Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education

On the Strength in Weakness: Human Figures Making History

Yaron Vansover

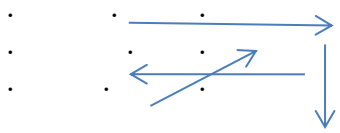
Kibbutzim College of Education

ABSTRACT

A good story we have read or heard weaves a web of gossamer around us, linking us to it by five emotional reactions that it arouses. Most of these reactions are sparked by the characters in the story. To a great extent, they are responsible for creating interest in the story as a result of the human weaknesses they embody. Examining the historical story as told in the classroom space strangely reveals that this quality is lacking in its characters – the story lacks figures who have human weaknesses that might tie the students to it. The article calls on history teachers to enable these characters to enter the classroom and thus, to intensify the possibility that the students will like their history lessons.

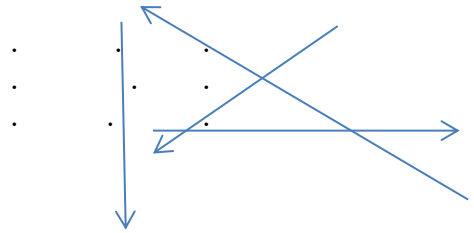
KEYWORDS: history teaching; story; interest; characters

Here is a problem: You must connect the nine points in the drawing with four straight lines, but without lifting your pencil from the paper:



The great majority of those who attempt to solve this problem determine the lines they draw on an assumption, which in effect does not enable them to find a solution. The
be found within the limits of this square – an assumption which is not part of the problem, but one that the solution seeker imposes upon him/herself. It can be shown that no matter what combination of four lines is chosen and in whatever order, if s/he seeks

the solution within the limits of the square, there will always be one point which has not been connected. This means that failure does not depend on the fact that the problem is unsolvable but rather in the method of problem solving which has been adopted. The solution to the problem demands freeing oneself from the accepted assumptions and going outside the borders of the square:



In the classroom where a history lesson is taking place, a historical story is always hovering in the air. It does not matter what type of discourse is created during the lesson, whether it is recitation, lecture or discussion (see, for example, Cazden, 2001), there will always be a story told, a historical story. In this story, there will always be two of the components of every story: events and characters, and we, as teachers, will want (or so I believe) this story to be an interesting one, one which will succeed in capturing the hearts of our students. But we are not always successful. Why is this?

It appears that history teachers, like those who try to solve the nine point riddle, have sentenced themselves to being loyal to a pattern which perhaps does not prevent them from "capturing" the students or "connecting" them to history, but certainly makes it very difficult. In principle, this article will maintain that the lack of success of the "historical story" to evoke interest and to win the hearts of the students is a result of the failure of the story to arouse emotions which should tie them to it.

The article will try to clarify the pattern in which teachers are imprisoned, what barriers exist on the way to reaching the hearts of the students which the teachers themselves have set. It will attempt to propose ways to eliminate these barriers in the space defined by the triangle whose vertexes include history, emotions and interest.

The role and the importance of emotion in history teaching has been a topic of research for some decades (Brooks, 2009). Considering the range of feelings that history may arouse in students (to be discussed later), research has focused on two, asking about the importance of the link between history teaching and sense of identification, and more broadly, about the connection between history teaching and a sense of empathy. If we attempt to find a broad common denominator for the variety of answers from this research, two fundamental directions can be identified.

One of these is connected to the contribution of empathy to the assimilation among school students of how the historian thinks. Here, for example, some stress empathy as an important component of constructing historical thinking (Seixas & Peek, 2004; 113). Others mark its contribution to historical literacy; some view it as a key element for historical reasoning (Van Drie & Van Boxtel, 2008), while some indicate its power of

advancing historical understanding in context (Davis, 2001: 3).

The second direction is connected to the contribution of empathy, and identification with the assimilation of questions of citizenship in a democratic state, in the wider sense of the term. Here, for example, researchers stress the importance of empathy in raising self-awareness of the student while enabling him to really exercise the point of view of the "other", even when his own position is different (VanSledright, 2001); or its contribution to encouraging students to be engaged and active citizens of a pluralist democracy (Barton and Levstik, 2004). This direction also tangentially leads to the role research designates to a sense of identification in teaching history when, for example, it marks the importance of identification for the creation of a common link to the nation or to other groups by historical source and development stories (Barton & Levstik, 2013). But research of history teaching generally does not relate to the role of emotions in creating interest among students and when it does, it touches on the question of interest when relating to films (Seixas & Peel, 2004: 113) and pictures (Berry, Schmied & Schrock, 2008), but not in relation to texts. The present research actually tries to clarify the ability of historical texts to arouse emotions and thus, to evoke interest in the students. As the research of history teaching neglects this question, the theoretical roots of the article tend towards literary theory, in which the connection between emotions, text and interest has often been investigated.[1]

The research also attempts to contribute to studies conducted in recent years examining history teaching, and focusing more and more on its practical aspects (Fogo, 2014: 155). One example is the study by van Hover, Hicks and Cotton (2012) which refines guidance for effective observation in history lessons and attempts to draw the observer's attention to six elements - lesson components, comprehension, narrative, interpretations, sources and historical practices – enabling identification of both teachers' and students' behaviors to contribute and advance learning. Another example is Sexias and Morton's "The Big Six" (2012) which presents six historical thinking concepts – significance, evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, perspectives and ethical dimensions – and proposes ways to bring them to the students in class in order to enhance and create better understanding of their perception of the past.

Part One: What connects us to a story?

What causes us to read or listen to a story with enthusiasm? What makes us want

[1] Note: The article discusses and analyzes texts, which are non-fiction using narratological tools and theories relating to fictional texts. This is not the place to discuss the theoretical legitimacy of doing so, as the issue is in deep research disagreement. John Searle has argued that "there is no textual property syntactical or semantic that will identify a text as a work of fiction" (Searle, 1975: 325) and many linguistic philosophers will agree with him. However, this is not true for narratologists like Dorrit Cohn (see, for example, Cohn, 1999: 109-131) and Gérard Genette (see, for example, Genette, 1990). For the issues raised in this article, I have adopted the position of Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan that "some of the procedures used in the analysis of fiction may be applied to texts conventionally defined as 'non-fiction'" (1983: 3).

to get home from work already so that we can get back to our book, open it to the dog-ear that we folded down last night before we fell asleep and continue to read? We are usually ready to leave the world aside, get into bed, dive into a book and not be able to put it down only if it has succeeded in touching us, in exciting us. When we have finished reading, we may find ourselves lying on our backs, the just completed book closed and upside down, resting on our chests, our eyes staring into space above us and our head teeming with activity and thought: trying to clarify to ourselves what we have just read, what we are feeling, what the main character of the book should have done but did not, what he did differently from what we would have done, what we are taking with us from the story into our own lives. We can also feel sadness and sense a tear in the corner of our eye or we may smile widely to ourselves and even laugh. Reading may be a deep emotional experience (Mar, Oatley Djikic & Mullin, 2011: 818) and may sometimes even change one's personality (Oatley, 2002; 39). How does that happen? What mechanisms create these reactions in the reader?

It appears that the fictional narrative affects the reader particularly by the emotions it manages to arouse (Oatley, 2002: 39). Keith Oatley distinguishes between five types of emotional responses by the reader to the text before him (Oatley, 1994). Two of them take place when the reader is "outside the story", and three occur while the reader is immersed within it.

The two emotional responses aroused while the reader is outside the realm of the text itself are connected to his/her own mental schemas and the way they determine how s/he reacts to what comes up in the text s/he is reading: either the new things that s/he learns from the text are assimilated within these schemas (assimilation), or the schemas change in accord with what has been newly learned (accommodation).

A kind of paradox is, in fact, built-in during the reading process. On the one hand, the reader expects the literary text to be as coherent as possible, making it easier for him/her to assimilate the new material into material, which has already been read, as s/he makes an effort to maintain the framework of the story which s/he has already constructed during the reading (Perry, 1979: 14). On the other hand, the reader expects the text not to "spoon-feed him/her", but rather to break up this coherence, to make things difficult for him/her, so that the organization of textual material will surprise, so that the text will "release" its information gradually, so that gaps are created in the plot and chronological order is disrupted. These will arouse the reader's curiosity and expectation and will make the reading more enjoyable. Creating this enjoyment involves a continual assimilation between the schema created in the reader and the information revealed at each stage of the reading. In order to clarify this point, we may follow Menachem Perry who directs attention to Robert Leeper's famous experiment exploring our perceptual deviations centering on the following illustration in which either a young woman or an old witch may be discerned (1):

Leeper displayed the subjects of the two illustrations, each emphasizing the young woman or the old witch with less ambivalence, and showed that whoever looked at the drawing of the young woman (2), tended afterward to see the same young woman in the more ambivalent drawing (1), and the opposite was true of those who were exposed to the drawing emphasizing the old woman (3).

In extreme cases, the dispersion of material in the text may not only involve change and assimilation of existing schemas but may change and convert them (accommodation), for example, by the use of what the Russian formalist, Victor Shklovsky termed "estrangement". In his opinion, the purpose of art is to create a novel point of view in the reader, one that is new, fresh and original, when referring to the hackneyed and overused. An example is *Kholstomer* by Tolstoy, in which it is the point of view, which creates estrangement. The narrator of the story is a horse, wondering for example, in what way he "belongs" to his masters. The "horsy" point of view absurdly and illogically illuminates the conventional and hackneyed concept – private property: "They have agreed that of any given thing only one person may use the word "mine" and he who in this game of theirs may use that conventional word about the greatest number of things is considered the happiest. Why this is so I do not know, but it is so. For a long time I tried to explain it by some direct advantage they derive from it, but this proved wrong" (Tolstoy, ([1886], 2008: 34).

Another type of emotional reactions occurs when the reader is submerged into the world of the literary creation, when he penetrates the story world, the imaginary world imagined by the author. These reactions are termed narrative emotions (Mar et al., 2001: 822), and they are unique to the world of literature (Oatley, 2004: 111): a feeling of identification, a feeling of sympathy and a one that arouses autobiographical memories. Identification is the psychological state in which the reader or listener may "enter" the story. The beginning of identification is in the affection that is created in the reader towards a literary character (or the narrator), continuing as the reader puts him/herself in the character's place, and ending as the reader adopts a worldview through the character's eyes. The reader appropriates the goals and the character traits of the hero for him/herself. When these goals are achieved, the reader is filled with happiness, and when the hero does not succeed in fulfilling them, the reader is disappointed (Oatley, 1999: 445). So for example, Gustave Flaubert creates our identification as readers with Emma Bovary as we take his book *Madame Bovary* in hand after having put the children to bed, sitting down

on the sofa in the living room, leaning back and reading about Emma and Charles, her husband, reaching the tiny village of Youville-l'Abbye where they had moved. How they met Monsieur Homais, the village pharmacist and Leon (one of the permanent diners) at the Golden Lion Inn and how, during the conversation, Charles mentions that, although Emma has more than once been recommended to be more active, she does not like social engagements but prefers to read. And Leon's answer to this comment: "…Is there anything better, really, than sitting by the fire with a book…The hours go by. Without leaving your chair, you stroll through imagined landscapes as if they were real, and your thoughts interweave with the story, lingering over details or leaping ahead with the plot. Your imagination confuses itself with the characters, and it seems as if it were your own heart beating inside their clothes" (as quoted by Oatley, 1994: 64).

But this of course can be, and usually is, much more complex. For example, Honoré de Bazac in his most famous realistic novel, *Le Père Guriot*, creates identification with his characters, lessening the reader's unfavorable judgment of them. So, for example, the strongly influential personality and brilliant analytical abilities of the murderer, Vautrin, leave the reader with such a strong impression that the fact of his being a murderer becomes secondary. The reader's partial identification with Vautrin also causes him/her to doubt the negative moral judgments of the narrator towards the murderer (Dingott, 1981: 62).

Unlike identification which is an emotion leading to a link between the reader and the fictional character and involving a relinquishing of the self, sympathy is a reader's feeling of affection toward the character without relinquishing of the self or entering the personality of the fictional hero. The reader is like a fly on the wall witnessing the experiences of the character and developing feelings about him/her. The reader would like to be standing next to the character, expressing support, giving him/her something and receiving something in return (Tan, 1994: 23). George Eliot is of the opinion that not only is this a central means of creating and transmitting feelings to the reader but it is also the very purpose of art in general: "The greatest benefit we owe to the artist whether painter, poet or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies (Pinney, 1963; 270).

We react with sympathy when we develop an attitude of pity towards Desdemona as she continues to try in vain to convince Othello of her love and fidelity; and we feel sympathy and happiness for Superman when he succeeds in saving Lois Lane; or when we feel a complex range of feelings toward Willy Loman, the hero of Arthur Miller's play, *Death of a Salesman*, when he commits suicide.

A third type of emotion that a text may arouse in the reader is related to his/her autobiographical memory. The story may directly or implicitly hint at a reader's autobiographical memory or fragments of that memory: a description of parting at the platform of a railroad station may arouse a memory of parting that we ourselves have experienced. When we cry over the bitter fate of Romeo and Juliet, in a certain sense we are reliving the experiences of our own great personal loss, but under new conditions and much less dramatic (Scheff, 1979: 13). It appears that not only actors who adopt Stanislavski's method – a method calling for the actor to enhance his/her acting ability by

relying on emotional memory from his/her own life and using these memories as raw material to model his/her performance (Oately, 1994: 63) – but also the viewers (or readers) rely on their autobiographical memories, either consciously or unconsciously, when they react to the fates of characters or to changes in the plot.

These are the emotional reactions that the text arouses in the reader, which are responsible for "adhering" it to him/her, and for having him/her remain completely connected. Which of these features exists in the historical story told in class to the students?

Part II: What "connects" students to the historical story told in class?

It appears that many of the emotional reactions, which should connect the student to the historical story told in class cannot be aroused by this type of story. This is because it lacks several of the elements of the emotional "glue". That means that the children remain distanced from the story, subdued, bored (Beiter, Bruce, Davis, Doyle, Foels, Grant... & Sampson, 2010: VII). They don't connect to the story; they are absent; the story doesn't manage to carry them away. I will now try to explain why.

Regarding the emotions awakened in the listeners when they are located outside of the world of the story, the historical story told in class can arouse these emotions. Here are two examples, one referring to a change in the mental schema of the listener, and the other relating to assimilation of new information into the listener's mental schema.

Since the establishment of the educational system in Israel and throughout its history of many decades, students are taught that the War of Independence was a "war of the few against the many" or "a war of David against Goliath". This is one of the foundation myths implanted into the Israeli collective memory: a struggle of David, small but courageous, intelligent and righteous, believing in the justice of his ways and ready to sacrifice for their realization, as he is led by talented officers and a politically wise leadership. David, fighting with a slingshot against a threatening Goliath armed with heavy weapons, overcomes him, as a result of Goliath's moral inferiority, his talentless leadership, corrupt and splintered (Bar-On 2012: 109). This myth began to crack under the research of a group of "new historians" writing in the 1980s who showed that the opposite was true: throughout most stages of the fighting, the Jewish population succeeded in mobilizing a superior fighting force on the battlefield than the Arab armies. This new version has since become established and has found its way into textbooks and classrooms. This is a version that may generate a significant change in existing perceptions among students of the War of Independence and to arouse their enthusiasm. Shattering myths should create freshness in a lesson, arousing interest and curiosity (See examples of this in its American context in Freyhofer, 2000).

One of the central questions in the study of Nazism relates to the developing extremism of the German Nazi government from its establishment in 1933. From the

various answers, two tendencies may be distilled: the intentional and the functional. The first refers to deliberate intentions, identified within Nazi ideology as outlined in Nazi culture in general and specifically, in the bible of the Nazi worldview: Mein Kampf, written by Hitler. In contrast, the second determines that Nazi extremism was not a result of a commander who navigated it in that way, but rather the very dynamics developing between the various bodies involved in decision-making (Neumann, 2007: 37-39). According to the history curriculum in Israeli high schools, the deterioration starting from Hitler's rise to power and ending with the low point of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp activity is studied as a policy which was led and directed by Hitler according to a program which had been outlined as early as the 1920s. The students' exposure to the functional explanation should challenge their mental schema so that they are required, for example, to develop a more complex historiographical viewpoint about German history, which may be interesting to them.

Myth shattering, changes in historiographical direction and the like should, of course, arouse interest and "connect" the student to the historical story, but it is not at all simple to achieve this, lesson after lesson, week after week, in class. It is certainly possible but very demanding in the routine of intensive teaching. And if we are relating to teachers' difficulties, when we enter the world of a work of literature, the world of a historical story told in a classroom space it becomes even more complicated for a history teacher. This time, we are not referring to the burden of work; here the teacher is trying to arouse students' interests with one hand tied behind his/her back, as reactions of identification, sympathy, and autobiographical memory are mainly aroused around the type of characters who usually do not appear in a historical story in class.

In this history story, as becomes clear from hundreds of history lessons I have observed in the past few years as a researcher and as a history teacher trainer, and as becomes clear from my intimate knowledge of history teaching in schools in general, these history stories involve very "airy" characters who do not succeed in capturing the hearts of the students[2]. Usually the story develops and is propelled by "clusters" of characters, generalized characters: there are Germans, Jews, Nazis, the world, the League of Nations, the French, the British, the Christians, the Romans, the Greeks. But here and there, there are also concrete characters who are only passingly mentioned: sometimes only by name and role, like Vittorio Orlando, Prime Minister of Italy, and Italian representative at the Versailles peace talks; sometimes by their name attached to some refined principles – Warren Harding, the twenty-ninth president of the United States, who coined the phrase "return to normalcy", or Calvin Coolidge, the thirtieth president of the United States who memorably stated that "generally speaking, the business of the American people is business". But sometimes, not very often, historical characters appear and gain real presence, like Herzl, Hitler and Churchill, Ben Gurion and Lincoln. But they too, do not succeed in arousing a great part of the emotional richness that characters

[2] The distinctions brought here are based on what occurs in history lessons, both in middle and high schools in the educational system of the State of Israel. I have the feeling that they reflect a broader reality regarding history teaching in the Western world, which does not succeed in penetrating the hearts of the students (See for example: Saye and SSIRC, 2013:113).

can create for their listeners, the abundance of feeling that would imprint the story on the student's heart. Why is this?

The authors of writing guides and screenwriters are able to put their finger on the reason: the shortcomings of a character are, to a great extent, what makes him/her easy to like (Truby, 2007: 32-35). They argue that we as readers want characters to be similar to people we choose as friends (Lamott, 2007: 70). In other words, these characters have many of the faults that we do. They say that in a good story, the characters almost always have human weaknesses, and, as such, they are the ones who have the power to arouse identification or sympathy in the reader, which is a necessary condition for being interested in the character and his/her fate – as we are all egocentric, more interested in ourselves than anything else (or our doubles in literature). They also often use the example of Superman, "the superhero" who was also created with a weak point: his sensitivity to the mineral kryptonite and to the radiation it emits which weakens him, makes him vulnerable and may even kill him (Eco, 1972: 16).

It is strange to discover that, what is almost taken for granted by authors and screenwriters – that the weakness of characters is the key to the hearts of readers and audiences, is not at all a possibility in the historical story in class. There, characters appear without weaknesses and defects, even though teachers, like authors and screenwriters are also concerned with finding the way into the hearts of their students. And it is interesting to see the great gap between the success of authors and screenwriters in designing characters who will entrap the hearts of their readers and viewers, and the continuing failure of school history to do this. Here is an example:
A homework question popular among middle school history teachers teaching the topic of the "scientific revolution" is taken from the widely used textbook *Journey to the Past: Progress and Revolutions - 16th-19th Centuries.* To summarize the subject, the students asked to answer the following question:

Compare Copernicus, Galileo and Newton and complete the following chart:

	Copernicus	**Galileo**	**Newton**
How long did he live?			1642- 1727
	Poland		
Area of Research		Mathematics and Physics	
Scientific Discoveries	The sun is the center of the universe- Heliocentric Theory		
How he proved his discovery		Mathematics and Physics	
	The church condemned his theory		
Books and			

publications			

The students are expected to fill in the table with details about the three "fathers of the scientific revolution": Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton. The table reflects the material learned in class (as I have frequently noted in the many lessons I have seen) and the information, which is presented in the textbook. The problem is that this table, as it stands, is testimony to the high barrier erected when teaching this subject to students, which does not enable them to create empathy towards these historical figures and thus, distances students' ability to become interested in them.

We may, for example, imagine a category on the left side of the table requesting "a biographical event which is thought-provoking" or to come right out with it and say "A biographical event which arouses identification" and building the lesson so that the student can investigate and to point out such an event. Here are a few examples of many:

Copernicus (1473-1543)

On 19 February 1473, Copernicus was born in the city of Torun, northern Poland. The weather in Torun is similar to that of Chicago and Toronto. In the summer, the temperature does not rise higher than 25 degrees and in winter, it falls to below -10; the Vistula River freezes over for the three winter months. Rain and snow are not overwhelming but humidity is high and the sky is usually clouded over. But Torun is 700 kilometers north of Chicago, like the city of Edmonton in Canada. That means that young Copernicus would see the sun set before four o'clock in the afternoon during the month of December, and in the afternoons, the sun would be low in the northern sky, only about 15 degrees above the horizon. With less than nine hours of daylight during this period of the year, Copernicus went to sleep in darkness and also awoke in darkness (Gringerich & MacLachlan, 2005:18). This means that Copernicus was exactly like us. He was tired in the evening and he needed his sleep. He went to sleep in darkness, and that's fine. But he also had to wake up in darkness, into the cold morning of northern Poland in December, and to go to school, St. John's School, in darkness and in the cold. That's pretty awful, as you can imagine. Maybe that changed a bit for him in 1491, when he began university in Cracow which was 430 kilometers south of Torun.

Galileo (1564-1642)

In his most famous book, *The Starry Messenger (1610)*, for the first time Galileo reports on his observations using a telescope and his discovery of the four moons of Jupiter. He dedicated the book to Cosimo II de Medici and even called the stars he discovered "Medici Stars". The book aroused great enthusiasm and copies, which were printed in Venice were sold out within a week. Galileo sent a copy with a telescope to Cosimo. The prince expressed his thanks and in spring 1610 he appointed Galileo to the post of "Chief Mathematician of Pisa University and Philosopher and Mathematician of the Grand Duke". When Galileo was conducting negotiations for the conditions of his work at the University of Pisa, he asked to receive the same salary, which had been promised him at the university in Padua. He also demanded that the "unpleasant teaching

responsibilities not be numbered with his responsibilities at Pisa (Sobel, 1999:36). In the "academese" of today, we might say that, from then on, he could devote himself to research and publishing. Galileo had already become a burned out teacher. He had worn himself out during 18 years of teaching at the University of Padua, and at the same time, had been making money on the side by giving private lessons. That is difficult, tiring, exhausting and wearing. For anyone. And for Galileo as well.

Newton (1642- 1727)

At Cambridge University of the seventeenth century, in the best British tradition, there were social classes. The Fellow Commoners, sons of aristocratic families and rich landholders ate at "high table" at the end of the dining room, which was raised on a platform. The next class was the Pensioners, those who paid their own expenses with no help from the college, sons of the middle class. And the third level, the Sizars, students who were poor and lacked resources, had to earn their studies and board at the college, giving services to their richer peers and to the teachers: serving food to the diners, being sent on errands of different sorts, waking their friends for studies and for morning prayers at church. This hierarchy was also expressed physically in the dining room: for example, they were not allowed to eat with the other students (Christianson, 1996: 20).

Isaac Newton was 19 when he arrived on 4 June 1661 to Cambridge as a sizar. and was submerged for years in gloom and social loneliness. Newton was excellent in mathematics, but it appears that he was much less than that in human relations. He never married. He had no children. and in the more than 30 years that he spent at Cambridge, the only significant relationship he had was with John Wickins.

One evening, Newton went for a walk around campus to cool down after a shouting match, with his roommate. and while rambling, he met John Wickins who was strolling around campus for similar reasons. The two decided to get rid of their present roommates and to live together. What their relationship was like has remained a riddle and we know very little about it. Wickins served as Newton's secretary for certain periods; he used to attend to the wood-burning stove as he was stronger than Newton; and he worried about the fact that Newton's hair had turned prematurely grey. In 1683, after more than 20 years of partnership, Wickins decided to leave Cambridge. He became a minister of the parish church at Stoke Edith, got married and became a family man, having a son called Nicholas. Newton considered Wickin's leaving as a personal insult and it appears that they never again spoke to one another for the rest of their lives (Westfall, 1994: 134-135).

Many years later, In their twilight years, Wickins sent Newton a request to contribute copies of the Bible for the poor believers in his parish. Newton seems to have acceded to the request and sent a few copies to the parish via Wickins' patron, Thomas Foley. In the draft of a fragmentary letter which we have, he wrote "I am glad to hear of your good health and wish it may continue (Ibid., 136). And he added nothing else.

Copernicus, Galileo and Newton as described were people, like you and me. They

had weaknesses, which could arouse empathy among students. Galileo had taught for many years as a lecturer at the University of Padua and, to supplement his income, had also worked as a private teacher. He was tired of teaching. He was suffering from teacher burn-out, and was trying to find a way out of teaching, perhaps like some of the teachers of the students themselves who have been teaching for many years and are making efforts to gain early retirement. This is something we all know well. And Newton, about whom there is something sad in his "aloneness", and that's something we hope will not happen to us. Suddenly we can be their friends. Suddenly they are here in the room and we can touch them. Try to comfort them. Tell them things are not so bad and will be better. This arouses interest.

Teachers in the past, long before the example of Copernicus, which I have raised here, successfully established empathy and interest about dealing with the cold. It's a weakness, or perhaps an expression of our humanity, which should create quantities of "history glue," whose effects should last for decades. The writer Yoram Kaniuk remembers one of his history lessons at his school, which was "a wonderful place to be", sixty-three years after leaving it at 17 to join the army: "What I remember is just one day, in the first term of the twelfth grade at the "New High School" …with Toni Halla, the inspiring principal who looked like a magnificent mouse, who, one day stood on a chair and shut her eyes, tears penetrating the closed lids, and with a kind of deep longing, began to describe how, in 1077, Heinrich IV stood facing the castle at Canossa, in which Pope Gregorius VII was hiding behind a curtain, and how poor Heinrich stood in the cold, in the snow, in a barren land, how he stood barefoot, she said with her profound beauty, how he stood without shoes, without socks, without a coat, without a shirt, without underwear and cried out to the pope, who was hiding in warm clothing, behind him a burning fireplace, and the pope peered out and saw the handsome Heinrich, the hero, the elegant king whom he loved, his real love, freezing naked and pleading, and all of us, all of the class were crying to hear the fate of Heinrich IX (Kaniuk, 2010: 12-13).
It is logical to assume that Kaniuk had no idea (nor does he when writing about the experience) of what it was like to be a pope, nor did he know what it was like to be a king, and he did not know the significance of their struggle against one each other. It is difficult to see how this could have aroused empathy or sympathy or autobiographical memory. But he knows very well how it feels to be cold (even when it is only the cold of an Israeli winter) while alongside us someone is feeling warm. We are all well acquainted with this feeling. Anyone who has had to wake up on a winter morning and get out of bed while his/her partner or children, or his brother/sister continue to sleep underneath the warm quilt knows this feeling well. You get the impression that fate has been cruel to you. You become a person burning with jealousy as you look over your shoulder at those who may continue to doze in a warm bed under the quilt for another half hour, another fifteen minutes, at those who have had a better fate. We all are acquainted with this feeling; we can all relate to this.

Let us recognize the strength in weakness. Let us allow it to penetrate the door of the classroom. Let us mobilize all of the means at our disposal to awaken emotional reactions in the student, to make him/her like history lessons, the way Toni Halla enabled Yoram Kaniuk to like them.

References

Abbott, H. P. (2008). *The Cambridge introduction to narrative*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bal, M. (2009). Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative. *(*3rd ed.). Trans. C. van Boheemen. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Bar-On, M. (2012). The power relations in combat reality and the myth of "David against Goliath" in the War of Independence, Yisrael (Israel), 20: 107-152. (Hebrew)

Barton, K. C., & Levstik, L. S. (2004). *Teaching history for the common good*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Beiter, A., Bruce, M. B., Davis, T., Doyle, J., Foels, S., Grant, S. G., & Sampson, M. (2010). *Teaching history with big ideas: Cases of ambitious teachers*. S. G. Grant, & J. M. Gradwell (Eds.). R&L Education.

Berry, C., Schmied, L. A., & Schrock, J. C. (2008). The role of emotion in teaching and learning history: A scholarship of teaching exploration. *The history teacher*, 437-452.

Brooks, S. (2009). Historical empathy in the social studies classroom: A review of the literature. *Journal of Social Studies Research*, *33*(2), 213.

Cazden, B.C. (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning*. (2nd. ed). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Chatman, S. (1978). Story and discourse. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

Christianson, G. E. (1996). *Isaac Newton: and the scientific revolution*. Oxford University Press.

Cohn, D. (1999), The distinction of fictio***n***, The Johan Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London.

Davis, O. L. (2001). In pursuit of historical empathy. In O.L. Davis, E.A. Yeager, & S.J. Foster (Eds.), *Historical empathy and perspective taking in the social studies* (pp.1-12). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Dingott, N. (1981). *Fundamental conventions of the nineteenth century novel*, Units 2-3, Tal Aviv: The Open University. (Hebrew)

Eco, U. (1972), The Myth of Superman, Diacritics 2.1 (1972): 14–22.

Fogo, B. (2014). Core practices for teaching history: The results of a Delphi panel survey. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *42*(2), 151-196.

Freyhofer, H. (2000). I Hate History Papers, *Writing Across the Curriculum*, 11: 47-52.

Genette, Gerard (1990), Fictional narrative, factual narrative, Poetics today, 11 (4): 755-774.

Gingerich, O., & MacLachlan, J. H. (2005). *Nicolaus Copernicus: making the Earth a planet*. Oxford University Press.

Henry, J. (1884). The art of fiction**,** Longman's Magazine 4 (September 1884), and reprinted in Partial Portraits (Macmillan, 1888); paragraphing and capitalization follow the Library of America edition.

Kaniuk, Y. (2010). 1948, Tel Aviv: Yedioth Aharonoth. (Hebrew)

Katz-Atar, O. From a national home to a state on the way- Pinchas Rotenberg, Leader and Innovator, Website of the History Supervisor, accessed 4 December 2013 from:

http://cms.eudcation.gov.il/Education__CMS/Units/Mazkirut_Pedagogit/History/Hazaot/

(Hebrew)
Lamott, A. (2007). Bird by bird: Writing and life, operating instructions, Jerusalem: Keter.
Lothe, J. (2000). Narrative in fiction and film. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
Mar, A. R., Oatley, K., Djikic, M. & Mullin, J (2011). Emotion and narrative fiction: Interactive influences before, during, and after reading, Cognition & Emotion, 25:5, 818-833.
McKee, R.(1997). ***Story***. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.
Morton, T., & Seixas, P. (2012). The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts. Canada: Nelson Education Ltd.
Neumann, B. (2007). Nazism, Broadcast University, Ministry of Defense- Publications. (Hebrew)

Oatley, K. (2004). From the emotions of conversation to the passions of fiction. In A.S. R. Manstead, N. Frijda &A. Fischer (Eds.) Feelings and emotions: The Amsterdam Symposium. (pp. 98-115). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Oatley, K. (2002). Emotions and the story worlds of fiction. In M.C. Green, J.J. Strange, & T.C. Brock (Eds.) Narrative impact: Social and cognitive foundations, pp. 39-69. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
Oatley, K. (1999). Meetings of minds: Dialogue, sympathy, and identification, in reading fiction. *Poetics,* 26, 439-454
Oatley, K. (1994). A taxonomy of the emotions of literary response and a theory of identification in fictional narrative. Poetics, 23, 53-74.
Perry, M. (1979). The dynamics of the literary text, Hasifrut (Literature), 28, 6-46. (Hebrew)
Pinney, T. (ed.), (1963). Essays of George Eliot. New York: Columbia University Press.
Rimmon-Kenan, S. (1983). Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics. London, New York: Methuen.
Saye, J., & Social Studies Inquiry Research Collaborative (SSIRC). (2013). Authentic pedagogy: Its presence in social studies classrooms and relationship to student performance on state-mandated tests. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *41*(1), 89-132.
Scheff, T.J. (1979). Catharsis in healing, ritual, and drama. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Searle, J. (1975). The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse, New Literary History, 6 (2): 319-332.
Seixas, P., & Peck, C. (2004). Teaching historical thinking. *Challenges and prospects for Canadian social studies*, 109-117.
Shaltiel, E. (1990). Pinchas Rotenberg – The rise and fall of a "strong man" in the Land of Israel, 1879-1942, Tel Aviv: Am Oved. (Hebrew)
Sobel, D. (1999). *Galileo's daughter: A historical memoir of science, faith and love*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
Tan, E. S.-H. (1994). Film-induced affect as a witness emotion. Poetics, 23, 7-32.
Tolstoy, N. ([1886] 2008). Strider: The story of a horse, ACN: Accessible Publishing Systems PTY, Ltd.
Truby, J. (2007). The anatomy of story: 22 steps to becoming a master storyteller, New

York: Faber and Faber Inc.
Van Drie, J., & Van Boxtel, C. (2008). Historical reasoning: Towards a framework for analyzing students' reasoning about the past. *Educational Psychology Review*, *20*(2), 87-110.
van Hover, S., Hicks, D., & Cotton, S. (2012). "Can you make historiography sound more friendly?": Towards the construction of a reliable and validated history teaching observation instrument. *The History Teacher*, *45*(4), 603-612.
VanSledright, B. (2001). From empathetic regard to self-understanding: Impositionality, empathy, and historical contextualization. *Historical Empathy and Perspective Taking in the Social Studies*, 51-68.
Westfall, R. S. (1994). *The Life of Isaac Newton*. Cambridge University Press.

About the Author

Yaron Vansover is a teacher trainer in the Kibbutzim College of Education, Tel-Aviv, Israel. His present interests include the 'story' character of history and the link between history and literature.