events. Therefore, we conclude that in-depth learning about people is a prerequisite for developing multiperspectivity. Such in-depth learning about historical figures and others who lived in the past can be achieved, for example, by reading biographies, analyzing documentary films, or viewing historical documents that present the perspective of different people. Such learning may enable students to attain greater understanding of the concept of multiperspectivity (Brugar, 2013).

Using generic people to study historical events did facilitate students' involvement in the lesson. In one case, using an open and detailed role play with generic people, a teacher helped her students grasp different perspectives of people in the past. In other cases, generic people were presented in a one-dimensional manner, as a means of illustrating a historical phenomenon. The one-dimensional presentation of people helped the teachers to arrive at a coherent account of the historical event (Ochs, 2004), but at the same time, prevented the students from distinguishing multiperspectivity in the historical events. We claim that conducting role-play or historical simulation may promote multiperspectivity, especially when it is based on previous learning of the historical background and when the students have the

opportunity to construct the characters they represent based on an analysis of relevant historical sources (Rantala, Manninen & van den Berg, 2016).

By talking about people using generalization, teachers presented a broader point of view of the historical event. In these cases, the focus was on political and social affiliation, which is one of the targets of history education (Barton, 1997; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Brophy &VanSledright, 1997). Generalization may also help teachers to present the important role of "collective agencies" in history (Seixas, 2012). When taking into account that history as it is taught in state schools is often directed toward creating a collective national identity (Clark, 2009; Wassermann, 2018; Yogev, 2013), using general categories such as "us" and "them" may be intended to reinforce or to create a distinct national identity. It may also be a result of the time limits that obligate teachers to present historical events in more general terms. Furthermore, using general categories is very common in everyday speech. The aim of developing multiperspectivity in students might be undermined, however, by using general categories to speak about people in history. The use of general categories has led students to speak about people as monolithic groups, without noticing the variety of perspectives in each group, and the differences between past and present. They also expressed stereotypical and deterministic perceptions about people's characteristics based on the social group to which they belonged (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2016).

We contend that it is important, and even inevitable, to discuss general categories, but the ability to recognize multiple perspectives within these general categories is also essential for students (Levstik & Groth, 2002). Therefore, we suggest that in-depth discussion about various historical figures who lived in the past alongside learning about "collective agencies" might help teachers assert that there are always multiple perspectives and differences between people's perceptions of the historical event (Stradling, 2003; Wansink et al., 2018). In-depth discussions of people's lives may also reduce stereotypical perceptions students have of individuals belonging to different social or political groups.

Finally, personification in history lessons may be used as a tool to illustrate and explain general concepts and events that are difficult to comprehend or unclear (Thulin & Pramling, 2009). We found that when teachers attributed historical actions to non-human factors, students did not ask questions or express any opinion even

when the historical events involved the use of violence or ended tragically. We believe that most high school students can recognize that human actions are behind personification. However, we assert that the use of personification creates a distance from the topic under discussion, making it more difficult to recognize different human perspectives in past events. Therefore, we assert that discussing real people who lived in the past, instead of using personification to describe human past actions, may promote perceptions of multiperspectivity.

2.6.1 Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. We observed only 40 lessons in five classes in Jewish-Israeli schools, and our results are based only on observational data. In addition, the presence of researchers and recording equipment in the classroom may have affected the course of the lesson. Moreover, our analysis focused only on the prism of multiperspectivity, although many other prisms could have been analyzed. Despite these limitations, we believe that this interpretative analysis of how teachers talked about people in high school history lessons may provide a helpful perspective to those how engaged in history education.

2.6.2 Practical Implications

In this study, we examined how high school history teachers talked in their lessons about ordinary people and historical figures people who lived in the past and how they engaged in aspects of multiperspectivity as they talked about people in the past. We conclude that using generalizations, personification, and one-dimensional descriptions of historical figures to describe the actions of those who lived in the past may limit the ability of teachers to engage in aspects of multiperspectivity in. We also conclude that in-depth discussion of specific individuals or a detailed and open discussion of generic figures against the background of past events may enable teachers to integrate different perspectives of the past in their lessons.

Talking about people in history lessons in order to achieve multiperspectivity is not just a matter of name-dropping or noting biographical details. A teacher who considers multiperspectivity as a goal will expose students to sources or provide activities that will enable students to understand different perspectives and the way these perspectives influence individual acts. The teacher will also encourage his/her students to apply a critical approach to the different perspectives, and to discern the

legitimacy of the different perspectives in the light of historical circumstances. This can be done, for example, by reading documents about historical figures and analyzing the different perspective of each figure about a specific historical event. It can also be done by constructing a role-play based on in-depth learning of the historical context and on the different perspective of real or fiction historical figures, or by analyzing figures from historical movies or books against the historical context. In all cases, balancing the learning of specific perspectives of the historical figure and the broader historical circumstances is crucial. This can be done, for example, by learning about the historical circumstances in class, and then exposing students to sources that represent different reactions of people to those circumstances when dealing with a specific historical event.

We do not claim that history lessons should be exclusively people-focused. Moreover, we accept the argument that studying history solely through the prism of the people may impede the learners' ability to understand the historical contexts and to discern the wide canvas of historical events, and that this may distance them from the possibility of seeing themselves as capable of influencing reality. However, we claim that it is essential to include more in-depth discussion about individuals who lived in the past in order to attain multiperspectivity.

Finally, we assert that learning the connections between the practice of talking about people in history lessons and multiperspectivity should be integrated into pre-service and in-service teachers' education. Analyzing representations of various practices teachers apply when talking about historical figures in history lessons and learning about its educational significant may provide teachers with tools to develop their own awareness of ways in which they can promote multiperspectivity through rational and balanced ways of talking about historical figures.

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3   Fight, flight or light:

Three approaches to teaching difficult past events as reflected in historical figures

Michal Honig and Dan Porat

The Hebrew University, Jerusalem

3.1 Abstract

This paper examines two research questions: How do teachers refer to historical figures when teaching difficult past events? Which approaches to teaching difficult past events are reflected in teachers' ways of talking about historical figures?

The paper is based on an analysis of lessons by three 11th grade history teachers in Israel on the controversial Altalena Affair. Each teacher assigned a different role to the historical figures. We argue that awareness of the relation between the way teachers present historical figures and the way they handle controversial events may provide them with a tool for reflecting on their teaching practice.

Keywords: Controversial events; Difficult past; History teaching; Historical figures.

The roots of difficult past events can be found in trauma, controversy, or internal conflict and accordingly, they evoke disquiet if not distress in public discourse (Goldberg, 2018; Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2009; Zembylas, 2018). The history of the twentieth century is rife with such events, which contemporary society must acknowledge. For example, policymakers in the US deal with how to represent the Vietnam War to the public. In Germany, people must confront the question how to present and define the Nazi era and World War II, and South Africans face the challenge of presenting the history of apartheid. The current study was conducted in Israel where policymakers and the public also must confront difficult events, many of them related to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and others that touch upon internal issues in Jewish-Israeli society.

3.2   Literature Review
3.2.1   Difficult Past and the Prism of the Historical Figure

A wide variety of cultural representations, such as official and unofficial ceremonies, movies, memorials, songs and texts reflect the hegemonic narrative of the establishment or the counter-narrative of groups and individuals in society toward their past. These representations have a profound and varied influence on how the historical awareness of members of society is constructed (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Kidman, 2018; Tinkham, 2018; Author, 2007).

The public education system is one of the most important places in the public sphere where the narrative of commemoration is constructed (Epstein & Peck, 2018; Goldberg, 2018). Expressions and representations of difficult past events vary not only *across* national education systems, but also *within* them, in different periods, groups, schools, and among different teachers (Wrenn et al., 2007). For example, the educational approach to Germany's Nazi past differed in East and West Germany and was different during the Cold War years compared to the years following the reunification of Germany (Von Borries, 2003). In South Africa, the way apartheid was studied shortly after it ended was different compared to subsequent years (Wassermann, 2018). In Israel, approaches to studying difficult past events differ between religious and secular schools, and between Arab and Jewish schools. Differences are also found among history teachers, even in the same school.

These different approaches may be examined through various prisms. We can analyze the nature of the historical information students are exposed to (Goldberg,

2018; Stoskopf & Bermudez, 2018); the type of work they are asked to produce (Author, 2008); or the effect of the teachers' stated position (Stoskopf & Bermudez, 2018; Zembylas, 2018). An additional prism is to analyze how historical figures are represented in class.

The prism of the historical figure is often mentioned in public controversies around how to represent the past in the public sphere. For example, in 2017 there was a public outcry in the US concerning the decision to remove statues of Confederate General Robert Edward Lee (Duggan, 2017). The question of how to commemorate General Lee reflects the ongoing dispute in American society concerning the memory of the Civil War. Another example is the deep split among the Jewish Israeli public concerning the commemoration of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was assassinated in 1995 due to his controversial efforts to promote peace with the Palestinians (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2009).

The ways historical figures are represented in history lessons focusing on difficult past events have not yet been discussed in the research literature. Analyzing them may shed additional light on how teachers cope with controversial issues. Such an analysis is reported below with regard to the 1948 Altalena Affair.

3.2.2 Teaching Difficult Past in State Schools

The nation state considers history teaching in schools to be a tool for reinforcing national sentiments and awareness (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2016; Kizel, 2015). This attitude is explicit or implicit in the history curriculum and policy papers of many countries (Ahonen, 2018; Gross, 2013; Taylor, 2000; Wassermann, 2018). Teaching and learning about difficult past events, however, can potentially undermine the sense of pride and national solidarity of the public because it may increase tensions between different sectors of society, or cause students to criticize their social group (Goldberg, 2018; Wassermann, 2018). Nevertheless, difficult past events are included in history curricula in many countries. This is related to other goals of history education, such as imparting disciplinary thinking patterns that apply a critical approach and developing a civics-social education that can develop sensitivity and tolerance towards the other. Meeting these goals requires facing the difficult past, in a way that can undermine existing positions, invite students to make ethical choices, and expose them to a multitude of perspectives (Goldberg, 2018; McCully, 2018; Noddings & Brooks, 2016).

When required to teach about difficult past events in their lessons, history teachers are faced with the challenge of dealing with the tensions these events may evoke (Ahonen, 2018; Bekerman & Zembylas, 2016; Goldberg, 2014; Seixas, 2018). Standard teaching tasks such as choosing texts, wording questions, and conducting classroom discussions take on an extra dimension when teaching controversial topics. Teachers are required to decide on whether they are committed to constructing nationalist awareness or to fostering a critical approach. They need to ask themselves to what extent, if any, do have the authority to undermine the hegemonic narrative, and how should they react when students criticize national heroes, whose acts or policies were controversial, or when students refuse to accept criticism by others for these acts.

3.2.3 The Altalena Affair

On June 22, 1948, during Israel's war with the Palestinians and neighboring Arab countries, large crowds stood amazed on the Tel Aviv promenade. The Altalena, a ship containing large stocks of arms and munitions, went up in flames and sank not far off from the coast. Earlier on, a bloody confrontation between different armed factions had taken place with shots fired on the coast and at sea, causing 19 fatalities and many more injured. The battle brought the Jewish population in Israel to the brink of civil war (Brenner, 1978; Nakdimon, 1978).

This event is a source of fierce debate. Differences of opinion and political tensions were brought to the fore with extreme violence manner during the Altalena Affair, which wracked Israeli society (Barzilai, 2013; Gordis, 2017; Nakdimon, 2016). To this day, there are outstanding questions that do not have definitive answers: What led to this violent confrontation? Why did Menachem Begin, the commander of Etzel,[7] insist on transferring some of the arms on the ships to his own people rather than to the Israeli army? Why did Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion order to bombard the ship given the inevitable loss of life? Who botched the negotiations? Who was responsible for bringing the newly formed state to the brink of

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[7] Also known as the Irgun, the Etzel (acronym of National Military Organization) was a Jewish underground active against the British and Arabs in 1931-1948, during the British Mandate in Palestine, identified with the ideological right wing and headed by future Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

civil war? Who ensured that, in the end, the affair did not escalate into a full-scale civil war?

The answer to these questions involves analyzing the roles played by the historical figures, because the events in the Altalena Affair are the outcome of controversial decisions made by controversial figures. Our decision to focus on the prism of how figures, which means famous people who took part in this affair, are represented in lessons about the Altalena Affair is based in two assumptions. First, every historical event involves decisions and actions by people. Second, the way in which people are involved in the historical narrative may have a significant impact on how learners interpret the event (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Carr, 1964; Vansover, 2016). By analyzing the attitude to figures in history lessons about the Altalena Affair, we reveal various approaches used by history teachers when presenting difficult past events. This test case will be used to answer the following research questions:

1. How do teachers refer to historical figures when teaching difficult past events?
2. Which approaches to teaching difficult past events are reflected in teachers' ways of talking about historical figures?

3.3   Method

The study was conducted using the constructivist-interpretive method (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Josselson, 2004; Wiggins & Riley, 2010). The findings are based on the interpretation of observations of history lessons in three classes. The categories for analysis emerged from the observations according to the methodological pattern that focuses on the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Grbich, 2007). The goal of this study is to reveal existing structures of how controversial historical events are taught, with the emphasis on the place and stature of the historical figures in the narrative. We selected a method based on observations of an existing situation and interpretation of what the teachers and students said in their natural setting and how they interacted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

3.3.1 Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in three 11th-grade classes in two Jewish schools in Israel.[8] Two of the classes were in a school located in a city with a relatively high socioeconomic status (cluster 8/10) and the third in another school in a city with a relatively low socioeconomic status (cluster 4/10) (Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

Both schools belong to an inclusive education program, committed to the integration of Jewish secular and religious students. The goal of inclusive education is to create a "common educational framework for religious, secular and traditional students that allows each group to maintain its unique identity"[9]. The inclusion of students with different religiosity contributes to integration in Israeli society in general, among other things by fostering a culture of dealing with controversial issues (Reichner, 2016). Thus, these schools have a common basis that was necessary to compare different ways of dealing with the disputed aspects of the Altalena Affair.

Shira, Yonatan and Yael (pseudonyms) were the participants in this study (see Table 3) – all experienced teachers with many years of teaching practice (13, 8 and 18, respectively).

Table 3: Participant teachers

Teacher (pseudonyms)	Age	Teaching experience	Academic degree	Fields of expertise
Shira	41	13	M.A.	History and Literature
Yonatan	48	8	M.A.	History and Civics
Yael	43	18	M.A.	History and Literature

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[8] The education system in Israel is heavily segregated, with almost all students enrolled according to their ethno-religious group in Arab, Jewish secular and Jewish religious schools.
[9] http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Applications/Mankal/EtsMedorim/3/3-1/HoraotKeva/K-2012-8-1-3-1-42.htm

3.3.2 Curriculum Context

The three 11th grade classes in the study shared the following characteristics: (1) they followed the state curriculum; (2) they were studying for the standard national matriculation exam in history; and (3) student admissions to the schools were non-selective. Each class had between 20 and 32 students.

In Israel, high school education is geared toward the internal and external matriculation exams. History is one of the compulsory subjects. Student usually study for the history matriculation exam in 10th and 11th grades. The final grade is largely (70%) based on a uniform, external exam. The Altalena Affair is a compulsory topic included on this exam.

3.3.3 Instruments and Data Collection

The study involved 10 hours of observation for each teacher (for a total of 30). For each teacher, two of the hours we observed were about the Altalena Affair. The other eight hours enabled us to become familiar with the teaching and learning habits, discipline rules, and group dynamics. All observations were documented in field diaries and audio recordings.

A semi-structured interview was conducted with the teachers to clarify their professional background, pedagogic approach, and stated approach in teaching difficult past events and the Altalena Affair in particular.

3.3.4 Data Analysis

The recordings of the Altalena Affair lessons were fully transcribed. The first reading was done by the principal researcher to identify the basic discourse units and outline an initial coding scheme. In the second stage, a research assistant analyzed the transcript using these initial coding schemes to test their reliability and refine the definitions of the various categories. In addition, expressions that deviated from the categories were highlighted. In the third stage, the researchers met to determine the categories, which formed the basis of the data analysis:

Chart 1: Historical figures and controversy
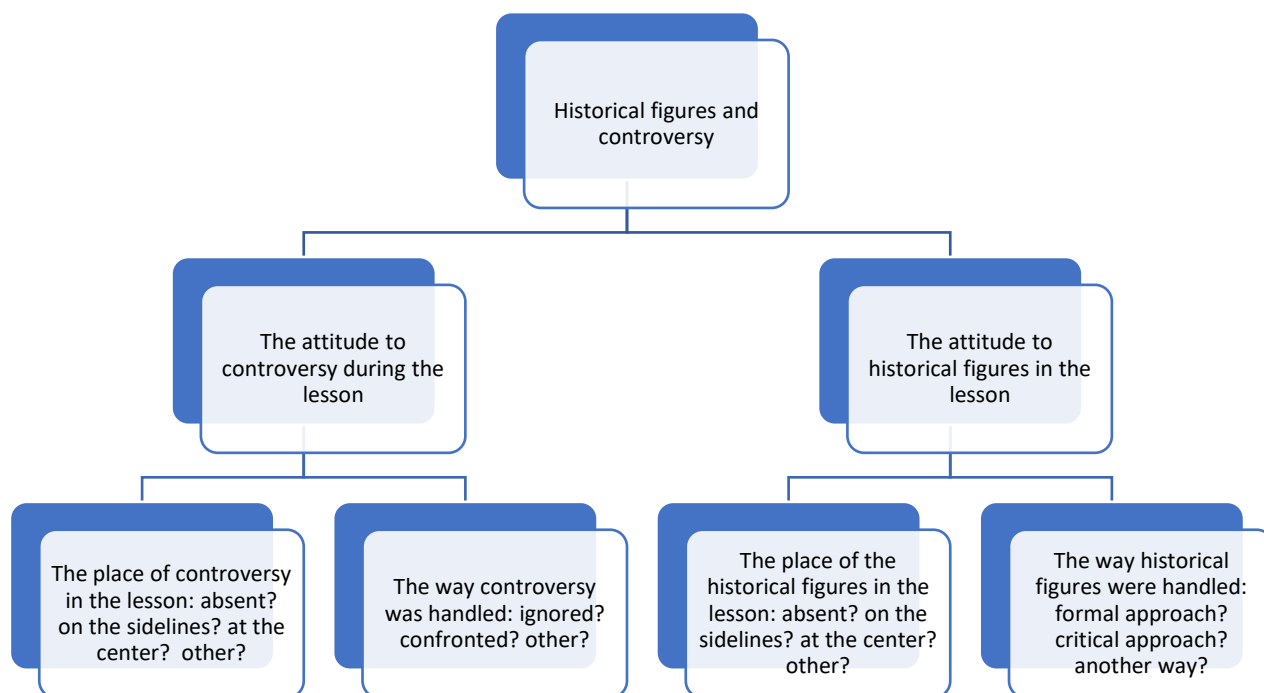
The lesson transcripts were analyzed by the researchers using the coding scheme. During an additional meeting, each researcher presented an interpretation of the transcripts regarding the categories in the coding scheme. In cases of disagreement, a discussion was held among the researchers. The findings chapter includes quotations that enjoyed a broad consensus of interpretation.

3.4   Findings

The lessons that Shira, Yonatan and Yael taught about the Altalena Affair shared several common features. They all used explanations and descriptions, presented the students with primary and secondary sources, and held a classroom discussion. All three referred to the historical figures who took part in the affair. However, significant differences between the teachers were observed regarding the amount of time spent discussing the figures, how the figures were referred to, and the roles the teachers attributed to the figures when describing the event. Our goal was to

examine how, if at all, the way teachers dealt with the historical figures in the Altalena Affair reflected an approach to teaching about difficult past events.

3.4.1 Shira's Lesson: "Unfortunately, we did not have perfect leaders"

Presenting the lesson topic to her class, Shira said:

> The Altalena Affair […] is one of the stories that people still disagree about […]. Some people consider it an open wound and one of the most contentious issues between right and left in the history of the State of Israel […]. It is a story of Jews who fired at Jews […]. Now I want us to get to know two people – David Ben-Gurion and Menachem Begin […]. The relationship between the two had for many years been, let us say, very bitter […] because Begin was the leader of the [nationalist] Revisionist party […]. David Ben Gurion served as […] the first Prime Minister […] Menachem Begin was his political nemesis.

In her introduction, Shira emphasized two elements: the conflict and the historical figures. She described the event as an open wound, and immediately afterwards, directly linking the conflict to the affair, she presented two figures: Ben-Gurion and Begin. Shira's introduction moved quickly from a very general description of the affair to talking about it from the angle of a bitter relationship between specific individuals. Thus, right from the outset, she made a connection between the controversy and the human factor.

Presenting the historical event together with the interpersonal relationship was also reflected in the main source Shira chose for the lesson. The discussion was based on watching an episode from a television series in which actors reenacted the events of the Altalena Affair, interspersed with witness testimonies (Lerner & Cohen, 2008). Before watching the film, Shira guided the students to focus on the historical figures:

> Shira: Who were the figures in the affair that we already know?
>
> Nadav: Etzel and Lehi[10] […] the Haganah.[11]
>
> Shira: […] Who were the main figures there? Take note of the names […]. I want you to follow them in the film […] Ben-Gurion, the Prime

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[10] Lehi (acronym of Israel Freedom Fighters) was a Jewish underground active against the British and Arabs in 1940-1948. The movement was headed by Avraham Stern, hence its alias Stern Gang.
[11] A Jewish underground active in 1920-1948. Identified with the Labor Zionist leadership of the Jewish community in Palestine and its leader Ben-Gurion, the Haganah formed the nucleus of what became the IDF.

Minister, Begin, […]. Another figure I want us to discuss is Yigal Yadin, who was […] a senior figure in the IDF. I want you to pay special attention to these figures. Take note of what they say and later we will try to understand […] what clash of values occurred within this story? Why do some people still view it as an open wound?

When Shira asked about the figures involved in the Altalena Affair, a student gave the names of movements and organizations. Considering his answer, the fact that Shira placed historical figures at the center of the discussion was highly significant. She linked the intensity of the conflict ("an open wound") to the figures involved. In the ensuing classroom observations, we noted how the emphasis on viewing the conflict through the eyes of historical figures was discussed.

Shira: Ok, let's get things in order […]. What was Ben-Gurion afraid of? […]

Alon: He said that a kind of putsch was underway.

Shira: A plot for a putsch by the Etzel. […] Ben-Gurion thought that if we give in to Etzel's demands […] then we are in fact letting force rule us […]. Which value did Ben-Gurion say he was prepared to fight for at all costs […]?

Suzy: Sovereignty.

Shira: […] Sovereignty, […] the state's ability to rule […]. Are we truly able to manage the country […] without there being a military coup, without letting the Etzel telling us what to do? On the other hand, what value guided Begin? […] Begin certainly did not underestimate the principle of sovereignty […]. He was a bitter foe but Begin did not disregard it. […] Why was Begin afraid for the fate of the state? […]

Michael: […] That it would diminish their strength, that they would not be able to fight at all.

Shira: Good. […] He said to Ben-Gurion: "You have decreed our fate to lose the war."

Shira played a dominant role in this conversation. She actively steered her students to search for Ben-Gurion and Begin's motivations for their aggressive actions. Shira argued that Ben-Gurion's actions defended the value of state sovereignty and Begin acted in defense of the state's unity and survival. To reinforce the two leaders' arguments, Shira attributed words to the figures that they did not

actually say by using expressions such as "Ben-Gurion said" or "he said to Ben-Gurion".

This part of the lesson stressed what the two leaders had in common, that they both acted on behalf of the common good on a national level. Through additional questions, Shira directed her students to look for other motives the leaders may have had:

> Shira: In the film, there was more than one hint that there were other considerations that came into play in this story. Considerations that were not necessarily moral […]. We must know how to identify them by reading between the lines […]. Which other considerations motivated Ben-Gurion and Begin? […]
>
> Amit: One was a rightwing extremist and the other leftwing […]
>
> Shira: […] When two parties argue, what kind of argument do we call it?
>
> Yossi: Political.
>
> Amit: Ben-Gurion considered him a threat to ruling the state.
>
> Shira: […] When we talk about political considerations, it would be that […] the Altalena Affair intensified a certain political disagreement […]. Ben-Gurion wanted to gain a political benefit from what was happening in this country and so did Begin.
>
> Daniel: [Begin] also said that he would not fire shots so that people would not say that they were terrorists.
>
> Shira: Excellent. […]. So that people would not say that we are terrorists, and he also […] wanted Ben-Gurion to be politically weakened by this affair […]. He said, "He will be remembered as a despicable murderer".

Shira asked her students to "read between the lines" of the film and look for additional motives for the controversial actions of these two central figures. Referring to her students' comments, she actively put forward an argument that considerations of political power may have influenced how Ben-Gurion and Begin acted. In reaction to Amit's general comment, she ignored the ideological connotations of right and left, and steered the discussion in the direction of political parties and interests. Later, she endorsed Daniel's comment about the fear expressed by Begin and talked about the political image that Ben-Gurion and Begin could achieve from this affair. In addition to the ideological and political arguments, Shira added another aspect:

Shira: Which other considerations affect the decisions of these two people? […]

Ruth: There were personal considerations, […] Ben-Gurion listens to [his wife] Paula. She says to him: "You will be remembered as the prime minister who killed Jews […]."

Shira: True. […] Ben-Gurion said: "We will stop them by every possible means" and Paula tells him "You must not give this order, because then you will be remembered […] as the Prime Minister who killed Jews." […] In the end, a leader is still a human being, and he may be influenced by his wife, or by others around him.

Shira expanded Ruth's argument, describing Ben-Gurion's interaction with his wife and raising the general possibility that personal relationships have an impact on historical figures when they make decisions. She then led her students to observe the historical event from another personal perspective, that of an interpersonal confrontation:

Shira: […] What else was felt there very strongly?

Ruth: They cannot stand each other.

Shira: Where did you see that they can't stand each other?

Liza: There is such a war of egos between them.

Shira: Where did you see this?

Amit: On the ship when [Begin] said that he will not raise a white flag.

Liza: And this minister, [Ben-Gurion] did not want to speak to him because he was also an associate of Begin.

Ruth's argument that "they can't stand each other" and Liza's argument that Ben-Gurion and Begin were involved in a war of egos were very general. Amit and Liza provided answers that included evidence after Shira demanded that they support their comments with the events they saw in the movie. The interpersonal aspect of the events led to questioning and disagreements between the students:

Shira: So, […] there was also personal enmity between Ben-Gurion and Begin […]

Noam: What, such a person can be a prime minister?

Shira: […] At the end of the day, they are human beings, and we must consider the fact that a large measure of personal animosity is based on political enmity.

Noam: It doesn't matter. He is the prime minister. He must set an example
[…]

Shira: Unfortunately, we did not have perfect leaders […]. Do you think
that the story of the Altalena was decided more because of personal
considerations or more because of considerations that were directly
connected to the affair?

Tom: Personal.

Noam: What do you mean by personal? Are you crazy?

Tom: It's personal – Begin against Ben-Gurion.

Noam: It's not personal!

Lili: I think it is more about the nature of Ben-Gurion and Begin's
characters […]. I mean that if it were someone else who had the same
ideology and the same political views, maybe it would have been […] less
important for them to stand up for their principles.

The discussion centered on the extent to which the interpersonal factor
influenced the events of the Altalena Affair. By distancing the leaders from their
statesmanlike image and presenting them as people who were also moved by
emotions, Shira gave the students an opportunity to critically evaluate the conflict.
Lili presented a viewpoint that the combination of the two different personalities
made the affair develop as it did. In that, she expressed an understanding of the
variety of factors that influenced Ben-Gurion and Begin in their decision-making, as
well as understanding of the influence that the figure has on the historical event.

The disagreement among the students on the question of the more dominant
factor shows that Shira exposed her students to a complex picture of the situation,
from a multitude of perspectives, and thus brought the conflict to the forefront. Shira's
emphasis on the historical figures was the main tool she used to present the
controversial aspects of the Altalena Affair.

3.4.2 Yonatan's Lesson: "When you establish a state, there are difficulties"

Yonatan opened the lesson about the Altalena Affair by asking his students a
question:

Yonatan: Who knows about the Altalena Affair? Has anyone ever heard of
it?

Daniel: It's about Ben-Gurion, isn't it? […]. Ben-Gurion decided to bomb a ship belonging to the Etzel […] because they did something that was not…

Tal: It was illegal or something like that, so Ben-Gurion simply bombed it.

Yonatan: OK. […] Altalena is a difficulty that came up […]. When you establish a state, you do not just say "abracadabra", and everything works out well in a flash. There are difficulties and challenges, there is a sovereign authority – in this case, it was the temporary government of the State of Israel. […] The sovereign authority can be everywhere, it could be your parents at home or your boss at work who are the sovereign authority who must make decisions.

Daniel and Tal gave general and inaccurate answers to Yonatan's question. At the same time, they knew very clearly that Ben-Gurion took part in this affair. Yonatan's words about the affair were even more general. He talked about sovereign authority and about the challenges that arise "when you establish a state". When talking about sovereignty, Yonatan applied it to contexts beyond the political-historical field, such as family and work. He also omitted the historical figure from his description. By doing so, Yonatan expanded the perspective on the Altalena Affair and distanced it from its historical context, so that it became a generic event of states in the making.

Yonatan also distanced the historical figures from the event by using generic figures. Trying to clarify the motives of the Etzel members involved in the affair, he said:

Try to imagine that I am a commander in the Etzel. You are my friend and you're fighting in Jerusalem. The state has been established. An army has been established. I call you up and ask: "What's up, bro?" and you reply: "Listen, I am in the middle of the fighting here in Jerusalem", and I reply: "No problem, bro, it's gonna be OK". So, we are both members of Etzel […]. I am in Tel Aviv and the ship arrives. […] I want to supply my friend with arms. You are my friend, awesome, but you are also part of the IDF. […] I will be told to give over the arms to the IDF. That is a very big deal, you understand?

Yonatan used a role-play story in which he and one of his students were Etzel fighters having an imaginary conversation. He used current slang and mentioned

actions that could not have occurred in the Altalena days ("I call you up"). By doing so, Yonatan distanced the event from the historical features and contributed to presenting the affair as a generic event. Juxtaposing past events with familiar contemporary events was also observed later in the lesson, when describing the most violent stages of the Altalena Affair:

> Are you all familiar with the following scenario? A group of kids taunts another group saying: "Here we come, you're done for, now we're in charge". A confrontation began on the beach, at first it was verbal but gradually it became violent […]. There was incitement in the air, and you all know what happens when people incite. You are all familiar with this from when you hang around with your friends here in school […] when someone comes along and throws out an insult, then another person reacts and then things begin to get out of hand. That's what happened over there on the beach [...] there was shooting on the beach and people died.

Yonatan interspersed descriptions in the present and past tense. He began by describing a confrontation between friends in the present tense and moved on to describe what happened on the beach, returned to the friends in school and then again to past events. By switching between past and present, Yonatan drew a parallel between the violence used in the Altalena Affair and the fights students are familiar with from school. Then he continued to generalize the event by avoiding any reference to actual participants. A clear example for this can be found in his description of the outcomes of the violence as "people died", without referring to their identity. In these statements, Yonatan generalized the event and turned it into a generic type of confrontation between unspecified people. He did not deal with the controversial aspects of the event.

Although historical figures were not central to Yonatan's lesson, he did not completely ignore the people involved:

> The Etzel commanders say: "We want part of the arms to be supplied to our fighters in Jerusalem. We will transfer some of the arms to the IDF, but we want to keep some of the arms for our people" […]. Ben-Gurion says: "Wait a moment. There is one army. The IDF. A ship has arrived? *Ahlan wa-sahlan* [welcome]! *Tefadal* [by all means], unload all your equipment. Hand it over to the army, and the IDF, the army of the sovereign state, will deliver it to those who need it." […] Begin, the Etzel

commander who would one day become prime minister, had signed a decree that disbanded Etzel and transferred all of its arms to the IDF […]. I told you that now there was a great deal of tension about the relations with the government, sovereign authority, and settling scores.

Yonatan referred directly to Ben-Gurion and Begin's activities, while providing a general description of the course of events. When referring to what Ben-Gurion said, Yonatan used slang words borrowed from Arabic, words that Ben-Gurion most definitely would not have used (see: Shaltiel, 1996). By attributing to Ben-Gurion slang familiar to students, Yonatan presented him as a person whose actions may also be examined outside of the actual context in which they occurred, in a generic way.

When referring to Begin, Yonatan noted that he later became prime minister. Seemingly, this piece of information seems irrelevant to the description of the event. The linkage that Yonatan made between Begin the leader of Etzel and Begin the Prime Minister may contribute to portraying his personality as a man whose actions should not be examined solely in the actual context of this event, but in broader contexts as well. This is an additional way of creating distance from the controversial aspects of the affair.

At the end of this quotation, Yonatan referred to tension related to government, sovereign authority, and settling scores. He did not refer to Begin and Ben-Gurion as people involved in a concrete political, ideological and/or personal confrontation. Rather, he referred to them as people who represented general and timeless power struggles about leadership, sovereignty, and politics. He paid little attention to the actual characteristics of the figures taking part in the event and thereby contributed to blurring its controversial aspects. This approach was also seen in the following classroom discussion:

Yair: Did he [Ben Gurion] want to kill Begin?

Yonatan: Don't know […]

Yair: So why did Ben-Gurion blow up the ship?

Yonatan: Oh, this is a question. […] There are 10 minutes left and I need you to listen. We also have the memorial plaque to the Altalena on the Tel Aviv beach.

Yair's questions reflects an attempt to understand why the figures involved in this story acted as they did. The first question reflected a wish to understand the depth

of the rivalry between by trying to assess Ben-Gurion's concrete goals concerning Begin. The second question was an attempt to understand the considerations that motivated Ben-Gurion to order the bombarding of the Altalena. Yonatan did not answer Yair's questions and returned to discuss the broader aspects of the affair. Once again, the role played by the two leaders in the affair and its controversial aspects were kept at a distance. This was observed again in Yonatan's reaction to another student's question:

> Yonatan: When a person is not willing to act for moral reasons, he may
> refuse to carry out orders. Here we have a case of conscientious objection.
> Yosef something-or-other was the IDF's first conscientious objector, he
> did not want to fire on the Altalena [...]. The Air Force and some people in
> the Navy also refused to fire […]
> Daniel: So, who did fire? […] If you said that neither the Air Force nor the
> Navy fired shots, who did fire?
> Yonatan: From the ground.
> Daniel: Who?
> Yonatan: Soldiers. Soldiers, IDF soldiers […]. Shots were also fired from
> the Altalena to the coast. Both sides are right. Each side fired on the other.

Yonatan tried to illustrate the concept of conscientious objection by referring to the actual historical event, but he blurred the identities of the people by mentioning "Yosef-something-or-other", "the Air Force" and "the Navy". Yonatan's response to Daniel's questions emphasized his avoidance of talking about actual people. By omitting the mention of specific people who took part in the affair, the description of the violent aspects of the events lacked any reference to the ideological, political, or interpersonal minefields that were the basis for this conflict. Summing up his input, Yonatan said, "both sides are right", without pointing at actual people who fired shots and what led them to violence. As a consequence, the discussion on the controversial aspects of the affair was severely curtailed.

3.4.3 Yael's Lesson: "We will avert civil war"
When Yael taught the Altalena Affair, she told her students:

> It is very difficult to tell this story objectively. We are dealing with one
> story, one event, a few dry facts: A ship purchased in 1947 set sail in June
> 1948 after the IDF had been established. The ship requested to unload the

arms and transfer them to the Etzel fighters [...]. The request was denied; the ship tried to dock at [Kfar] Vitkin [north of Tel Aviv]; it failed; it tried to dock at Tel Aviv; shots were fired at it and it sank. These are the dry facts, but no one can tell this story this way […]. I tried very hard to talk about the facts alone, and I know that I was not 100 percent successful in separating the facts from the emotions.

Yael's difficulty in teaching the Altalena Affair was not related to its violence or the controversial decisions made by the historical figures, but rather to conveying the controversial contents. Her awareness of the fact that she would not be able to tell the story "objectively" did not prevent her from declaring that she tried to present the affair in a factual manner, devoid of emotional overtones. But is it possible to strip all emotional involvement from a historical narrative? How can one learn about events such as the Altalena Affair without referring to its political, moral, and emotional aspects?

Yael's concise description demonstrates one way of excluding emotions from the affair: she did not refer to the people involved at all. Instead, she personified the ship by attributing human actions to it: it set sail; requested to unload; tried to dock. Using the passive tense, Yael describes how shots were fired at the ship and that it sank. The people on board and those who fired shots are completely absent. This approach enabled Yael to avoid on this stage from discussing the controversial aspects of the affair.

However, analysis of other parts of Yael's lesson show that the historical narrative she presented to her students was in fact not so sanitized of emotions and messages. Yael made direct reference to the key figures involved:

Yael: Begin conducts negotiations with [Haganah leader] Galili before the ship sets sail. These negotiations continue until Ben-Gurion orders to stop […] but Begin asks: "What am I going to do with this equipment? I want to distribute part of it to the IDF and part of it to my soldiers." […]. What was Ben-Gurion's reply?

Dina: That they should disband and become IDF [soldiers].

Yael: Good answer.

Yael described an imaginary dialogue between Begin and Ben-Gurion based on the positions and arguments she attributed to them. Examination of actual quotes

reveals a different picture. In his autobiography *The Revolt* (1978), Begin wrote: "We demanded that the efficient arms that we had brought here after a great effort, should be transferred to them [=Etzel fighters]" (p. 244). In a cabinet meeting in which this demand was discussed, Ben-Gurion said: "Mr. Begin will not do whatever he feels like [...]. If he does not give in [to our demand] we will open fire" (Bar-Zohar, 1986, p. 301). These quotes imply that Begin did not ask for some of the arms to be transferred to the Etzel – rather, he demanded it. Ben-Gurion did not explain the situation to Begin – rather, his reaction to Begin's demands was derogatory. From what Yael said, one can conclude that despite their differences, the two level-headed leaders spoke to each other in a respectful tone. Describing the confrontation as a dialogue is very different from how the actual historical event transpired and undermines its seriousness. This approach was also seen when Yael described the violence that erupted:

> The Etzel fighters somehow think that if they bring it to Tel Aviv, in full view of the public [...] the outcome will be different. They sail with the ship [...] to the Tel Aviv coast, and there an order to shell the ship is received [...]. The outcome [...] is threefold. The ship [...] sinks; all the arms aboard are destroyed and become useless, explode, sink [...]. Sixteen [militia] fighters are killed in addition to three IDF soldiers. The Etzel leader chooses not to fire back at the shots directed at them from the coast toward the ship and thus civil war is averted. "We will avert civil war" is a direct quote from Begin.

Yael attributed the violent developments to general categories: IDF soldiers, Etzel fighters, Jews, Etzel leaders. The source of the order to shell the ship remained obscure. While no figures were mentioned in the description of the bloody stages of the event, her reference to Begin as the averter of civil war was clear. Yael's description may have had the effect of blurring the responsibility for opening fire, while emphasizing Begin's contribution to healing the rift by demonstrating responsibility and leadership in real time. Later in the lesson, she elaborated:

> This is the story of Menachem Begin. Begin is on board the ship. The ship is being shelled. He has a lot of arms on board [...]. He can give the order to shoot back. Instead, he says: "We will not return fire. I will not cause a civil war."

In this quote, Yael explicitly presents Begin as a responsible leader whose approach is to avoid violence. She describes him as the owner of the arms, and as the one who could have brought about an intensification of the conflict, but consciously chose to avoid it. There is solid research to prove the accuracy of this description of Begin's behavior in the final stages of the Altalena Affair (Nakdimon, 1976). However, Begin's actions throughout the event may also be presented as aggressive and divisive (Brenner, 1978). These interpretations of his actions were not presented at any stage of the lesson.

Yael's description of Begin may be understood as an expression of her political views, or as she said: "It took me time to be able to speak about it not from the point of view of the Etzel" (interview, March 2018). However, analysis of the way she presented Ben-Gurion to her students showed that this is not only an expression of her personal view, but also a possible preference for the consensus over the conflictual:

Yael: Why was David Ben-Gurion so intransigent […]?

Amit: He was afraid there would be rebellion, that another army would be established next to the IDF […]

Yael: The fear was from a military move that could undermine the IDF's authority, which was just born […]

Danny: It was a precautionary measure for all to see and be warned of the consequences.

Mira: […] Because he wanted a united army. He did not want an army of many underground movements.

Yael: Ben-Gurion understood that when he establishes a state it must be according to all the rules of a state: one state with one government. […] The fear is for the army that is getting off to a rocky start. […] We cannot have a situation in which we are fighting a war against such a difficult enemy and at the same time waging internal battles.

Leah: But that is what he did!

Yael: No. He put a stop to this battle […]. Ben-Gurion was prepared to pay a very heavy price. [He said:] "I am going to sink this ship, with all the arms on board. I am going to create a situation in which soldiers will fire on other Jews. […] I will lose the arms, even though I have a shortage of arms, because the most dramatic challenge I face is creating a single

army. […] I need to take very decisive action and pay a very heavy price to say that there will not be more than one army here."

In this discussion, Yael presented Ben-Gurion as seeking national cohesion and protection of the public interest. She presented his controversial decision as proof that he was prepared to pay a heavy price to stop the internal battle. She blurred the bloody price of this action by ignoring the actual people who paid with their lives. Yael did not react to Danny's comment that Ben-Gurion's action was motivated by the wish to frighten the public. She also decisively dismissed Leah's claim that Ben-Gurion was the one who ignited internal struggles among the Israelis. Rather, Yael presented him as a leader whose actions were motivated by national and statesmanlike considerations and not by political or personal ones, as his opponents in the Etzel claimed (Nakdimon, 1978).

The way Yael presented Ben-Gurion to her students represented her educational position. Throughout the lesson, she instructed students to balance the two sides, to soften the controversial aspects, and to reinforce a national healing and a unifying perception. When discussing the figures involved, Yael presented two levelheaded, responsible leaders who were both motivated by concern for the future of the state and were prepared to pay a price for this. Despite the violent nature of the event, Yael did not present either as aggressive or single-minded nor did she criticize either of them. This may explain the lack of critical discussion or argument about Begin or Ben-Gurion's actions in her classroom. In this sense, although the lesson appeared to be free of controversy, it was not without a message.

3.5   Discussion

The Altalena Affair is a compulsory topic in the Israeli history curriculum. However, the policymakers did not tell teachers how to teach it. History teachers decide for themselves how to teach this topic and can channel the issues to be discussed as they see fit. In this article, we focused on how three teachers dealt with the historical figures involved in the Altalena Affair. We argue that the decisions they make reflect three different approaches to teaching difficult past events. These approaches will be conceptualized using terms borrowed from physiological responses to stress or danger – fight or flight – and adding a third category – light. These concepts were used because studying difficult historical events entails entering

a danger zone that may give rise to heated discussions, with the teacher possibly being forced to confront strong arguments put forward by students.

3.5.1 "Fight": Focus on Figures

Shira directed her students to an intensive study of the historical figures and let the controversial aspects of the Altalena Affair be noticeably present during the lesson. She presented the ideological disagreement between the leaders, the struggle for political gain, and the personal enmity between Begin and Ben-Gurion as motives for their actions. By facing up to the controversial aspects, she revealed a disagreement to the class – which included the ways personal considerations influenced the leaders' actions. By placing historical figures at the center of the class discussion, the students and teacher were forced to confront ("fight") some of the historical conflicts.

The "fight" approach may help develop multiperspectivity because it exposes students to various approaches to the event (Hartner, 2012). Multiperspectivity in history teaching is usually achieved by exposing students to a variety of historical sources and asking them to conduct research assignments, with emphasis on critical thinking and rational discourse (Goldberg & Ron, 2014; Goldberg, 2018; Stradling, 2003; Wrenn et al., 2007). In the current case study, the multitude of perspectives was revealed not by a variety of sources and academic research methods, but by referring to the different characteristics and motives of the historical figures involved in the event. In contrast to using historical research methodology that requires intellectual distance from the events, studying the people involved enables students to understand the complexity of human behavior and to relate to the event in a more personal way (Barton & McCully, 2012; Vansover, 2016). By presenting historical figures as complex human beings and revealing the multidimensional aspects of the conflict between them, the teacher confronted the controversial content and placed it at the center of the lesson.

3.5.2 "Flight": Figures Forced to the Sidelines

By placing historical figures on the sidelines and replacing them with personification, generalization, or generic figures, Yonatan minimized the conflictual aspects of the affair, making it possible to observe the historical event from a very general, almost generic point of view. When students asked questions about the historical figures that touched upon the heart of the conflict, Yonatan delayed

replying, or answered in general terms. Thus, he was able to avoid ("flee") the controversial aspects of the event.

The "flight" approach may be understood in the context of teaching difficult past events to young children. In such cases, some scholars suggest avoiding a direct confrontation of children with difficult past (Wrenn et. al., 2007). Studies have shown that some teachers have adopted this approach in teaching older students, not out of fear of emotionally damaging the students, but because they wish to avoid a heated emotional discussion and to avoid confrontations which will not have the support of the school authorities (Barton & McCully, 2012; Farley, 2009; Goldberg, 2018; Magendzo & Toledo, 2009; Zembylas, 2018). The findings of this study show that such "fleeing" only distances the students from the actual conflict and misses the opportunity to discuss the moral, political or social aspects of the affair in question.

3.5.3 "Light": A Selective Attitude to the Figures

By selectively referring to the figures, Yael was able to mitigate the controversial aspects of the affair and reinforce the elements of national unity. Yael attributed violent human actions to non-human factors or to generalized categories, while presenting unifying and healing motifs as actions by the leaders, even though they were locked in a bitter and violent conflict. In doing so, she was able to present the conflictual aspects of the event more lightly.

The "light" approach is based on the goal of presenting the students with a balanced, cohesive, and methodical narrative founded on a description of difficult past without diminishing the students' sense of national pride, and perhaps even enhancing it (Seixas, 2000; Wassermann, 2018). This was achieved by representing the historical figures as people who were motivated by a sense of a national mission, and by attributing the violent aspects to generalized human categories.

This approach to historical figures involved in difficult past events may be used to achieve other goals such as helping students cope with guilt feelings or criticism (Goldberg, 2018). It may also help build a common social basis in religiously, politically or socially divided communities (Sheppard, 2010). Using the "light" approach, however, may also undermine the possibility of developing in-depth and critical discussion of difficult past events.

3.5.4 Limitations

We are aware of the limitations of this study. We observed three teachers in schools that share a unique agenda of integrating religious and secular students. We do not claim that these teachers represent the entire teacher population, nor can one infer any statistical generalizations from the findings. It is possible that our presence as external observers in the classroom influenced the behavior of the teachers and students during the lesson. Nevertheless, we argue that the observations can teach us about classroom dynamics, and that the approaches we identified shed light on an additional aspect of the dealing with difficult historical events in high-school history lessons.

3.6 Conclusions

"Fight or flight" describes the autonomous physiological response to dangerous situations in living organisms (Jansen, Nguyen, Karpitskiy, Mettenleiter, & Loewy, 1995). Unlike autonomous physiological responses, history teachers can and should rise to the challenge of teaching difficult past events. They must consciously plan their lessons in a logical way, based on clearly defined pedagogical and didactic philosophies (Wrenn et al., 2007). Examination of the various approaches to studying difficult past through the prism of the historical figure may provide teachers with a tool for examining and designing their teaching practice.

Some teachers may prefer to avoid the controversial aspects inherent in an event and may not refer to historical figures at all. Such an approach may reduce the intensity of the conflict in the classroom and allow the teacher to guide the discussion toward achieving other ideological or educational goals. In contrast, we observed that when historical figures were at the center of the lesson the problematic historical event became the focus of the discussion and disagreements about these events arose. Teachers who decide to use this approach must be prepared to handle such controversies. In the long run, the students will benefit from a lesson that generates a sometimes-heated discussion of the political, ideological, and interpersonal aspects of difficult past events.

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4   Reading biographical texts:

A gateway to historical disciplinary reading

Michal Honig and Dan Porat,

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

4.1 Abstract

We examined the response of high school students in Israel to biographical texts. Students were exposed to three sub-genres of biographical texts (a literary-biographical text, an autobiographical text, and a scientific-biographical text). These texts all differ from the conceptual schema of ordinary school texts. The data were collected from 64 participants from three classes in two different state schools in Israel. The ability of students to apply historical disciplinary reading skills was evaluated for each text, with an emphasis on 'sourcing' and 'corroboration'. The basic premise was that the texts the students are exposed to influence not only their level of knowledge but also their disciplinary concepts and skills (Paxton, 2002).

We contend that it might be that biographical texts, and especially autobiographical and literary-biographical texts, evoked historical reading in students, and strengthened their disciplinary reading abilities.

Keywords: history learning, history teaching, biographical texts, disciplinary reading.

4.2 Literature Review

In his article, "An answer to the question: What is Enlightenment?", Immanuel Kant attempts to explain why many people avoid intellectual independence:

> It is so comfortable to be a minor. If I have a book that thinks for me, a pastor who acts as my conscience, a physician who prescribes my diet, and so on--then I have no need to exert myself. I have no need to think…; others will take care of that disagreeable business for me. (Kant, 1784/1996, p.17)

It may be surprising that Kant thinks that a book hinders or contradicts intellectual independence, but we must note that Kant focused on a book written in an authoritative tone. As he adds later, the authoritative book reinforces the reader's belief that undermining the book's content is "not only hard but… extremely dangerous." (p.17)

In the field of history education, authoritative texts are mainly "school texts". The term "school text" refers not only to textbooks but to a variety of texts created at school or for school, including content from presentations, texts written on the board or dictated by the teacher to the students during class. These texts present historical events as being simple, linear and representing the absolute truth. These attributes, as well as others such as the absence of the author's voice, give the school-texts an authoritative aura (Bain, 2006; Olson, 1989; Wineburg, 2001; Peled- Elhanan, 2011, 2012; Podeh, 2000; Paxton, 2002).

These characteristics of "school texts" contribute to the establishment of a cognitive schema in students' consciousness regarding the characteristics of history and history learning. According to Piaget, people perceive the world using schemas, which are the basis of their world-view. These units guide people to respond to different stimuli. Piaget asserted that our cognitive schemas become more and more sophisticated throughout our lives through a dialectical process. In this process, new structures of knowledge and consciousness develop from encounters between the thesis, which is the old schema, and the antithesis, which offers a new and different structure. In the encounter between thesis and antithesis, a sense of stress arises, which stems from undermining the schemas that were formulated before. Cognitive development arises out of this sense of stress, which becomes possible when the schema change through contact with reality. (Piaget, 2013/ 1954; 2015/1971)

Piaget did not investigate development of historical disciplinary reading, but if we try to apply his theory to the field of learning and teaching history, we can make a correlation. "School texts" used in high school present history in a chronological, linear, and factual manner. These texts are characterized by the absence of the author's voice. Students tend to see these texts as authoritative and look at history as a discipline based on a linear accumulation of factual knowledge not open to debate. From a disciplinary point of view, this concept is one-dimensional and problematic, since history literacy is based on the ability to construct meaning out of multiple genres of sources, to create dialogue between different points of view, and to generate and evaluate multiple voices in relation to the historical events (Wineburg, 1991; Paxton, 2002; VanSledright, 2004 Nokes, 2013; VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016).

Research in history education has attempted to lead students to question the authoritative presentation of history, not only by calling for the questioning of textbooks, but also by exposing students to multiple documents and asking them to interpret, debate, reconstruct events, and write about them (Wineburg, 2001; Paxton, 2002; Bain, 2006; Neumann, 2010; Reisman, 2012).

None of these studies have dealt with students' responses to biographical texts. The aim of this research is to analyze the response of high school students to biographical texts they were exposed to during the course of this research. We asked two questions: 1) How did high school students respond to different sub-genres of biography (A literary-biographical text; An autobiographical text; A scientific-biographical text)? 2) Can exposure to these sub-genres of biography promote historical disciplinary reading in high school students?

4.2.1   School Texts Versus Biographical Texts

In order to establish the claim that biographical texts differ substantially from the schema of the school text we will differentiate between the most commonly used school text and the biographical text in four major categories: (a) status of the historical figure; (b) author-protagonist relationship; (c) author-reader relationship; (d) writing style (see Table 4).

Table 4: The educational history text compared to the biographical text

Category	The educational text	The biographical text
Status of historical protagonist	Absent, blurred or in the text margins	Present at the core of the text.
Author-protagonist relationships	Distance: The voice of the author is removed from the subject matter	Proximity: The voice of the author is close to the subject matter
Author-reader relationships	Distance: The voice of the author is absent from the text	Proximity: The voice of the author is present in the text
Writing style	"Considerate text": chronological, linear and causal form of events description	"Hybrid text" A combination between historiography and literary tools

(A) **Status of the historical protagonist**. A comparative analysis of four Israeli textbooks about nationalism as a historical phenomenon shows that in three of them, just one individual is mentioned in the table of contents. Historical figures are occasionally mentioned in these books but are usually discussed in a shallow and limited manner (Domka, Urbach & Goldberg, 2008; Kovarsky, 2014; Naave & Vered, 2008). In the fourth book, some historical figures are mentioned in the outline at the beginning of the book, but they usually appear only in the footnotes, and not in body of the text (Avieli-Tabibian, 2008). All the textbooks focused on descriptions of historical phenomena, but rarely discussed the individuals who caused or were involved in them.

A similar analysis of two middle and high-school history textbooks used in the United States revealed a similar, but not identical picture. The outline of these books includes explicit references to historical figures, but in the actual text historical figures are usually mentioned in boxed references, under titles such as 'Faces of

History' or 'Biography Quest' giving students a brief description of historical figures (Ayers, Schulzinger, de la Teja & White, 2007; Davidson & Stoff, 2006). Despite the greater prominence of historical figures in textbooks in the United States we assert that the historical figures are still found only at the periphery of the textbooks of both Israel and the United States

Perhaps it is superfluous to state that a biography puts the historical figure at the center of the text, since the biographical genre inherently deals with historical events by focusing on a historical figure.

(B) Author-protagonist relationships. If it is assumed that the author's opinion regarding the historical protagonists is found in any text, then it is intentionally blurred in the educational text. Paxton claims that textbooks create a distance between the author and the protagonist by using the third-person form, and by presenting the events without any emotional engagement by the narrator (Paxton, 1997; 1999; 2002).

Many biographical texts are written in the third person form but are characterized by a clear bond between the author and the protagonist. Biographical writing is described in the research literature as a process in which the author grows almost intimately close to the subject, to the extent that at times the reliability of the biographical text is called into question (Banner, 2009; Caine, 2010; Leckie, 2004; Lee, 2009; Nasaw, 2009). Even when biographers try to create a distance between themselves and their subject, they express a clear connection with the protagonist (Tuchman, 2011). This closeness does not necessarily involve the author's affection or appreciation of the character (e.g. *Hitler* by Kershaw, 2010; *Mussolini* by Mack Smith, 2001).

(C) Author-reader relationships. In their description of the triangular relationship between author, reader and text, Moffett and McElheney (1966) argue that the distance between the author and the reader is affected by the distance of the author from his subject. They claimed that when authors express distance from the events they describe, they create a distance between themselves and the reader. This claim is reinforced by Crismore, who argued that the author's style in social studies textbooks is anonymous and unequivocal (Crismore, 1984). Focusing on history school texts reveals a similar pattern: despite the changes in patterns of writing

textbooks over the years, history textbooks are still characterized by a decisive tone, and by distance which is the result of the author being anonymous and all-knowing (Porat, 2001; Paxton, 2002).

In the biographical text, on the other hand, the author's presence is reflected in a particular writing style and approach to the protagonist. This presence is so central, that some researchers even claim that every biography contains an autobiographical dimension, in which authors present their own life stories through the descriptions of the protagonist (Hamilton, 2007; Leckie, 2004; Tuchman, 2011). This dominant presence of the author in the text is the basis of the close relationship between the reader and the author (Paxton, 1997).

(D) Writing style. Researchers describe educational texts as a 'considerate text' aimed at helping students comfortably and effectively understand and memorize historical events (Armbruster, 1984; Beck, McKeown & Gromoll, 1989, Paxton, 1997). To accomplish this, the educational texts are written in chronological, linear and causal form. They usually contain descriptions of the historical events, and therefore elements such as description of landscape or emotions are absent.

Biography is a genre of telling life-stories in the context of historical events (Lee, 2009; Caine, 2010). This combination between characteristics of literary writing and historical research is the basis for the claim that 'biography is a hybrid' (Benton, 2007, p.77). Indeed, biographical texts often use elements such as descriptions of feelings or relationships, even when these are not essential for the description of historical chronicles.

Based on these four categories, we argue that biographical texts are fundamentally different from school texts. We suggest that integrating biographical texts in history lessons might challenge students' cognitive schema of school texts. When students come to class with the expectation of learning from a school text, and are then faced with a biographical text, there is a dissonance between their expectations and the text. This may be the first step towards an 'expectation failure' which is defined as 'a situation in which existing mental models will lead to faulty expectations, causing students to realize the problems they face in believing whatever they believe.' (Bain, 2004, p. 28). Our goal is to find out how students react to the change from the familiar schema of the school text and in what way, if at all, this

'failure of expectations' may contribute to the development of historical disciplinary reading.

4.2.2   Historical Disciplinary Reading

Wineburg (1991) found significant differences between the way students and professional historians read historical sources. High school students used the texts primarily to extract factual and chronological information, whereas historians used the text for disciplinary reading using three research heuristics: 1.) Sourcing – identifying details of the source, including author, text type and date of writing as a prerequisite that is vital for text analysis. 2.) Contextualization – text analysis within its wider context, examining space and time with the goal of deepening the understanding of the historical events described in the source. 3.) Corroboration – a comparative study of several texts with the goal of creating a complex picture of the historical event (Wineburg, 1991).

Based on Wineburg's definitions, researchers carried out a variety of studies to examine how to guide students in developing disciplinary reading. In these studies, different interventional programs were implemented to enable students to acquire disciplinary reading skills (e.g. 'History lessons: Reading like a historian', n.d; 'Historical thinking matters', n.d; 'The Sourcer's Apprentice', n.d). Results of the studies show that programs that give explicit instructions use a cognitive apprenticeship model to teach reading and writing strategies and present an organized model for source analysis, do indeed promote disciplinary skills among students. Furthermore, they contributed to the development of general, vital learning skills (De La Paz & Felton, 2010; De La Paz et al., 2014; De La Paz et al., 2016; Reisman, 2012; Nokes, 2013) and the development of a critical awareness of reading texts (Martin & Wineburg, 2008; Barton & Levstik, 2004).

An organized acquisition of historical disciplinary reading may be a goal that history education teachers should strive to achieve. In practice, many students are not exposed to programs geared toward the acquisition of disciplinary reading skills for historical texts. This was observed in the control groups of the studies, in 'regular' classes. The researchers reported that in these classes, there was no systematic acquisition of disciplinary skills for analyzing historical sources (Reisman, 2012; De

La Paz & Felton, 2010; Britt & Aglinskas, 2002; De La Paz et al., 2016). A similar picture exists in Israel where there is a learning track geared toward the development of disciplinary reading and writing skills. In 2017, only 893 out of 52,619 students who took the history matriculation test participated in this learning track (data based on figures from the History Teaching Inspectorate, personal communication, November 26, 2017), meaning that the vast majority of students are not given an organized acquisition of disciplinary reading skills.

Paxton's study (2002) offered a different approach to examining the development of historical disciplinary reading. While other researchers focused on the effect of explicit teaching of disciplinary skills, Paxton focused his attention on the nature of the texts the students were exposed to in history lessons. He examined students' responses, both orally and in writing, to a school-text, characterized by an anonymous writer, and to a text based on the same historical content, with a clear presence of the writer. The results of Paxton's study show that a clear presence of the writer through first-person writing, meta-discourse, and a personal position or allusions to different positions, facilitates the development of disciplinary reading and writing skills.

In light of Paxton's findings, we decided to examine the reaction of high school students to different kinds of biographical texts, each characterized differently within the genre of biography. Our working premise is that biographical texts are easily available to teachers, easily readable, and different from the accepted schema of the regular texts used in history lessons.

4.3   Methodology

This is a qualitative study using the constructivist paradigm. Our aim is to observe the study participants, listen to what they say, interpret their words as well as the interactions among them, in order to identify social constructions in the research field and attach research significance to them (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The interpretation proposed in this paper is directed toward analysis of what the students said after they had been given various kinds of biographical texts, and toward identifying significant comments in the context of historical disciplinary reading.

We believe that the constructivist paradigm, based on the assumption that human knowledge is structured by social agents, and that truth is not revealed but created (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), was the most appropriate method for studying the use of biographical texts, which are in themselves subjective interpretation of a life story.

Using qualitative methods, we could not isolate the students' responses to the biographical texts from other influences, such as the presence of the moderator, the moderator's questions, and the focus group format. We are aware of the influence of these factor on students' responses, and therefore our conclusions about the impact of biographical texts on the development of disciplinary reading in history are not unequivocal. Rather, we wish to illuminate the possible effect of the biographical texts on students' responses.

4.3.1 Research Tools

 In the preparatory stage we observed regular history lessons of the classes that participated in the study to help us define the type of texts students usually read in their history courses.

The main research tool was focus groups (Finch, Lewis & Turley, 2014; Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001). The data collected in the focus groups include individual student reactions to the biographical contents and the interactions that took place during discussions among members of the group. Using focus groups enabled us to simulate, to a certain extent, a normal classroom learning process. Thanks to the limited size of the groups, many of the participants were also given the opportunity to voice their opinions (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Finch, Lewis & Turley, 2014).

4.3.2 Participants and Field

We collected data during the years 2015 - 2016 from two state schools in a medium-sized city belonging to the middle-high socio-economic cluster (8), which characterizes the middle class in Israel[12].

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[12] http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications/local_authorities06/pdf/t02.pdf

Schools were selected for participation in the study based on the following criteria: (a) State schools that follow the national history curriculum. (b) Schools that are non-selective in student admissions. (c) Schools that prepare students for the national matriculation exam.[13] (d) Classes that included average level students (gifted and special education classes were not chosen.). Sixty-four students approximately 16 years old participated in the study. Fifty-four percent were girls (n=35). Forty-six percent were boys (n=29).

Ninety two percent of the students were born in Israel (n=59), and eight percent (n=5) were born in Western European countries (Great Britain and Germany) or in the United States. The native language of ninety percent of the students is Hebrew (n=58). Eight percent (n=5) reported that their native language is English, or both English and Hebrew. One student's native language was German. This demographic data indicate that the population was mostly homogenous, both in terms of the students' ethnic origins and in terms of their linguistic infrastructure.

The study includes students from three classes in two state schools: two classes from the 'Alon School', and one class from the 'Ella School' (pseudonyms, as are all of the names of people and places in this article). According to the requirements of the Ethics Committee, conducting the study was conditional upon the written consent of all teachers, parents, and students who took part in this study. This condition shaped the sample, because only students with parental approval could participate in the study. Both schools have a similar multi-year average in their history matriculation exam grades. The 'Alon school', with two classes in the study, had a three-year average of 79.49, while the 'Ella school', with one class in the study, had a three-year average of 77.05.[14]

4.3.3 Curricular Context of the Study

The research was carried out within the continuum of history studies in the classrooms. The historical issue we chose (the "Uganda Affair") was an integral part of the matriculation curriculum in history. The same amount of time was devoted to the subject in routine lessons and in the intervention sessions (90 minutes). The

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[13] Israel's state educational system is centralized with the Ministry of Education establishing the curriculum and subject matter to be taught, as well as authorizing textbooks before they may be used in lessons and conducting a national matriculation exam.

[14] Based on Ministry of Education data. Retrived from: http://go.ynet.co.il/pic/news/201888.pdf

matriculation curriculum in Israel places a strong emphasis on Jewish national history as part of a declared aim to strengthen the students' national identity (Kizel, 2015; The Israeli history curriculum for high school, 2014). The topic we chose to focus on, the Uganda Affair, exemplifies this goal (see details below). Questionnaires filled out by the students before the start of the study indicated that their prior knowledge about Uganda Affair was limited. Fifty-two percent of the students claimed they know nothing about the Uganda Affair. Thirty- nine percent had some general and often inaccurate knowledge of the historical event and six percent of the students had detailed and accurate knowledge of the topic. The rest of the students (three percent) had entirely inaccurate knowledge of the affair.

4.3.4   The Historical Event and the Historical Figure

The 'Uganda Affair' (1903) was chosen to be the historical event of the research intervention. The sixth Zionist Congress, which took place in Basel in the summer of 1903 was particularly stormy. Benjamin Ze'ev Theodor Herzl (1860 – 1904), the founder and leader of the Zionist movement, decided to raise the issue of the British offer of Jewish settlement in East Africa, as a substitute for settlement in Palestine. Herzl's decision sparked a major controversy. Some of the Congress delegates viewed the British proposal as an unprecedented achievement of the Zionist movement and its leader and asked to consider it positively. Others argued that the very fact that the issue was raised was an expression of defeatism and betrayal of the principles of Zionism by Herzl and his supporters. Caught in the middle were the wavering delegates who were challenged by the British offer. At certain stages of the Congress, it seemed that the dispute could lead to the dismantling of the Zionist movement (Avineri, 2014).

The Uganda Affair is a sensitive and emotionally laden topic in Israeli discourse. Herzl, the founder and leader of the Zionist movement is at a historical crossroad when he expressed his willingness to withdraw from the official Zionist stance and discuss the proposal to set up a Jewish state outside of the Land of Israel. This topic was selected as the central focus of this study to examine how, and if at all, students can hold a historical disciplinary discussion concerning this sensitive and emotionally laden topic.

4.3.5 The Biographical Texts

The biographical genre includes a wide variety of sub-genres (Lee, 2009, Caine, 2010). In this research, we used three biographical sub-genres. The distinction between the sub-genres was based on an analysis of the texts by four expert readers: two historians from the Hebrew University and two senior history teachers. None of them were involved in this study. Each of them read the three texts and were asked to characterize them using the 'think aloud' technique (Wineburg, 1991, Martin & Wineburg, 2008). Afterwards they were asked to characterize each text with reference to four criteria: 1. person 2. voice 3. style 4. point of view. The four expert readers characterized the texts very similarly. All of them identified the texts as biographical texts and found nuances that distinguish them from each other. The only disagreement was that one of the readers said that one of the texts was quite objective with no expression of the author's position regarding the 'Uganda Affair'. The other three readers identified the author's position in this text, and we accepted the interpretation of the majority and defined the three biographical sub-genres used in this study: 1. A literary-biographical text 2. An autobiographical text 3. A scientific-biographical text (see table 2).

The distinction between the biographical sub-genres is not absolute and they have a great deal in common. Thus, all three biographical texts dealing with 'Uganda Affair' are distinguishable from the educational text according to the general criteria presented in the literature review. At the same time the texts are distinguished according to the characteristics of the sub-genres to which they belong (see table 5)

All four readers asserted that although the literary-biographical text (see Appendix 1, based on Omer, 1997), was written in the third person, the author's position regarding the affair was clear. They also noticed the author's desire to portray Herzl in a positive light. They characterized the 'literary-biographical text' emphasizing descriptive elements of Herzl's thoughts and feelings about the 'Uganda affair' and clearly revealing the author's point of view.

The autobiographical-text (see Appendix 2, based on Herzl, 1960) was characterized by the readers as a text written in the first person, which includes detailed and explicit descriptions of the events from the perspective of 'a witness narrator' and 'a hero narrator', and contains emotional elements. This text emphasizes the impact of the historical events on Herzl himself.

Although the scientific-biographical text (see Appendix 3, based on Elon, 1975), contains emotional descriptions, all of the readers thought that it maintains an academic style, with references to and quotations from primary sources. Three readers agreed that it is possible to identify the author's point of view in the text even if doing so requires accurate reading and sensitive inferencing.

Table 5- Similarity and differences between the biographical texts according to expert readers

	Text 1: Literary-biography	Text 2: Autobiography	Text 3: Research-biography
Person	3rd person	1st person	3rd person
Voice	Emotional	Personal, emotional	Matter-of-fact combined with emotional
Style	Literary	Diary	Academic combined with literary
Point of view	An omniscient narrator	A first-person narrator	An omniscient narrator
Example	"The horrifying news of the pogroms in Kishinev had reached far-off England, but nevertheless the Minister for Colonies was unable to grant Herzl's wish."	"Talked yesterday with the famous master of England, Joe Chamberlin…, I presented the whole Jewish question as I understand it."	"News of Kishinev pogrom reached Herzl in London, before his final interview with Chamberlain."

4.3.6   Data Collection

The data collected included field diaries, audio recordings and video recordings of observation and focus groups. The study was conducted in two stages:

1. *Background observations.* Researchers observed four single (45 minutes) history lessons in each of the three classes (total of 12 academic hours of

observation). The observations were held in regular history classes, in order to understand the instructional style in the classes and the types of texts students are usually exposed to in history lessons.

2. *Focus groups.* The participating classes were divided into six focus groups (two focus groups from each class, eight to twelve students per group). The teacher of each class divided the students into two groups alphabetically. Each group was exposed first to one biographical text, and at the second stage to another biographical text. The six focus groups allowed us to create all the possible combinations between the three biographical texts, making sure that each text was read by four groups: twice as the first text, and twice as a second text. The researchers divided the texts between the groups randomly (see table 6).

Research assistants acted as group moderators and explained the purpose of the groups to the students as well as the rules for the discussions. The students were told that the purpose of the meeting was 'to understand the text and through it, to learn about the Uganda Affair'. They were given a list of the rules to be followed during discussions (see appendix 4). The moderator handed out one of the three biographical texts and read it to the students. The discussion was based on a semi-structured questionnaire, which included leading questions on three levels: A.) general questions such as 'Does anyone want to say something about the text we have just read?' B.) Open content questions such as 'What can we learn from the text about the Uganda Affair?' C.) Open sourcing questions such as 'what position about Uganda affair, if any, does this text represent?'

Following the discussion on the first text the moderator handed out a second biographical text and read to the students. The questions followed the same pattern as the first text, with additional question comparing the two texts (see appendix 4). The research assistants were instructed to encourage the students to react to the text and to intervene as little as possible in the discussion. However, the moderators' presence, questions and responses certainly did influence the course of the discussion.

Table 6- Texts in classes

Category	Text/Author	As first text	As second text
Autobiography	*The Jewish cause: Diaries 1895 – 1904*/ Herzl, 2001	19 students	23 students
Literary-biography	*A voice called in the dark*/ Omer, 1997	22 students	19 students
Scientific-biography	*Herzl*/ Eylon, 1975	23 students	22 students

Students received the texts without bibliographic references. In addition, the texts were given unrevealing titles: 'The Uganda Affair Text 1 / Text 2 / Text 3'. Although it is generally accepted policy to provide the citation information of historical articles to students, we decided against it to enable students to freely evaluate the sources we gave them, to encourage them to speculate about the source, and to discuss the possible source in their focus groups. Today, students are frequently exposed to many anonymous sources on the internet that lack any orderly reference to sources, and do not mention the writer's name, or institutional or political affiliations (e.g. Wikipedia). In this context, Nokes (2013) said, "Twenty-first century reading is unlike the reading of previous generations .... The internet makes it simple to move from text to text which requires readers to make quick judgments about the relevance and utility of diverse sources. "(p. 187) Omitting the source of the text, in that sense, resembles an existing reality, and enables students to identify the trends, biases or positions hidden in texts of unknown origin independently.

4.3.7 Analysis

Recordings of the background observations were mapped to see how frequently biographical texts were used in regular history lessons. The focus groups records were fully transcribed.

The main researcher divided the transcripts into 'discourse units' based on four technical criteria: 1. A new question / instruction by the moderator. 2. A student's question 3. A student's claim not directly related to the previous comment. 4. Some

disturbance to the ongoing process (e.g. entrance of a person out of the group to the classroom). A total of 426 'discourse units' were mapped, not all of which reflect disciplinary reading. Each discourse unit was examined by the main researcher and by a research assistant according to a coding scheme built on previous research findings in the field of historical disciplinary reading (see appendix 5). The researchers decided separately which of the 'discourse units' include characteristics of disciplinary reading, and which skill is reflected in each of these units.

'Contextualization' category, which Wineburg (1991) defined as a historian's reading skills, was deliberately omitted from the coding scheme. This decision is based on the work of Britt and Aglinskas (2002), who claim that students do not usually apply contextualization because they lack of relevant historical knowledge. Other studies confirmed this claim (Nokes, Dole & Hacker, 2007; Nokes, 2013; Reisman,2012), as do our own findings in the lessons and focus groups we observed. Based on Britt and Aglinskas' research, we decided to expand the sourcing category and call it 'inferential sourcing' to include expressions for identifying the source characteristics of the text, including differentiations within the historical context. This means that the rare manifestations of contextualization in students' words were included within the broader category of 'inferential sourcing', with the understanding that although the ability of students to contextualize the biographical texts is inherently limited, it still exists.

After reading and analyzing the transcripts separately, the researchers met and discussed the main themes that arose from the analysis of the transcripts according to the coding scheme. Three hundred and eight discourse units were discussed. We found a matching of 92.2% between the researchers in the analysis of the discourse units based on the coding scheme (284 discourse units). As for the remaining 7.8% (24 discourse units), there was some controversy in the content analysis. The findings chapter is based on discourse units on which there was an interpretive consensus among readers.

Following this process, we found two central categories that became the basis for the findings chapter: 1. Inferential sourcing. 2. Basic corroboration.

4.4 Findings

The data we collected during our background observations of the regular lessons revealed that biographical texts were never used in the classes. Teachers confirmed that students were unfamiliar with this genre within the context of their history class. Therefore, we analyzed students' comments on the biographical texts, knowing that these texts are different from the ordinary class-texts.

4.4.1 Inferential Sourcing

Historians begin reading a historical source with 'sourcing', in which they refer to the bibliographic context of the source, whereas students tend to ignore this information (Wineburg, 1991). In the present study, students were not given the opportunity to refer to the bibliographic source of the texts since this information was deliberately omitted. However, we noted 115 expressions of inferential sourcing about the biographical texts referring to the content and style of the first biographical text they read. Of these discourse-units, 61 were supported with evidence from the text, and 54 were not supported with evidence from the text (see Table 7). Another 95 expressions of inferential sourcing were observed following the reading of the second biographical text, but we chose not to analyze them here in order to focus on the responses of students to the biographical text, rather than the influence of multiple sources.

Table 7- Quantitative mapping: Inferential sourcing

Text	Inferential Sourcing (in first text)		
	Without text support	Including text support	Total
Literary-biographical text	13	23	36
Autobiographical text	14	24	38
Scientific-biographical text	27	14	41
Total for skill	54	61	**115**

Inferential sourcing in reaction to the literary-biographical text. The biographical-literary text provoked a negative reaction in many of the students who read it. Some of them objected to the use of the literary-biographical text in learning situations because of its non-objective style. For example:

> Jonathan: I didn't like the fact that the description was not really neutral…

> Moderator: Not neutral. O.K.

> Jonathan: … He was an author who wanted to say that what Herzl did was really good…

Jonathan claims that he did not like the text because it was 'not neutral' and seems to him to be biased in favor of Herzl. Although Jonathan identified the text's tone and the author's intention, his objection to the text was general and not supported. Later on in the discussion, the moderator asked a leading question and then Jonathan and a friend tried to support their argument.

> Moderator: What do you mean by saying that the writer was not neutral?

> Jonathan: This author wanted to describe Herzl as a really good person, someone pure, as if he was truly outstanding… And he described the people who opposed him as bad people; as if they shouted and rebelled; as if they sat and refused in a kind of childish way. And Herzl kind of came, and talked to them, and he was presented like a really really... I am sure that he wasn't so good.

> Anat: They always wrote ' he got up immediately and went' as if…

> Jonathan: He heard about the horrors and went to save the world.

In response to a very general question of the moderator, Jonathan and Anat identified techniques used by the writer to express support for Herzl. Jonathan noticed that the author described Herzl as a moderate and an affable person, while Herzl's opponents described him as childish, noisy and stubborn. Anat said that the text presents Herzl as an activist who was quick to help persecuted people, and this presentation demonstrates the author's positive attitude toward Herzl. The ways in which Jonathan and Anat explained their objection to the text reflects an understanding of how the text was designed to influence the reader's opinion. They noted the author's intentions and found proof from the text in both content and style.

When reading the literary-biographical text, some of the students also expressed doubts about the validity of the text. In the other group that read this text as a first text, the students questioned the truthfulness of the text:

David: Is it true? All this part about the dinner meal?

Moderator: So, what question are you asking…?

Lili: If it really happened.

David: It is a story... I am not sure if all the facts are true.

Uri: O.K. But it does not matter whether or not there was dinner.

Gil: Of course, it matters.

David: O.K. But not just this, in general…

Eytan: But the facts are true, right? … He really said: 'If I forget thee O Jerusalem'?

David: Is it true?

Lili: Of course, it is!

David: How do you know? Were you there?

Lili: They wouldn't put in details just like that…,

Eytan: But it is a story.

Lili: It is a story that aims to tell you what happened. It is not really a story

Eytan: Is it recorded on camera? Is it documented that he really did it?

Uri: Many things are not documented.

This kind of discussion is very rare in history lessons, especially because it reflects a questioning of the accuracy, and the authenticity of the text. The discussion begins with Daniel's question about the accuracy of the dinner description in the text. This description does not fit the schema of school texts, which usually do not include details that don't contribute to the development of the central narrative plot.

In this case, the difference between the school text and the biographical text created a dissonance that led the students to question the accuracy of the text, and gave rise to many questions: Did it really happen? Can we trust a text that looks like a story? Which facts in the text are important and which are less? Is there any difference between 'a real story' and 'a story that aims to tell what happened'? What is the role of documentation in the effort to achieve historical truth? Through these questions, we can see that the students used an inferential sourcing: they demonstrated healthy skepticism, identified the nature of the text and tried to evaluate it.

Some of the students enjoyed reading the literary-biographical text claiming that it was an interesting story. For example, Shiri said "It is interesting. It was fun. When it is written like a story, it is fun." Such positive responses did not reflect any element of disciplinary reading. In one case, a student, along with criticism of the biographical-literary text, also expressed a recognition of its added disciplinary value:

Daniel: I kind of agree that the author gives an opinion… I don't know how right it is to stick to your position in a text that is intended to be educational. But I can also see the other side, that precisely this subjectivity makes us address this text critically.

Daniel's comments express his doubts about the text, as well as the value he sees in reading an overtly non-objective text. He said that maybe the obvious subjectivity of the text causes the students to address the text critically. Between the lines, one can recognize that Daniel's comment is a naïve way of thinking about historical sources. When he says "I don't know how right it is to stick to your position in a text that is intended to be educational" he expresses his expectation to find objectivity in historical texts. Nevertheless, his awareness of the effect of the literary-biographical text on his critical thinking may indicate a beginning of a change in this naïve concept. Daniel's reflective point of view was singular, but it demonstrates the potential of the literary-biographical text to awaken disciplinary abilities in student's mind.

Inferential sourcing in reaction to the autobiographical text. The autobiographical text was written in first person, so it was easy for students to recognize the writer's point of view. During the discussion, some of them were able

to recognize that a particular author writing about events he was directly involved in, affected the nature of the writing style:

> Abigail: I don't know, it's a diary… He wrote a diary for himself… He wrote that 'we sat in Cowen's room around a bottle of mineral water.' Why should I care if there was mineral water?

> Shira: [He] does not want us to think that he had Vodka… to show that he isn't sitting and enjoying himself while other Jews are suffering. He sits with mineral water, not with some kind of Vodka Red Bull.

Abigail claims that the text is taken from a diary although this information was not mentioned in the text. Based on this assumption, she classified it as a private text. This has an interpretative importance, as it creates the identity of the writer and the purpose of the text.

When Abigail asked: "Why should I care if there was mineral water there?" she disputed a fragment of information that seems to her to be valueless. Indeed, this kind of casual reference, that is typical of an autobiographical text, does not contribute to the development of the central narrative plot.

As an answer to Abigail's question, Shira claimed that this bottle of water represents Herzl's empathy with the suffering of his people. She seems to establish a connection between the reference to mineral water and the wider context that brought Herzl to present the controversial 'Uganda Plan'. In both, she finds an expression of Herzl's empathy to the suffering of his people.

Furthermore, Shira's words express an implicit claim about the target audience for this text. Unlike Abigail, she implies that Herzl wrote his diary with an awareness that it may be published in the future. According to this view, Herzl tried to shape his public image in a manner that would present him as a sensitive leader. This implicit argument is important as it may lead students to consider the text content with an awareness of the author's motivation. We can see that Abigail and Shira used inferential sourcing heuristic: they identified the nature of the source, referred to the target audience of the text, and assumed the writer's motivation.

In another group of students exposed to the autobiographical text as a first text, a discussion arose regarding the nature of the source. In this situation as well,

questions and arguments by the students reflected their ability to operate inferential sourcing.

Moderator: Do you know who wrote this text?

Some students in unison: Herzl.

 Moderator: O.K. So it is clear to you that it was Herzl. For whom is this text intended?

Dina: I think it is for [people] who will live in the future, when there is a state, and they could see Herzl's diary, what he wrote and what he said… He didn't write it as something personal. He wrote it as if many people will read it.

Moderator: How can you see this in the text…?

Dina: Because he didn't write what he ate for lunch.

Roni: But these are just segments. It might be that he wrote what he ate for lunch, but someone took it out of the texts. There are many examples of 'three dots' in this text.

In this case as well, the students had no doubt that Herzl was the person who wrote the text, even though this was not explicitly stated. At this point, the moderator shifted the discussion to the question of the target audience, which led to a process of characterization of the text. Dina claimed that Herzl wrote this text for people who will live in the future, who will read it from a different perspective. This claim can be based on historical sources (e.g. Elon, 1975, p. 219), but these sources were not available to Dina. She based her claim on the fact that in the text there was no information about 'what he ate for lunch'. This absence of information testified, from Dina's point of view, that this was not a personal text, but rather a text written out of awareness of the possibility that it would be published. Her words express an attempt to characterize the text.

Roni characterized the source in a different way, while relying on another element in the text. She focused on the fact that the text was full of "three-dots" markings, which indicated in her eyes that the text was edited. She concluded that it was impossible to know what Herzl wrote, and what had been omitted from the text by the editors. Students from the other group that was exposed to the autobiographical

text as a first text were also aware of the use of the "three dots" characteristic. Lia for example, expressed her criticism by saying 'These three-dots are annoying to me… why didn't he write what happened there?"

Like Roni, Lia noted the existence of "three-dots" markings in the text and expressed her dissatisfaction with the information gaps inherent in this marking. Noticing the information gaps in the text indicates a sensitive reading, since it shows the students' awareness to the influence of the editor on the text. This sensitive reading indicates general reading literacy, but the ability to see what is missing from the text also led the students to look for the wider historical picture, and to criticize the text, as required in historical-disciplinary reading (De La Paz & Felton, 2010).

Inferential sourcing in reaction to the scientific-biographical text.
Compared to the literary-biographical text and the autobiographical text, which were widely criticized by students, the scientific-biographical text raised a more complex response when read first. For example, students who read the scientific-biographical text as a first text said:

Moderator: Can you identify the author's point of view in this text?

Romy: He really likes Herzl…He decided to tell the story from Herzl's point of view…

Sari: It doesn't seem to me that he has any position.

Moderator: You don't feel he has any position. Can you explain it a little more?

Sari: I don't know.

Students in the other group who read the scientific-biographical text as first text said similar things:

Alon: In my opinion, the author admired Herzl.

Noah: In my opinion, he did not.

Tali: In my opinion, no opinion is even expressed here.

The differences between the students' opinions about the author's position teach us a great deal about the complexity of the scientific-biographical text. On the

one hand, the scientific-biographical text contains emotional expressions that reflect the author's position, and that might be the basis for claims such as, "The author admired Herzl" or "He really likes Herzl". On the other hand, its scientific nature gives it an aura of distance that might be mistakenly interpreted by the students as an expression of "objectivity".

These conflicting claims, which were not supported by evidence from the text in the beginning of the discussion, later developed into a somewhat more coherent and text-based argument. In response to the moderator's leading question, students spoke about the nature of the text and backed up their arguments with examples:

Dafni: The text says, 'Uganda was not Zion, this he knew well, but there was no time to lose', this is what needs to be done now, and now is not the time to adhere to ideology. It is as if he [=the author] is adding his own view. This is not a quote; it is as if the author is adding a justification for what Herzl did...

Noah: … No, it means that Herzl knew that Uganda was not Zion. That is what Herzl knew.

Alon: No, but then he added a comma. 'Uganda was not Zion, this he knew well'. Comma. 'But there was no time to lose'. He [=the author] is saying as if there is no time to lose. Many people had already been killed … it was he who thought that this is the time and the decision had to be made…

Moderator: The question is whether this sentence says something about the author who wrote this text.

Alon: Yes, it tells us that it is his opinion. He agrees with Herzl on the point that he should go ahead and take the opportunity offered to him, to set up a state in Uganda.

Dafni and Alon's comments support Alon's claim that the author agrees with Herzl's position. Dafni made the distinction between the direct quotations from Herzl's diary and the sentences written by the author. Alon noticed how the punctuation influences the text's tone and how it showed the author's position. Thus, they both showed disciplinary reading of the text, using inferential sourcing.

However, most of the students who were exposed to the scientific-biographical text did not apply inferential sourcing. This is clearly reflected in the numerical data, which indicates that compared to the two other texts, there were many fewer expressions of inferential sourcing after reading the scientific-biographical text, and, for the most part, students were unable to support their claims with evidence from the text.

4.4.2   Basic Corroboration

Corroboration involves a confrontation between the content of at least two sources. Therefore, we did not observe any examples in the first stages of the focus groups when they were only given a single biographical text. When the students were given a second biographical text, we found 74 discourse-units that we classified as examples of corroboration (see table 8).

Table 8- Quantitative mapping: Basic corroboration

Text vs. Text	Basic Corroboration (after reading two texts)		
	Without text support	Including text support	Total
Literary-biography versus scientific-biography	18	9	27
The Scientific Biographical Text versus the Autobiographical Text	17	5	22
The Autobiographical Text versus the Literary Biographical Text	15	10	25
Total for skill	50	24	**74**

Not all discourse-units that contained comparisons between two texts were defined as corroborations. Some of the comparative comments were made to see which text was more efficient in helping complete study tasks. For example, Dina said, "Text one [=literary biographical] contains far less information than text three [=scientific biographical], so if you really need to study for a test, you are better off using the second one." Gili noted that "if you need to bring facts as part of preparing for a test, text three [=scientific biographical] text is better, but if you want to know which text I will remember more, then the one with the stories is the one that I would prefer." These quotations are examples of a functional comparison between two texts and do not show a disciplinary approach, so they were not included in our analysis.

The literary biographical text versus the scientific biographical text.

Those groups in which the students were given a literary biographical text and a scientific biographical one, began comparing the two as soon as they read them, without any intervention by the moderator. For example, immediately after they had read the literary-biographical text as a second text, the following discussion ensued:

Sari: Wow, this one is completely different.

Elai: As far as objectivity is concerned, whatever I thought earlier, well now….

Romi: Text one [=literary biographical] is more interesting, because it is as if it is telling a real story.

Sari: Text three [=scientific biographical] is more of an informational text and text one [=literary biographical] is more like a story.

The students' initial reaction was to compare the two texts, even before the moderator asked them any questions. They mentioned "objectivity", "information", and "story" but did not explain what they meant by these words. In another group, that was given the same texts (in opposite order), we found a similar comparative reaction:

Noga: Some of the things that are written in text three [=scientific biographical] are not clear in text one [=literary biographical].

Daniel: Yes, text three [=scientific biographical] is exactly the opposite.

Yair: And it is preferable.

The students' initial reaction to the text was very general, and judgmental. They made vague comments without explaining themselves or backing them up with proof from the text. Later in the discussion when the two texts were compared, their comments became somewhat clearer, but the level of analysis remained very basic. For example:

Elai: Text three [=scientific biographical] gave more practical facts – a Congress took place, one hundred people were killed, two hundred, it was more factual. Text one [=literary biographical] gave his feelings.

119

Mira: Yes, but both texts presented the same opinion, supporting Herzl.

Elai and Mira presented two different aspects when comparing the two texts. Elai claimed that the texts differed in that the scientific biographical text describes the historical event more factually, whereas the literary biographical text includes a more detailed description of Herzl's feelings. Mira referred to the similarity between the two, saying that she felt they share the same point of view, and she did not back up her claim. They both show initial stages of corroboration in the category of similarity and difference between the texts, but they did not develop this train of thought to lead to a thorough comparison touching on the tone and structure of the text or the authors' motives.

The scientific-biographical text versus the autobiographical text. In groups that were given a scientific-biographical text as well as an autobiographical one, some of the students suggested comparisons between the two immediately after reading the second text. For example, Shira's reaction was: "Text three [=scientific biographical] is much clearer." Her group mate, Yael, said, "Text two [=autobiographical text] is written from a different viewpoint then text three [=scientific biographical]. You feel more involved with it." In both examples, the students compared the two texts and voiced their initial thoughts and feelings about the differences between the two, without supporting their claims with evidence from the text. Later on in the group discussion, they gave comparisons with some evidence from the text:

Noah: Text two [=autobiographical text] is simply more detailed.

Nili: It's like he is saying what he did yesterday afternoon.

Moderator: Try to find an example in the text that shows it is more detailed...

Ruth: OK, in text three [=scientific biographical] it says that he was in a meeting with Chamberlain, and in text two [=autobiographical text] it says that there were actually two meetings. Right?

Dafni: It also says what he said.

Ruth: Yes, it also says what was in the meeting. It says that there was an earlier meeting that he explained. And then, after the riots, there was another meeting in which he proposed this.

Nilli: Parts of their conversation is in the text.

In response to Noah's claim that the autobiographical text is more detailed than the scientific biographical one, the moderator asked the students to support her claim with examples from the text. Some of them suggested a technical comparison based on certain details but did not refer to the impact those details had on how the presentation of the historical event influenced the message of each of the texts. Students from the other groups also made similar comparisons and were unable to extrapolate any thoughts on the nature of the text and its value as a historical source. Despite this, we cannot negate the fact that they demonstrated basic corroboration skills.

Some of the comparative reactions showed a preference for one text over the other, in most cases the preferred one was the scientific biographical one. For example:

Abigail: If I had to, I would choose [text number] three [=scientific-biographical]. Maybe it is not completely objective, but it is much more objective than [text number] two [=autobiography] …

Moderator: Are you looking for a text that is as objective as possible?

Abigail: Yes, to know exactly what happened, not to know only what one of the sides saw.

Abigail's aim of "not to know only what one of the sides saw" represents one aspect of historical thinking because she noted that one of the texts provides a broader and multi-faceted picture of the event, which makes the text a better source for historians. However, this is insufficient to be defined as an in-depth disciplinary reading. Her preference to learn, like many other students, from what she considers to be "an objective text", and her hope to know "exactly what happened" reflects the distance between how she reads, and the way professional historians read. Professional historians would not seek out objective texts, but rather look for multiple points of view. In this sense, although Abigail did offer a comparative evaluation of the texts, it would be difficult to claim that she did a disciplinary reading of the text.

The autobiographical text versus the literary biographical text. When the students were given an autobiographical text and a literary biographical text, they

made some general comparisons, but these were generally not comments made by a historian.

For example, Dina said, "text one [=literary biographical] talks a lot about how Herzl feels, and how he experienced this, and text two [=autobiographical text] doesn't talk about this at all. It is facts." Dina noted the general characteristics of each text but did not support her claims or refer to the significance of the differences.

In another group, Ben said, "Text two [=autobiographical text] is a first-hand source, it is someone who was present there… we do not know who wrote text one [=literary biographical], maybe it was written one hundred years later." Ben made an important distinction between Herzl's diary, which is a primary source, and the literary-biographical text, which was written retrospectively. This can be considered as an initial stage of disciplinary reading. However, he did not support his claim and did not realize the significance of the difference between the two texts for understanding the historical event.

Only in one case, of the autobiographical text versus the literary biographical did we note an example of the students corroborating between the texts in a manner that shows elements of disciplinary reading.

Moderator: Earlier on, Inna said that it was OK to read excerpts from his diary, but that it should be read in conjunction with another text, like this one [=literary biographical]?

Gili: Not this one, because they are both on the same side, they both say that Herzl was the good one and the others are the bad ones… You have to use a text from the other side, which explains why Palestine should be chosen and not Uganda. It is impossible to learn only from one side…

Lia: But it does show the other side…On the one hand, he says there is no way it will be in Uganda, and on the other hand, he says yes to a move to Uganda. That shows both sides…

Gili: No. What I mean is that they are both Herzl's sides. At first Herzl says no and then yes. But, what we need is someone who says no at the end.

This discussion centers on the question as to whether a literary biographical text may be used in addition to the autobiographical text. Gili claims that the text is unsuitable as an additional text because it also has a pro-Herzl viewpoint. Lia disagrees with her and says that the autobiographical text does give the two opinions about the Uganda Plan and a discussion ensues between them. Gili makes it clear that she noticed that both texts support Herzl, even though one of them included arguments against the proposal. She understood that in order to gain a wider understanding of the affair, it would be necessary to read an additional text that would present a different viewpoint about the events. Even if she does not reveal in-depth disciplinary reading, there are certain elements of such reading, including a comparative reading between the lines in order to distinguish the leanings and style of the text.

Following analysis of all the data regarding corroboration, we claim that the students showed initial corroboration by identifying the differences between texts. In most cases, they did not draw any additional significant conclusions about the characteristics of the texts and how it contributed to understanding the historical event.

4.5   Discussion and Conclusions

Before discussing the results, we want to point out the limitations of the research method and design. Conducting the study by applying intervention of focus groups guided by moderators is an important limitation, since their participation did not allow us to isolate the unique influence of the biographical texts. We cannot attribute student reactions during the group discussions exclusively to the biographical texts, since the moderator's intervention and formatting the class into focus groups might have had a significant implication on their responses. For that reason, we contend that the biographical texts may not have an exclusive effect on student historical-disciplinary reading. Rather, we assert that they contribute to high school students' historical reading.

In addition, the focus groups were guided by a moderator whom the students did not know, and who was not part of the school staff and the presence of a camera and tape recorder in the classroom all may have affected student responses. The relatively small number of classes studied, characteristic of qualitative research,

allowed for just a limited focus on student responses to biographical texts in history lessons. Nevertheless, we postulate that our findings are significant.

In history lessons, most of what students read conforms to the characteristics of "school texts". The intensive exposure to texts sharing similar characteristics results in a conceptual schema. Therefore, students expect to find the same characteristics in all texts they read in history lessons: functional descriptions, a writing style that indicates the author's distance from both the subject and the reader, and the absence or blurred presence of both the author and the historical figures in the text.

The existence of this conceptual schema about the character and the authority of the school text is no trivial matter. Studies show that difficulties students have in developing historical reading are largely the result of their adhering to the conceptual schema of the educational text. Unlike historians, students tend to approach the historical text by scanning through the contents to locate the important facts and processes. They also tend not to doubt the text's reliability, and they do not look for biases. If they do identify biases, they do not attribute them to the author's personal agenda (Bain, 2006; Paxton, 1999, 2002; Wineburg, 2001; Nokes, 2013).

One of the most prominent observations we made during the study was that many of the students were opposed to using biographical texts, especially literary-biographical and autobiographical texts, as historical texts in history lessons. We assume that they objected because these texts undermined what they had read in the familiar school text schema.

Biographies are not written to fulfill the formal demands of history learning in school. They also do not require the distance, which is built into the school-texts, between the author and the subject, or between the author and reader, nor do they avoid dealing with the emotional aspects of the historical event. It is possible that the deviation from the educational text pattern, characteristic of the literary-biographical and autobiographical texts, caused the students to object to use those texts for formal learning. Students did not object as strongly to the scientific-biographical text, which seems to be similar in structure and writing style to the schema of the school text.

The resistance of students to biographical texts draws our attention to the question of whether there is any added educational value in exposing students to

biographical texts. Indeed, if the purpose of history study is to accumulate knowledge about historical events in an organized manner, in a way that will enable them to deal successfully with formal school tasks, then the biographical texts do not serve this purpose. However, if the purpose of learning history is to enable students to apply their historical knowledge using a disciplinary approach (Wineburg, 1991; Paxton, 2002; De La Paz & Felton, 2010; De La Paz et al, 2014; De La Paz et al, 2016; Reisman, 2012; Nokes, 2013), then dealing with biographical texts may have significant educational potential. We assert that the findings of this study can reinforce Paxton's (2002) findings about the influence of a visible writer on disciplinary thinking.

We assert that biographical texts with a highly visible author (e.g. autobiographical texts or literary-biographical texts) may serve as a first step in an important process of "expectation failure" (Bain, 2004). Students came to class expecting to learn from a "useful", "objective" and "truthful" text. Instead, they were asked to learn from biographical texts in which the subjectivity is very clear. Possibly, students' objection to the literary-biographical and autobiographical texts was one of the factors that led them to activate basic disciplinary reading skills. This subject can be tested in further studies that will examine patterns of critical thinking of students in reaction to the biographical content in other situations and in other ways.

For example, students who claimed that the literary-biographical text was not objective justified their claim with reference to the content and structure of the text, and position of the author in the text. Students noticed the techniques used by biographers, voiced reasoned criticism about the text, and found attitudes and biases in it. These processes are not usually required of students when dealing with school texts, since school texts appear to be authoritative and objective.

Some of the students who reacted negatively to the biographical texts at the beginning of the discussion were able to explain their reaction on their own or as a response to leading questions from the moderator. The data gathered in this study shows tens of examples of "inferential sourcing", in which the students referred to the author's identity, viewpoints and motives while referring to the content and style of the text. Some of the students also were able to identify the author's point of view in

the scientific biographical text, which, at first glance, appeared to be "objective" or "neutral."

The results of this study are not decisive. For example, there were few examples of corroboration skills shown by the students and in most cases; they remained at the initial level. Comparisons were generally based on finding technical differences between the two texts, and they did not reveal any significant historical understanding. It is possible that in-depth disciplinary reading in the corroboration category requires more guidance than was given in the focus groups. Nevertheless, that the comparative approach the students used after reading the biographical texts should not be underestimated because this approach might plant the seeds of a deeper disciplinary reading of texts.

Furthermore, not all of the biographical texts prompted disciplinary reading. The literary-biographical text and autobiographical text raised students' doubts or objections and later led them to inferential sourcing. Scientific-biographical texts usually did not raise similar doubts or text-based historical arguments.

We suggest that these differences stem mostly from the nature of each one of the biographical texts the students were exposed to. The autobiographical text was written in the first person, and the voice of the writer was clearly expressed. The biographical-literary text included a clear interpretation by the author of the events, and the author's position was clear. These two text types deviated from the schema of the familiar school text; they required the use of disciplinary skills, and students objected to them. In the scientific-biographical text, so typical of the academic style of school texts, the voice of the author is harder to discern. Such texts evoked fewer objections and required fewer disciplinary skills. We conclude from these findings that the nature of the text might have a dominant influence on students' comments.

We do not think that exposing high school students to biographical texts is the only way to help them overcome their difficulties in disciplinary-historical reading. We also do not think that biographical texts should be the main historical source in history lessons. We do claim, however, that integrating biographical texts in history lessons may help, at the initial stages, develop disciplinary skills in students. It might be, that by using these texts in conjunction with meta-cognitive strategies (which were

not examined in this study), teachers can encourage their students to acknowledge their own mental assumptions about the nature of biographical texts and school-texts.

This study contributes to previous research in the field of history education that have discussed different tools that encourage students to question the authoritative nature of historical texts (e.g. Paxton, 2002; Bain, 2006; Neumann, 2010; Waring & Robinson, 2010; Wineburg, 2001). The results of our study are consistent with those of Paxton's studies, which claim that the nature of the text, and especially the presence or absence of the author in the text, may affect the way students employ disciplinary skills in history. Further studies on this subject are needed, but according to our finding we believe that using biographical texts, may enhance students' historical disciplinary reading.

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5   General Discussion

The current study examined the educational significance of incorporating biographical content in high school history lessons. My initial objective was to examine the assumption captured in the Victorian proverb, "Servants talk about People: Gentlefolk discuss Things" (Young, 1953/1936, n.p.). I wanted to examine the different ways in which teachers and students talk about people in history lessons, and the pedagogic significance of studying, or not studying, biographical content in history education. The three research questions:

1. How do teachers talk about people in high school history lessons?
2. What are the various approaches concerning the place and role of people in history, as reflected in the daily practice of teachers and students in history lessons?
3. What is the educational significance of the way teachers talk about people in history lessons, in the context of promoting disciplinary skills and fostering involvement among the student?

I examined the questions on the basis of the claim that history teaching and biographical content, the two key elements of the research questions, were positioned at the juncture of disciplinary history and life practice (Seixas, 2018), resulting in a potential source of tension, yet also an opportunity for viewing both history teachers and biographical texts as mediators between two worlds.

One of the most important findings of the **first paper** is that individuals are mostly absent from the teacher-student dialogue about past events. The teachers observed made only scant reference to them but did talk a lot about "people" without referring to actual historical individuals. The widespread use of generic people, general categories, and personification of historical objects formed the basis for discussing human acts in history lessons.

The study revealed that the frequent use of generic figures in the lessons may have increased student engagement. However, in some of the observed lessons, it was clear that using generic figures led to a one-sided and inaccurate presentation of historic events, likely to blur the inherent human complexity, prevent multiperspectivity, and result in a shallow discussion. Conversely, the use of actual or imaginary historical figures in detailed and varied role-play games, although controversial (see Schweber, 2003; Harris & Foreman-Peck, 2004), opened up a

variety of perspectives on past events and enabled the students to observe historical situations from different viewpoints.

Speaking about people in terms of general categories ("the British" or "the Americans") enabled teachers to present a broad picture of the historical event and brought them closer to understanding broad processes and long-term historical phenomena. Additionally, general categories were used as a tool to reinforce a nationalist sense of belonging – part of the overt or covert goals of history teaching (Clark, 2009; Yogev, 2013; Wassermann, 2018). However, the use of generalizations did not allow the students to distinguish the multiple perspectives within those generalized categories. Frequent use of "us" and "them" is likely to increase hostility toward other groups (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2016). Based on these findings, I argue that the combination of studying the broad aspects of the historical event using human generalizations, and the study of actual figures who reflect human complexity or human dilemmas (Dilthey, 1961) will enable teachers to help students develop sensitive multiperspectivity.

Personification helps teachers explain abstract or difficult concepts (Thulin & Pramling, 2009). The findings of the study show, however, that the commonly observed personification of historical objects in history lessons distances the learners from the human aspects of historical events. Even when discussing violent acts with tragic outcomes, students did not respond to the teacher's descriptions or ask questions when these actions or outcomes were attributed to non-human factors. This demonstrates a low level of student engagement in the historical content.

I found that in order to develop students' disciplinary skills and foster greater engagement, it is insufficient for the teacher to talk about people in history lessons simply by name dropping or mentioning trivial biographical details about the people involved. When teachers talk about people as a tool for developing sensitive multiperspectivity in the students, it is vital that they do so in a way that will shed light on the meaning and the value of different human perspectives of the historical event being studied (Stradling, 2003). Talking about a variety of historical figures while examining each one's unique viewpoint about the historical event, or in-depth study of one historical figure to gain understanding of that person's unique perspective on the event is likely to influence the students' interpretation of the entire historical process. Teachers' awareness of the connection between how they present the acts of historical figures to their students and how students understand the event and

subsequently form their disciplinary knowledge may help teachers formulate their teaching practice.

In the **second paper**, I examined a specific aspect of how teachers talk about people in history lessons, focusing on how they refer to actual historical figures in lessons that centered on a controversial event in the public sphere. The study analyzed three lessons taught by three different teachers about the 1948 Altalena Affair, which meets the definition of a difficult past event (Epstein & Peck, 2018; Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2009).

Studying difficult past events is a significant challenge for history teachers in state schools. When teaching these topics, they confront head-on the practical meanings of the "history/memory matrix" (Seixas, 2018). On the one hand, since they hold a public position, teachers have to be careful not to offend students' sense of statehood. On the other hand, they are committed to the rules of the history discipline. Particularly with regard to controversial events, teachers are required to choose how to represent the controversy such that both parts of the Seixas' matrix are presented to the students fairly.

The findings show that the way teachers referred to the historical figures in the lessons reflected a broader fundamental approach to studying difficult past events. When the first teacher placed the historical figures at the center of the class discussion, there was a direct confrontation ("fight") between her and the students about the controversial aspects of the affair. In this sense, studying actual people contributed to the development of students' multiperspectivity through an understanding of the viewpoints of various figures about the event, as well as an understanding of the different perspectives through which we can view the actions of that particular individual. The use of this "fight" approach also led to greater student engagement in the class discussion and an increase in their awareness of the political and moral controversy surrounding the historical affair.

The second teacher taught the Altalena Affair barely mentioning the historical figures, presenting it as a generic confrontation between people. I observed that the teacher and the students distanced themselves ("flight") from the controversial aspects of the affair. The conflict, which formed the basis of the lesson, was not discussed at all in this class.

The third teacher presented the historical figures as responsible national leaders who acted for the common good. The teacher attempted to mitigate the controversial aspects of the event ("light") and almost did not present them to the class. This approach is likely to promote nationalist goals of reinforcing the shared identity of the political leaders involved in the controversial event and avoiding internal dissent. In this lesson, there was no evidence of the development of disciplinary perceptions or skills and no significant student engagement.

"Fight or flight" is the biological mechanism for coping with dangerous situations (Jansen, Nguyen, Karpitskiy, Mettenleiter, & Loewy, 1995). I claim that teaching controversial subjects presents teachers with a pedagogic "danger", because difficult, unresolved past events are likely to lead to disagreement between the teacher and students, or among the students themselves. Tempers are likely to flare, and the class status-quo could be dented or shattered. A frightening experience for some – an opportunity to benefit from the lessons of history for others.

Unlike automatic physiological reactions to dangerous situations, history teachers can and must handle the challenge of difficult-past teaching in a rational manner and plan their classroom activities based on well-defined pedagogic and didactic philosophies (Wrenn et al., 2007). Examining the different approaches to difficult-past teaching through the perspective of the historical figure may provide the teachers with tools for introspection on their teaching practice. The findings show that a teacher who is interested in examining the controversial aspects of a historical affair can achieve this by placing the historical figure at the center. When applying this approach, the teacher needs to be aware that serious disagreements could develop in class, and extremely emotional statements could be expressed. Referring to historical figures may lead to a class discussion that brings with it added educational benefits: at the disciplinary level, students will distinguish between the multiple perspectives of the event, and on the civic level, they will refer to the political, ideological, moral and interpersonal layers that can be seen in the figures' actions in the historical situation.

When a teacher chooses to keep references to the controversial aspects of the historical event to a bare minimum, however, this is often in the service of delivering educational messages (such as nationalist-particularistic as opposed to moral-universal ideals). This in turn can lead a selective, goal-oriented discussion about historical figures. When choosing this approach, the teacher needs to be aware that the

lesson may be indoctrinating in nature and run counter to the disciplinary objectives of teaching history.

The **third paper** was based on an intervention research conducted in five high school classes. Students in focus groups were intentionally given different subgenres of biographical texts. I wished to examine their reactions to using biographical texts as a learning source for the Uganda Affair. I examined the findings with reference to Piaget's cognitive schemas theory (Piaget, 2013/1954; 2015/1971).

I was surprised to discover that many of the students were opposed to using any kind of biographical text, and particularly to using texts with more distinct biographical markers (literary biography and autobiography). Although some of the students noted that texts with a story-like nature or personal touches were interesting, they generally were opposed to using them in history lessons. Specifically, when referring to the biographical texts they were given, and particularly the literary-biographical and autobiographical texts, many argued that they were neither credible or objective nor helpful for study. Needing to back up these claims, either independently or in response to the facilitator's questions, led many of them to perform inferential sourcing and basic corroboration, thus contributing to the disciplinary objectives of history teaching.

Students who argued that the literary-biographical text was not objective justified their claims with examples of the author's writing techniques. They identified the author's voice, referred to the content he chose to insert in or delete from the texts, and noticed the text's bias. The students were also highly critical of the autobiographical text. They identified the author as an interested party, concerning both the actual affair and in terms of how his image would be perceived in the future. I found dozens of examples of inferential sourcing when I analyzed the lesson recordings, showing that the students were able to list the characteristics of the biographical text even without being provided any hints as to the author's identity or the nature of the book from which the text was taken. Regarding the scientific-biographical text, far fewer examples of disciplinary reading were seen and they were of a much lower level.

I claim that due to the different nature compared to the school-texts, some of the biographical texts (the literary-biographical and the autobiographical text) undermined the school-text's cognitive scheme, with which the students had become familiar after many years of learning history. I found that precisely because the

students refused to accept the biographical texts as authoritative, they engaged in more extensive learning processes, particularly in order to identify the source's characteristics – an important disciplinary skill.

As for the scientific-biographical text, the findings are likely to strengthen the argument that undermining the school-text's schema is an important tool in developing disciplinary skills. I found that the students considered the scientific-biographical text to be closer to the standard school-text in its nature and writing style, so the text schema was not undermined. Therefore, the students did not feel the need to confront the different text model and justify their arguments against it. The text did not evoke as many expressions of disciplinary reading as the other biographical texts did.

Expressions of corroboration in reading of biographical texts were weaker and less backed up. I assume that in order to lead students to corroboration, clearer guidance and direction may be needed. Simply handing them the text and asking a few open-ended leading questions may be insufficient.

The findings of this paper reinforce Paxton's (2002) findings about the influence of author high-visibility texts on students' level of history reading. As opposed to text books and other texts used in schools (such as computer presentations, texts written on the white/black board and handouts), biographical texts were not written to help students complete learning tasks satisfactorily or enable them to gather as much organized history information as possible. However, if we assume that the goals of history education go beyond the acquisition of knowledge or passing a final exam and include the acquisition of disciplinary skills (Wineburg, 1991, 2001; Paxton, 2002; De La Paz & Felton, 2010; De La Paz et al, 2014; De La Paz et al, 2016; Reisman, 2012; Nokes, 2013; Nokes, Dole, & Hacker, 2007), then exposing students to biographical texts has additional value.

5.1 Conclusion

The present research projects offer three key insights. First, the use of biographical content in high-school history lessons is likely to promote two aspects of the goals of history education: development of disciplinary skills (distinguishing multiple perspective as a feature of the discipline, identifying features of the source, critical reading of sources); and fostering student engagement (distinguishing multiple perspectives as a civic approach, identifying the connection between human actions and historical processes, and developing the distinction between the individual's viewpoint as opposed to generalized, simplified or racist approaches).

Second, in order to develop student disciplinary skills and foster engagement, it is insufficient for the teacher to simply mention names or note biographical anecdotes about the historical figures. Rather, historical figures need to be studied in depth. The content type and the way it is used must be selected judiciously, in accordance with the teacher's educational goals.

Finally, teachers aware of their unique position, at the juncture of disciplinary history and life practice, will be able to make optimal use of biographical content that is also positioned at the junction of the disciplinary history and life practice. The teacher's judicious use biographical content is likely to serve as a helpful mediator between history as an academic field and history as the focus of public interest and maximize student engagement.

These findings do not mean that history teachers need to use biographical texts as the only sources in history lessons. I fully understand that a wide variety of texts and sources is likely to contribute to deepening students' disciplinary skills and foster engagement. However, it is worth noting again that background observations and subsequent interviews with teachers showed an almost total absence of biographical content from history lessons. The study's findings show that an additional benefit is likely to be gained by consciously exposing students to biographical texts.

The answers to the research questions were not conclusive because of the complexity of the field of study and the qualitative methodology. There are several inherent limitations in this study. For example, the presence of filming and recording equipment and an observer or external facilitator in the classroom may have influenced the behavior of the teachers and the students. Another limitation is the fact that eleven classes were observed out of tens of thousands taught in Israel every year.

Given that this study dealt mainly with exposure of students to biographical content about famous figures, and that the scope of the study was limited in advance, future studies can broaden the scope by examining the significance of exposure to different kinds of biographical content (such as biographical texts about ordinary people or other subgenres of biography).

In her novel *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy wrote:

> History was like an old house at night. With all the lamps lit. And ancestors whispering inside. To understand history… we have to go inside and listen to what they're saying. And look at the books and the pictures on the wall. And smell the smells. (Roy, 1997, p. 51)

I adopt Roy's imagery and consider history as an old house in which every item can teach us, the people living in the present, about what happened in the past. I think that if teachers make wise and logical use of everything this house has to offer, including the voices and writings of the people who lived and acted in it, they will succeed in expanding and deepening their students' disciplinary skills, and concurrently, contribute to raising the level of their engagement in history studies.

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6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1: Literary biography

One evening, while Herzl was having dinner with his wife and children, they suddenly heard a knock at the door. The servant informed Herzl that his friend Mr. Kremnetzky wished to speak with him. Herzl left the table and went to speak to the man. "I apologize for barging in like this," the embarrassed Kremnitzky murmured, "but something terrible has happened. Pogroms have erupted in Kishinev in Russia. Terrible things have happened there. Many Jews have been killed and hundreds have been injured. Thousands of homes have been destroyed and torched. Shops have been looted."

"How terrible!" declared Herzl, covering his face with his hands. All that night he was unable to sleep. The terrible images flashed before him, and he heard the calls of pain and horror from children and tiny babies. The next day he left his home and traveled to England to meet with Chamberlain, the Minister for the British Colonies. The horrifying news of the pogroms in Kishinev had reached far-off England, but nevertheless the Minister for Colonies was unable to grant Herzl's wish and allow Jews to settle in or near the Land of Israel. "Take Uganda," Chamberlain suggested, as he had done in the past. This time, Herzl did not immediately reject his proposal. In his hand, he held Uganda or nothing. Which was preferable? Maybe he should reconsider this offer? It was essential to get the Jews out of Europe and save them before it was too late. The Sixth Zionist Congress would begin in a few days, and there he would raise the subject of settlement in Uganda, he decided. Uganda is better than nothing. Any solution is preferable to the current situation.

At the Sixth Zionist Congress in Basel, Herzl did not find the understanding he had hoped for. A storm of protest erupted in the hall when he raised his plan for Jewish settlement in Uganda. "Settle in Africa?" came the cries among the enraged crowd – "never!" Menachem Ussishkin, one of the veteran leaders of the Hibat Zion movement, called out: "The Uganda Plan is a death blow to Zionism!" Herzl stood on the podium, white as a sheet. His back seemed to bend under the heavy burden, his shoulders sank. His heart beat rapidly. He had not expected that the large audience would thank him for managing to secure Uganda, but neither had he anticipated such

fierce attacks. Shocked, he returned to his rom. On the second day of the Congress, Herzl addressed the gathering in passionate terms, explaining why he had chosen Uganda. The negotiations with the Turkish Sultan had proved unsuccessful, as had the talks with the German Kaiser. "The Kishinev pogroms proved to everyone," Herzl declared in an emotional and agitated tone, "that we must find a country of refuge for the Jews. Uganda is not and will never be Zion, but we must accept the British offer!" A moment of deathly silence fell on the hall, followed by an eruption of loud and protracted applause, drowning out the voices of opponents and cries of rejection and protest. In a vote held immediately thereafter, the Congress decided to send a delegation to Uganda to examine the conditions. The delegation would submit its conclusions and a decision would then be made. Enraged, the opponents of the plan left the hall.

Herzl was in a state of great excitement, his face covered in sweat. He returned to his room, but he could not rest for long. At the doorway stood David Wolfson, who informed him: "The opponents to the Uganda Plan have stayed in the congress hall. They are sitting on the floor, mourning the destruction of Jerusalem, crying and emotional. Please, my friend, go to them. Speak to them. Explain to them." Herzl immediately rose and returned to the congress hall. He went to the door through which he had left the hall a little earlier, but it was now locked in his face. Setting aside his honor, he again asked to be allowed to enter. Only after a vote was the door opened and Herzl permitted to enter the hall. He sat with the opponents of the Uganda Plan until daybreak, swearing and promising that Uganda was merely an interim stage. His explanations were full of power and confidence, and above all – full of a great faith. He managed to persuade the opponents to participate in the discussions that morning and to remain in the congress and in the Zionist movement. When Herzl made his speech closing the congress, he repeated all his statements and promises from the night before. As he ended his remarks, he slowly lifted his right hand and declared in Hebrew: "If I forgot thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning!" His passionate vow echoed through the spacious hall.

6.2 Appendix 2: Autobiography

Talked yesterday with the famous master of England, Joe Chamberlin. I expounded everything I had intended to bring up, and he was a good listener. Unfortunately, my voice trembled t first, which greatly annoyed me while I was speaking. After a few minutes, however, things improved and I talked calmly and incisively, to the extent that my rough-and-ready English permits it. Addressing myself to Joe Chamberlin's motionless mask, I presented the whole Jewish question as I understand it and wish to solve it. "I am in negotiation with the Sultan," I said. "But you know what Turkish negotiations are… Now I have time to negotiate, but my people has not. They are starving in the pale. I must bring them an immediate help." (23.10.1902)

With Chamberlin yesterday noon. He received me amiably, like an old acquaintance. "I have seen a land for you on my travels," said the great Chamberlin, "and that's Uganda. And I thought to myself, that would be a land for Dr. Herzl. But of course, he wants to go only to Palestine or its vicinity." "Yes, I have to," I replied. "Our base must be in or near Palestine." (24.4.1903)

May whole Sinai plan has broken down. A great deal of time and efforts as well as some money have been lost. I already have another plan. According to my information, a terrible fear has taken hold of Jews in Russia. The immediate consequence will be a new emigration movement. Where? To America? To England? (30.5.1903)

I called the A.C. to my house and acquainted them with my new Portuguese-African plan. Kockesch raised his eyebrows and declared himself flatly opposed to it. Kahn was in favor. Kremenzky saw its rightness after I had explained things. (11.6.1903)

"The sixth congress. The old hullabaloo. My heart is palpitating from fatigue. If I were doing it for thanks I would be a great fool. Yesterday I gave my report to the Great A.C. I presented the British offer. Not for a single moment did it occur to any of them that for these greatest of all accomplishment to date I deserve a word of thanks, or even a smile. Instead they criticized me." (22.8.1903)

The difficult great Sixth Congress is over. When, completely worn out, I had returned from the Congress building, after the final session, we sat in Cowen's room around a

bottle of mineral water, I said to them: "I will now tell you the speech I am going to make at the Seventh Congress- that is, if I live to see it… My speech will be as follow: '…The ultimate goal has not been reached, and will not be reached within a foreseeable time. But a temporary result is at hand: this land in which we can settle our suffering masses on a national basis and with the right of self-government. I do not believe that for the sake of a beautiful dream or of a legitimistic banner we have a right to withhold this relief from the unfortunate. But I recognize that this produced a decisive split in our movement. And this rift is centered about my own person… Palestine is the only land where our people can come to rest. But hundreds and thousands need immediate help. There is only one way to solve this conflict: I must resign my leadership… My best wishes will be with those who work for the fulfilment of the beautiful dream. By what I have done I have not made Zionism poorer, but Jewry richer. Farewell!'" (31.8.1903)

6.3 Appendix 3: Scientific biography

On April 19, an outrage occurred in Kishinev. In less than 48 hours it left 45 local Jews lying dead, and nearly 600 wounded. 1500 shops and homes were pillaged or destroyed. For almost twenty-four hours the mob run amok. News of Kishinev pogrom reached Herzl in London, before his final interview with Chamberlain. They discussed the British government offer to lease the Zionists a vast in Africa, big enough to absorb one million settlers.

Time was running out in Russia. Herzl decided to reconsider Chamberlain's offer of Uganda. He had made up his mind. Uganda was not Zion, this he knew well, but there was no time to lose. It was time for rescue, not for ideology.

Six days later the sixth Zionist congress was opened. The delegates were shocked by the change in Herzl's rank. Fatigue and illness showed in his lined face and stooped figure. Herzl's public opening speech to the congress was received with tumultuous applause. Speaking slowly, in a firm, well-modulated voice, he reviewed the most recent disasters. Herzl recounted the failure of his negotiation with the Turks. But now, he stated, the British had offered him a substituted territory in Uganda. "The new territory does not possess historical value, but I do not doubt that the congress will welcome the new offer with warmest gratitude. The British government, he added, was fully aware of the movement's ultimate aims in Palestine. Uganda was not and would never be Zion. It would serve merely as a "provisional site for colonization on a national, self-governing basis"[15]

A storm followed this last remark. The applause barely concealed the abyss between Herzl and his opponents. The movement itself was threatened. Some of the Russian opponents of Uganda declared a hunger strike. Many fell on one another's necks and wept. Herzl was shaken by the hostility and by the vicious attacks hurled against him. He was so tired, so busy, and so disgusted that he hardly registered his impression in his diary, except once: "The sixth congress. The old hullabaloo. My heart is palpitating from fatigue. If I were doing it for thanks I would be a great fool. Yesterday I gave my report to the Great A.C. I presented the British offer. Not for a single moment did it

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[15] Stenographic Protocols of Zionist Congresses, Vienna, 1903

occur to any of them that for these greatest of all accomplishment to date I deserve a word of thanks, or even a smile. Instead they criticized me"[16]

In the face of so much opposition and the very real threat of a split, a mild resolution was actually put to a vote; it merely called for the dispatch of an expedition of experts to the proposed East African region. Two 295 delegates voted for the resolution, 178 voted against, and 99 abstained.

In the closing speech, the last he was ever to deliver in any congress, Herzl returned to the British offer of East Africa. He described it as a temporary expedient. Then, slowly raising his right hand, he cried, in Hebrew, "If I forget thee, oh Jerusalem, may my right hand lose its cunning." But the conflict about Uganda was not over. The opponents of Herzl's East African project had not been reassured by his conciliatory remarks in Basel, or by his dramatic announcement.

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[16] Herzl's Political Diary, 22.8.1903

6.4 Appendix 4: Facilitation guidelines for focus group discussions on the Uganda affair

Our aim is to understand the text and through it, to learn about the Uganda Affair. Before we begin, I will point out the rules of discussion in this meeting:

1. Speak to your fellow students and not only to the moderator.
2. Ask questions if you did not understand what one of the group members said, or if you need clarifications of any kind.
3. If you make a claim, back it up with proof from the text. The text is the core of this group discussion.
4. You did not need to raise your hand or ask permission to speak, but you may not interrupt a fellow student, nor you may not take control of the discussion all the time.
5. You might disagree with each other, but do not dismiss what others say. We are here to study this text together.

Discussion on First Text:

1. Does anyone have anything to say about the text we read earlier?
2. Based on what you understood from the text, what happened in the Uganda Affair?
3. Based on what you understood from the text, can you understand why the Uganda Affair was included in the history curriculum?
4. In your opinion, is there a central figure in the text? Who? And why do you think it is a central figure?
5. Based on what you understood from the text, what motivated the figure to act as he did in the Affair? How is this seen in the text?
6. What was the author's opinion about how the central figure acted?
7. Based on what you understood from the text, what is the author's viewpoint on what happened in the Uganda Affair?
8. In your opinion, who was the text written for? How can you identify the target audience in the text?

9. In your opinion, is this text a good source for learning about the Uganda Affair?

10. Does anyone have anything further to say about the text we read?

We will now read an additional text, and then discuss it.

1. Does anyone have anything to say about the new text we read?

2. Based on what you understood from the new text, what happened in the Uganda Affair?

3. Based on what you understood from this text, what motivated the central figures to act as he/they did?

4. Can you identify the viewpoint of the author of this second text about the central figures actions in the Uganda Affair?

5. In your opinion, who was the text written for? How can you identify the target audience in the text, if that is at all possible?

6. In your opinion, is this text a a good source for learning about the Uganda Affair?

7. Compare the two texts. Do you think it is possible to determine whether one of the two is more suitable for learning about the Uganda Affair?

6.5 Appendix 5: Coding scheme: Students' reactions to use of biographical texts in history lessons

Based on: Wineburg, 1991; Britt & Aglinskas, 2002; De La Paz & Felton, 2010

Master Category:

Historical Disciplinary Reading

Subcategory – Expanded Sourcing

Examining the source from various aspects – author, place, time, text voice, wording

Subcategory: Corroboration

Comparison of two sources, look for similarities and differences as the basis for evaluation

Subcategory – Author:

Who is the author? When was it written? Viewpoints? Values? Motivation?

Subcategory – Content:

What does the text describe? What does it omit? Repetitive content? Consistency? Is it supported?

Subcategory – Style and Structure:

Structure? How is the event described? Tone? What do the structure and tone reflect?

Subcategory - Similarities and Differences:

How is the second text similar to the first one regarding author, content and style? How is it different?

Subcategory – Additions and Absence

What does the second text add to detract from the first text?

Subcategory Contradictions:

Are there contradictions in n the information in the texts? Are there conflicting descriptions?

Subcategory – Evaluation:

Is the text believable? Does it give a deeper understanding of the topic? In what way?

Subcategory - Comparative evaluation

What is each text's unique contribution to understanding the topic? Is one preferable, and why?

תקציר

מחקר זה עוסק במשמעויות החינוכיות של שילוב תכנים ביוגרפיים בהוראת ההיסטוריה. במסגרת המחקר נבחנו אופנים שונים בהם התייחסו מורים ותלמידים לדמויות היסטוריות בשיעורי היסטוריה שגרתיים, ותגובות של תלמידים לשילוב מכוון של טקסטים ביוגרפיים בשיעורי היסטוריה. מטרת המחקר הייתה לברר את המשמעות של שילוב תכנים ביוגרפיים בהוראת ההיסטוריה הן בהקשר של פיתוח מיומנויות דיסציפלינריות, והן בהקשר של יצירת תשתיות למעורבות תלמידים בשיעורי היסטוריה.

המחקר התבצע באחת-עשרה כיתות תיכון בחמישה בתי ספר ממלכתיים בישראל על בסיס הפרדיגמה האיכותנית. איסוף הנתונים נעשה באמצעות תצפיות בשיעורי היסטוריה, קיום ראיונות עומק חצי מובנים עם תלמידים ועם מורים, והפעלת קבוצות מיקוד במסגרתן נחשפו תלמידים לתכנים ביוגרפיים. התצפיות תועדו באמצעים דיגיטליים וכן ביומני שדה.

ניתוח התכנים נעשה בארבעה שלבים : 1.) קריאה ראשונית של תמלילי השיעורים וסימון יחידות השיח הרלוונטיות לנושא המחקר. 2.) בניית סכמת קידוד ראשונית על סמך התמות שעלו מתוך תמלילי השיעורים. 3.) בחינת סכמות הקידוד על ידי קוראים נוספים לצורך דיוק הקטגוריות לניתוח. 4.) ניתוח התמלילים באמצעות סכמת הקידוד על ידי מספר קוראים, ודיון בין הקוראים לצורך יצירת הסכמות הפרשניות.

המחקר מורכב משלושה מאמרים, שכל אחד מהם בוחן את נושא השימוש בתכנים ביוגרפיים בשיעורי היסטוריה מזווית אחרת, ותוך שימוש במסגרת תיאורטית שונה. המאמר הראשון עוסק בדרכים שונות בהם מדברים מורים על אנשים בשיעורי היסטוריה רגילים, ובבחינת הקשר בין אופן הדיבור על אנשים לבין פיתוח תפיסה של ריבוי פרספקטיבות בתלמידים כיעד דיסציפלינרי ואזרחי. המאמר השני עוסק בגישות שונות להוראת עבר בעייתי, כפי שהשתקפו בהתייחסויות של מורים אל דמויות היסטוריות בשיעורים שעסקו בפרשת אלטלנה. המאמר השלישי עוסק בתגובותיהם של תלמידים לטקסטים ביוגרפיים אליהם נחשפו במסגרת לימודי ההיסטוריה, ובהשתקפות של מיומנויות דיסציפלינריות בתגובותיהם לטקסטים הביוגרפיים.

הממצאים המרכזיים של המחקר הם :

1. המורים שנצפו במסגרת המחקר המעיטו להתייחס לדמויות היסטוריות במסגרת שיעורי היסטוריה. הם הרבו להתייחס לבני אדם דרך שימוש בדמויות גנריות, קטגוריות מכלילות והאנשה של אובייקטים היסטוריים.

2. העמדת דמויות במרכז שיעור היסטוריה המתמקד בסוגיית עבר בעייתי הובילה לעיסוק ישיר בממדים השנויים במחלוקת של הפרשה ההיסטורית. הרחקת דמויות היסטוריות משיעורים העוסקים בסוגיות עבר בעייתי הובילה לטשטוש ההיבטים השנויים במחלוקת של הפרשה. עיסוק סלקטיבי בהיבטים מסוימים של פעולותיהן של דמויות היסטוריות, לפי בחירת המורה, הוביל לריכוך הממדים השנויים במחלוקת של הפרשה ההיסטורית ולהדגשת השותפות הלאומית.

3.   תלמידים רבים התנגדו לשימוש בתכנים ביוגרפיים במסגרת לימודי
ההיסטוריה. מתוך התנגדותם לשימוש בתכנים הביוגרפיים, התגלו בדבריהם ביטויים
בולטים למיומנות דיסציפלינרית חיונית אחת (inferential sourcing) וביטויים פחותים
למיומנות דיסציפלינרית חיונית אחרת (corroboration)
התרומות המרכזיות של המחקר הן :

1.   שימוש בתכנים ביוגרפיים במסגרת שיעורי היסטוריה בכיתות תיכון
עשוי לקדם מטרות של החינוך ההיסטורי הן בתחום פיתוח המיומנויות הדיסציפלינריות
(הבחנה בריבוי פרספקטיבות כמאפיין דיסציפלינרי, זיהוי מאפייני המקור, קריאה
ביקורתית במקורות), והן בתחום פיתוח מעורבות מצד הלומדים (הבחנה בריבוי
פרספקטיבות כגישה אזרחית, זיהוי הקשר בין פעולות האדם למהלכים ההיסטוריים,
פיתוח הבחנה בנקודת המבט של פרטים כנגד גישות המבטאות הכללה פשטנית או
גזענות).

2.   עיסוק בבני אדם במסגרת שיעורי היסטוריה לצורך פיתוח מיומנויות
דיסציפלינריות או לצורך טיפוח מעורבות של הלומדים אינו יכול להסתכם באזכור שמות
או בציון אנקדוטות ביוגרפיות אודות דמויות היסטוריות. לצורך השגת הערך המוסף
הפוטנציאלי הכרוך בשילוב תכנים ביוגרפיים יש צורך עיסוק מעמיק בהם, תוך בחירה
מושכלת של סוג התוכן, ואופן השימוש בו, בהתאם למטרות החינוכיות של המורה.

3.   מורים שיהיו מודעים לנקודת העמידה הייחודית שלהם, על קו התפר
שבין ההיסטוריה הדיסציפלינרית לבין הפרקטיקות של היומיום יוכלו לעשות שימוש
מיטבי בתכנים ביוגרפיים, הממוקמים אף הם על קו התפר שבין ההיסטוריה
הדיסציפלינרית לבין חיי היומיום במרחב הציבורי. שימוש מושכל של מורים בתוכן
ביוגרפי, הנגיש לרבים באוכלוסייה, עשוי לשמש כמתווך מועיל בין ההיסטוריה כתחום
דעת אקדמי, לבין ההיסטוריה כמוקד עניין ציבורי ולגרום גם לעניין בקרב תלמידים.

מילות מפתח : תכנים ביוגרפיים, הוראת היסטוריה, מיומנויות דיסציפלינריות, מעורבות
תלמידים

עבודה זו נעשתה בהדרכתו של

ד״ר דן פורת

תלמידים מדברים על אנשים:

שימוש בתכנים ביוגרפיים בהוראת ההיסטוריה

חיבור לשם קבלת תואר

״דוקטור לפילוסופיה״

מאת

מיכל הוניג

הוגש לסנט האוניברסיטה העברית

יוני 2019

תלמידים מדברים על אנשים:

שימוש בתכנים ביוגרפיים בהוראת ההיסטוריה

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"דוקטור לפילוסופיה"

מאת

מיכל הוניג

הוגש לסנט האוניברסיטה העברית

יוני 2019