A Narrative Account of Contacts With Two Study Subjects

by Lonl Bonwitt

Abstract

The following document includes an account of the visits to Oranim (and some related materials) of two of the subjects of this investigation. A. (No. 19) is a kibbutz-index case whose father was diagnosed as schizophrenic; H. (No. 81) was a town-index case whose mother had that diagnosis. Each of these parents had had one period of hospitalization. In both cases the observations extend over a period of 7–8 years, and attest to the warm, close contact between the subjects and the staff of the study. The rapport built up between subjects and staff is unusual, and it facilitated the high followup rates: 93 of the original cohort were seen in the 1973 followup and 90 of the surviving 99 in the 1981 followup. The observations are presented virtually unedited so as to convey the richness of the interaction and the special contact between Mrs. Loni Bonwitt, the project secretary, and the subjects. In the 1981 followup, A. (No. 19), the kibbutz-index case, received a DSM-III diagnosis of neurotic depression; H. (No. 81), the town-index case, received no diagnosis.

Visit of A., No. 19 (Kibbutz-Index) and L., No. 20 (Kibbutz-Control) to Oranim, November 1967

A. (age 10) and her partner L. were brought to Oranim by their kibbutz Metapelet directly, so that I did not have to pick them up and bring them, as was often the case with other subjects. I saw these girls the first time when they arrived and had some warm drink and cookies ready for them, to “warm up.”

A. is a rather clumsy looking girl, with asymmetrical features and heavy movements—altogether awkward—but when she smiles, there is tremendous warmth in her expression. But it takes some effort to make her smile. When I say something funny (this pattern repeats itself all day), she first looks at me straight-faced and watches me as if thinking, “did she really mean what she said?” Then she will begin to smile, and her smile will slowly turn into laughter when she lets go and is certain that her laughter is acceptable. I laugh with her.

The playroom is full of various toys, handicrafts, drawing and painting material, etc. Here the girls spend their individual “intermissions” with me between testings, which last between 15 and 60 minutes. Here they are also served their warm lunch, which I bring from the Oranim kitchen, and sweets and drinks in between as much as they please.

A. is restless in the playroom. She chooses one occupation after another, always for a short time only. She changes places in the room often. Even if she does not play any games with me, but does some embroidery by herself, she changes places from one corner of the room to another. She has no special occupational preferences and accepts every suggestion I make (such as shooting at targets, Dukes, and looking at pictures), including the suggestion to lie down a bit after lunch to rest. But also during the rest period she sits rather than lies on the couch with her embroidery, and walks frequently in and out of the room, to the W.C., bathroom, etc.

For lunch A. eats very little.
A. talks excitedly, especially about her meeting with Michaela (Lifshitz) and the gift she was promised (colored pencils for decision-making). She wants to know where each of our team members lives, including myself. A. asks questions about each of us and seems to enjoy her experiences during the day. When toward the end of the day the Metapelet comes to pick her up, she practically ignores her, continues whatever she had been doing in the playroom: talking to me, asking questions. When she leaves, I feel we have become friends. A. says she will come again to Oranim.

Correspondence

A. is one of the subjects from whom I received every year very warm New Year’s greetings. She did not wait to get my cards and then reply; I usually got her letters before I sent out mine in the name of our entire team. She never used the stereotyped kibbutz picture postcards, but made her own drawings and paintings showing beautiful and colorful flowers, patterns, etc. She also decorated thus the envelopes, and her handwriting was very nice, round and clear. She also wrote to me in between holidays such beautiful and clear. She also wrote poems addressed to me.

In reply to our letter after the Yom-Kippur War asking about her experiences and how she and her family and friends are these days, and telling her about ourselves and our activities during the war, I received a very long and detailed letter. First she said that she is happy that we are all well and may we “forever and ever” stay as we are. Then she told me in detail how she felt, how she reacted when she heard about the casualties in her kibbutz, how hard she worked with the rest of the youngsters to get the shelters ready, how anxiously she listened to the news, etc. She then gave me a nice description of how life slowly returned to normal and she can again listen to good music, “but I like to do that only when I am alone in the room without my parents; then I enjoy listening, singing, yelling, and dancing all by myself.” The three-page letter ends with the words, “hope to see you again during better and nicer days than these . . . .”

Directions Received From Dr. Nagler Before My First Home Visit in 1970

Difficulties in relationship to group: aggressions, suspicions.

Minor paranoid signs—yet it is possible that she is being disliked because of her behavior. Feels persecuted.

Lack of concentration which leads sometimes to disturbances in her thinking capacity in spite of good intelligence.

Unclear speech. Hard to understand. This may have been caused by some resistance to interview with N.

There are some minor preschizophrenic signs in her relationship to the group.

Visit at Kibbutz, December 1970

I had made an appointment with A. (age 13) to meet me near her kibbutz school. I had no clear picture of her looks in my mind anymore, and I was rather disturbed to find that this girl coming toward me looked so sloppy and unkempt. Her hair fell partly on her shoulders, and partly was tied together in the back with an ugly old ribbon. Old worn pants, old sweater. Maybe the rainy, gray day played a part in this. Her first question: Why are we still interested in her? She can hardly remember the things she had done in Oranim so long ago. She remembers the playroom and especially Michaela (Lifshitz) (who treated her sister some time ago). Then she remembers Shmuel (Nagler) too.

I suggest that we go on talking while we walk slowly in the direction of her room. A. tells me that she shares the room with L. and another child. I find this is a depressing room; the whole house looks rather neglected. In the room, hers is the only bed of the three that has some pictures hanging on the wall next to it; among them are the New Year’s cards I had sent her. We talk about school. “I don’t like school altogether. It’s disgusting. I hate studying; we have one exam after another. No, I don’t get excited before the exams—I just hate them.” The boys in class make life miserable; they are so noisy. She has no special subjects she prefers—perhaps English is best—everything
else is all the same. I ask to whom she turns if she has personal problems. "There is really no need . . . ." Who are her closest friends? It makes her think for a while. Then: "Perhaps L." (the control). I ask about hobbies. She shows me a long chain made out of chewing-gum wrappings. Otherwise she has no hobbies. Sports? Well, she belongs to the group that also deals in sport games—but she does not care very much one way or another.

Her mother and father are very busy people (she tells me). Father teaches in school; Mother is a kindergarten teacher. Her little brother takes a lot of time and attention. He is cute but bothers her. Makes so much noise. (In the meantime, L. has joined us, greeted me in a very friendly fashion, and the situation becomes "social," less intimate.) Outside I took pictures of both girls, which I sent them later in a letter of thanks for their hospitality.

Visit to Parents’ Home (Same Day)

A. showed me where her parents live, and we separated before I entered the house without any problems, because this had been prearranged by me with A.'s help. She knows that I am interested in the educational situation in the kibbutz, from the parents’ point of view.

The little apartment (one bedroom) looks rather neglected, yet here and there I see nice pieces of art, and many good books rather carelessly thrown around.

Father (index) is very good-looking, friendly, but not outgoing. He sits with us, but leaves the talking to his wife. Mother looks restless, worried, jumpy—I think she could be quite pretty if she took care of herself and dressed nicely, which she does not. In her talk she enjoys using psychoanalytical expressions such as "internalizing," "self-image," "insight," etc. She complains that A. "is so closed." It seems that if there is aggression at all, it is "internalized." Previously she was much more openly quarrelsome. Now she does not really quarrel, but is easily hurt—a little remark, a wrong motion, a wrong facial expression—it will offend her. Mother thinks it quite possible that she sees how much more beautiful her big sister is, and therefore loses interest in doing anything for her own looks. Some months ago she stopped paying any attention to her dress, stopped fixing her hair nicely, although Mother reminds her again and again of it. She thinks that A. has a very negative self-image, considers herself ugly, and even says so. Mother tries to explain to her that beauty is a relative thing, "comes from inside," and cannot be measured—but this has not helped so far. A. is altogether very dissatisfied with herself.

In school there are, all in all, no learning problems. She is not lucky with her age group. "The girls are far above the boys," and among the girls there is no "outstanding material" either. Mother has several times seen her talking with an older girl (Mother seems to be proud of that)—maybe she is her best friend now. Here Father interrupts and tells about a younger girl, and Mother continues, yes, she can adapt herself to every level and find a common language with everybody concerning things of real interest to her. There is a girl of 9 with whom she is very friendly (Mother sounds as if she describes a weakness)—but in her own peer group there is nobody to whom she is really close.

Parents offer me sweets and coffee, ask about myself, we talk about general matters, and I take leave. Mother accompanies me to the car and tells me that she had to beat around the bush owing to her husband’s presence. She then tells me that she feels that she needs much more help than she gets at the moment. The only person to whom she can turn is Michaela, who gives her some guidance regarding her older daughter, but not often enough. She gave me to understand that she is expecting some help from Shmuel N., and I left the question open, since at this point we cannot interfere.

Conversation With Teacher

A. is very talented in almost anything she touches. She shows very good taste and has much "feeling and soul." She lives in a world of her own and does not care very much for others. Does handicrafts, reads a lot, succeeds especially in humanistic subjects. Her handwriting is beautiful. She is among the very best in class. With adults—withdrawn, is inhibited, never tries to exhibit her talents. Some time ago became very friendly with a girl 2 years younger than herself—a really close friendship.

She has no concentration problems. Comes to teacher with questions if necessary.

In general, does not show aggression. Then teacher remembers that some time ago a new problematic girl joined the class. Nobody wanted to sit with her, and the teacher asked A. to do her a favor and sit with the girl. She agreed, but after some time she was openly aggressive toward the child, cursed her, and yelled at her.

She usually talks in a very low voice, is difficult to hear, and
children often have to shout, "we don't hear you!"

She once started to learn to play the piano, showed talent, but stopped. A. likes music very much. Altogether, teacher thinks that A.'s development is positive.

Teacher has good contact with parents. Although Father is known as a real "Tarbutnik" (man of culture), who deals in literature and teaches in high school, those who know him well don't take him very seriously—he appears a bit "childish." He usually makes a big impression on newcomers or on marginal people in the kibbutz. He possesses an unusual working capacity, belonging to the old school of teachers, carries on extensive correspondence with previous students—something outstanding. However, teachers think that Mother is very lonely; never comes to group meetings in the kibbutz. He possesses an unusual working capacity, belonging to the old school of teachers, carries on extensive correspondence with previous students—something outstanding. However, teachers think that Mother is very lonely; never comes to group meetings in the kibbutz, does not show up in the dining room day or night, is bitter about the kibbutz and the whole world in general. Professionally, as a kindergarten teacher, she is o.k. Yet she remains an outsider.

Conversation With Medical Nurse of the Kibbutz (December 1970)

This nurse has seven children and is very proud of it; says she has "representatives of her own" in nearly every grade in the kibbutz. If I would let her, she would talk about her own family only, and so I have a hard time in constantly bringing her back to our subject.

A.'s family "is, so to say, socially nonexistent" in the kibbutz. The woman does not come to meetings, does not come to the dining room at all, and the man also does not show up any more. He works in the "Kaduri" High School, and here in the kibbutz too he is active. He is in charge of book-exchange activities for school children. Yet he always feels frustrated, and not sufficiently appreciated. People don't pay attention to his suggestions at meetings. In the kibbutz school he failed as a teacher, and could not cope with disciplinary problems. Finally, instead of teaching, he began to talk only about himself and everybody was stunned. She does not know how he manages today in the other (nonkibbutz) school. She does not remember any recurrences of this incident, but is not sure.

Mother usually makes a very lengthy affair of putting her children to bed. The other children, including the nurses, think this funny and entertaining.

Nurse switches to the topic of A.'s metapelet. Describes her as a very compulsive person, especially regarding cleanliness, who actually hates children. (It is my feeling that she has some personal problems with her regarding her own children.) She is an invalid and limps, and this makes work difficult for her. Maybe as a result of this, A. does not pay attention to her dress and looks; another reason may be that A.'s mother does not pay any attention to her own dress either. The older sister likes hippy-style, but A. does not go along with it. The little boy in the family (there are three girls and one boy) presents, in the nurse's opinion, a real problem to the whole family. He is the prince. He receives all the attention. The girls are not allowed to come to the parents' home before 5 p.m., when Mother is through taking care of the little boy.

After that, the nurse just had to talk about her own children, family, and personal problems.

Discussion With Dr. Nagler

A. has a negative self-image. Complains about her teacher and shows clear signs of dissatisfaction. Also the parents, who spoke with praise about her elder sister, complain about A. regarding her learning difficulties, her bad group adjustment, and lack of social life. There is dissatisfaction, discomfort, lack of interest, bitterness.

Her negative self-image apparently has to do with her negative body-image (sees herself as ugly) and probably affects her outer appearance (dress, hairdo). Lack of attention to her looks, her room, and her environment is obvious.

Contrary to her own and her parents' judgment of herself, teacher expresses positive opinion concerning her studies as well as her social attitudes.

In talks with Loni, A. showed a mixture of bashfulness, embarrassment, and ambivalence regarding cooperation.

As with her elder sister, A.'s condition may improve after this difficult stage of preadolescence.

The environment is conscious of a "strange" relationship of the parents toward the smallest children (girl of 6, boy of 4); mother is attached to boy, father to girl to an exaggerated extent.

Chance Encounter With A.

(Age 16, January 1974)

On this date I had to see another person at this kibbutz, but A. saw me and was unexpectedly happy and excited at our meeting. She insisted that I come with her to her parents' home (parents were out at work) and was very happy when I agreed. She
Visit for Reexamination at Haifa University (July 1974)

Like all our subjects, A. and her partner L. received individual invitations from me asking them to come together to Oranim on a fixed date, telling them how much I am looking forward to seeing them again, and also what interesting activities we are planning for them this time, taking into consideration that they are now much more grown-up. Thereupon I received several phone calls at home from A., who sounded excited. She told me about some obstacles which L. was facing, and finally informed me that L. has given up all her other plans in order to come to us (it seemed to me that she did so under A.’s influence). It must be kept in mind that it is quite difficult to telephone from a kibbutz.

According to our general arrangement for reexaminations, the girls arrived at 3 p.m. the day before the examinations and were accommodated at a comfortable private home so that they could be with us the whole next day at the university, not being tired after their respective journeys.

When I met the girls at 3 p.m. at the Central Bus Stop, Haifa, they were obviously pleased to be here. Both have grown considerably, but L. looks much more elegant, uses make-up, plucks her eyebrows—a little lady. A., on the other hand, does not do anything about her looks—but her smile and her enthusiasm make her attractive, since there is so much warmth in her facial expression. L. does not show that much fondness and excitement, is less outgoing, but friendly, polite, and definitely under A.’s influence concerning the acceptance of this visit. They accept every suggestion I make with pleasure. I give them a sightseeing tour by car through Haifa, and then we have some coffee in a coffee-shop. A. has brought along with her all the letters I had written to her in the course of years, and when she showed them to me with pride, she did not make it clear why she brought them. Did she expect me to go through them all with her? Did she have any questions she would have liked to ask me concerning these letters? Or did she just want to show me how much she cherishes them? I never found out, and she took them back home the way she brought them.

When I ask how they are spending their summer vacations, they tell me that they pick plums. They get up at 5 a.m. and work till noon. A. likes this work very much. She is learning to play the guitar and loves it. L. is much more vague about her statements, and seems to take things, including her dancing lessons, in her stride. Keeps cool.

Next morning I picked the girls up and brought them by car to the university. They were well rested, did not go out the night before because there was a record-player and good records which the girls enjoyed; the lady who put the room at our disposal was very nice to them and also fed them well. So we had a nice ride to the university and on the way, as well as at the university, A. showed much enthusiasm about everything she saw. It was all new to her and she enjoyed herself. L. was less enthusiastic, took things in a quiet way, kept a polite distance from everything but cooperated. At the beginning of the day, some forms had to be filled out by the girls with questions about family members and friends (in preparation for the lie-detecting devices) and A. said: “Who has close friends?”

During the lunch break of about an hour, A. refused to eat. She is on a diet. But she could not resist a chocolate bar. L. eats everything and her figure is very good. A. is still a little plump.

When I prepared the girls for the video-tape interaction activities as part of our program, A. for the first time showed some displeasure. She considers herself unphotogenic and tells me that she usually cuts herself out of group photos; when the activities were over, she avoided looking at herself, but L. did with much curiosity.

When the day was over, the girls expressed a wish to remain in touch and suggested a party when the project is completed. My answer was vague.
Visit of H., No. 81 (Town-Index) and B., No. 82 (Town-Control) to Oranim, December 1968

The arrangement was for me to meet the girls this morning at a pension in Tivon, where they arrived the previous evening with the mother of B. (H.'s partner). I was then to bring them by car to Oranim. They were having breakfast when I got there.

H. (age 11) was friendly and relaxed, whereas B. showed tension as did her mother (perhaps they had just quarreled?). I made an arrangement with B.'s mother to pick up the girls in the evening and took the girls to Oranim, while B.'s mother went to see relatives in Haifa.

First I took the girls for a walk through Oranim, explaining everything about the teachers' college. There was a dog quite a distance away, and H. was afraid of it.

Later, in the playroom, H. could not make up her mind as to what to do. I suggested the shooting game, and she enjoyed playing it with me.

Her reaction to the various testing activities was positive, in spite of the fact that B., when the two girls got together, expressed worry and fear. H. was, all in all, rather quiet, but cooperative, attentive, and friendly.

H. had not much appetite at lunch, but tried everything in small quantities.

After lunch she decided to draw a picture with the new crayons that she had gotten from Michaela (part of Michaela's testing program). She drew as if she knew every line of this landscape by heart. In answer to my question and admiration, she told me that she does the same kind of picture at home, but with watercolors.

Toward the end of the day, she did some embroidery—perhaps because I said that she could take the incomplete embroidery home with her to finish.

Correspondence and Special Visit to N. (H.'s Home City)

H. was a very ardent letterwriter. It may have to do with the fact that in the meantime she has learned how to type and enjoys practicing—but there are also long handwritten letters. One of these handwritten letters describes all her personal problems: learning problem—what to learn, how to learn; social problems: there is a boy whom she would like to meet, yet she is going out with another; she is confused at this point and would like to discuss these things with me.

According to Shmuel's suggestion, I answered that she should talk to one of the teachers whom she trusts and find out what her chances as a student really are and how the teacher sees her—because the way others see a person is not always similar to the way one sees oneself. After receiving a description of this meeting with the teacher, I shall be glad to meet her and have a talk with her concerning the things that bother her. Very soon after that, I received the teacher's grades on all subjects, plus some remarks that she is very good in literature but should improve her biology work. Although the grades are quite good, H. writes that she still feels restless and dissatisfied, and perhaps should learn a profession. Perhaps I can help her make up her mind. So, with letters going back and forth, I arranged for a meeting with her in N., a fact that made her very happy; she gladly invited me to her to finish.

We met in April 1972 in a coffeeshop. I found her (age 15) a bit disheveled-looking compared to the way I remembered her; but this may be the "in" thing. During our talks she kept busying herself with her long hair (it was previously short). She is very self-conscious, not looking into my eyes when she talks to me, blushes frequently; her speech is blocked, a slight stammer now and then, and the voice is monotonous. I have to ask the questions, to show initiative, and her answers are short and inhibited. She speaks quite positively about her class teacher, who seems to try to encourage her and tell her that she really has nothing to worry about if she just goes ahead and does her work as everybody else does. But she cannot believe this. Why?—does not know. Then: "For quite some time now, I don't raise my hand in school. I never know whether my answers are correct or not. Then it turns out that they were actually correct, but the teacher will never know this." "Why don't you raise your hand?" "I can't express myself well—not even in writing; they laugh at me."

Yes, she has quite a number of friends—but last Friday she finished with her boyfriend. He is a liar; he says he came to see her and she wasn't there—this is not true—and she does not want him anymore. She is participating in a drawing course. When I said that I would love to see her pictures, she gladly invited me home. I was again impressed by her painting. We talked about using her talent professionally one day and she said, "I am not always able to paint; it comes and goes; there are times when I am unable to do anything."" Talking about various professions, such as teaching art, etc., I never got a clear reaction to any such suggestion. It was difficult to know what she felt about anything.

It was my impression that this girl has some deep conflicts, the source of which she cannot express—in any
bought herself a tape recorder and was very excited about it; she paid for it in installments. She is active in school activities, enjoys parties, trips, and other "happenings." From time to time makes some money with "profile drawings" (IL. 3. – apiece). She was getting ready for her matriculation exams up to the time of our second examination series in Haifa.

In addition to the steady correspondence, I also received colorful New Year's greetings during these years.

Directions Received From Dr. Nagler Before My First Home Visit in 1970

Problems in interpersonal relationships—with group.

Thinking disturbances—answers not quite to the point.

Poor language.

Depressive trends.

Paranoid trends (they hate her).

Fears (strange hand movements, as if wants to chase them away).

Constant expression of astonishment—stunned.

Moods.

Aggressiveness.

Stomach ache at night and whenever she laughs; headaches; nausea when riding by bus.

Eating problems (milk, yogurt).

Home Visit (December 1970)

Having completed all the arrangements by mail for this home visit, I received a day before my departure a short letter from H.'s father informing me that unfortunately H. (now, age 13) would not be home at the time of my arrival because of changes of plans owing to the Chanukka holidays which she intended to spend working in a kibbutz. I nevertheless decided to go, because anyway the other family (H.'s partners) was waiting for me in N. the same day.

H.'s home was hard to find; it is located a bit out of town, and a dust-road leads to this relatively small, old two-family-house. To my surprise, H. was outside, waiting for me. She appeared very pleased to see me, came running to my car, and told me that she was able to leave the kibbutz just in time to see me. She led me into the house, and there I met Mother (dark, fat, rather slovenly in dress, but friendly), Father (small, thin, bashful, unobtrusive but friendly), her little sister (cute, nice disposition), and a very old grandmother. The furniture in the house was good, but in the arrangement there was a lack of feminine warmth—the kind of deterioration I so often find when mothers are sick. They were all waiting for me, sitting in the living room around the table. After some general, polite conversation and having been offered some snacks, I suggested that maybe H. would like to show me her room; Father understood the hint and suggested that we stay in the living room to talk with H. privately, and everybody else would go out. Yet, before leaving, he complained about the fact that H. did not stick it out at the kibbutz as planned. She was supposed to stay longer and work—she is too lazy—she should get used to the demands of life, should pull herself together, otherwise life would be too hard for her. But H. looks all along quite content and does not regret a thing or have guilt feelings.

When we were alone and I inquired about her general health,
she told me that she had her appendix taken out 2 years ago. Since then, she feels much better, does not suffer these stomach aches and nausea any more, and her appetite is much better; she feels fine now. Then she looks at me expectantly and asks, “Hey, don’t you detect any changes in me?” Luckily I guessed right—she had her long hair cut short and looks really cute this way. My compliments please her very much.

This is her first high school year (since September)—but owing to the long-lasting teachers’ strike, she did not have much of a chance to get adjusted, and hardly knows her new teacher, who seems to be much more demanding. Lessons seem to be more interesting in this school, especially literature and humanities. She thinks she would like to become a teacher. She likes to go to school parties. She has a very close girlfriend with whom she can talk about everything. She doesn’t have time for the youth movement in N.; it is not worth much anyway.

Her hobby: collecting stamps. “I am crazy about stamps.” Also collects key-holders. Showed me a very nice collection. Wanted me to send her stamps as I get them. In sports activities she participates as everybody else does, but it does not interest her particularly. She tells me confidently that she often reads secretly until late at night—especially likes James Bond books.

Boys? Yes, she has boyfriends now and then—but nothing serious—always goes out with the gang—all she wants is to have a good time, to dance, etc., and that, of course, includes boys.

At this point the family decided that we had had enough privacy and that they too wanted to tell me things. So they returned to the living room, sat down and began, as if prearranged, to tell me about H.’s drawing lessons. They asked her to bring me some of her drawings. I was surprised at the quality of her work. Very expressive, interesting faces, postures, sketches for dress designs. Parents told me that these last 2 years she has taken an art course. I noticed an extreme contrast between the tasteless (kitschy) pictures on the wall of the living room and H.’s paintings. I asked the family why they did not hang these lovely pictures on the wall. They just smiled and H. said, “I really don’t know why—they are never satisfied with me. . .they don’t know what they want.”

Father now suggested that she should go to her room so that they could talk to me privately too (I always wrote to the subjects that during my visit I expected to talk to the parents about their own problems and thinking too). The parents told me that since she had her appendix taken out, she is a changed, healthy person. Her appetite is excellent, but she tries to curb it to watch her figure, which is o.k.

Aggressions? At the most maybe toward her little sister, but it is not serious, maybe natural. She has no special problems, no special fears, and her parents are not bothered or worried about her. In school they hope she will improve now that she has this new, younger teacher. All in all, her parents are proud and satisfied, and I wonder why they had to send her out of the room. Perhaps they expected me to come with some statements regarding test results.

H. returns with more pictures for me to admire. Does not want me to leave. I have to promise to come again, is happy to hear that we shall invite her again and that I shall send her stamps (which I did).

Conversation With Teacher (December 1970)

I found out where this previous teacher of hers lives and went to see her at home, since she is now retired. This teacher knew H. for years, whereas there is no contact as yet with the present teacher. The information given is very dry, disinterested, matter of fact. Does not volunteer information—I have to ask, and she is doing me a favor if she answers at all.

If H. is an above average student, it is not owing to her natural abilities—it’s just that she works hard. Her general inclinations are “humanistic.”

She is friendly with everybody—but definitely not a leader type.

No aggressions, no anxieties or special tensions, but also no special talents.

Teacher thinks that “though she enjoys social life, she repels boys.”

Did she sometimes ask for help? This is one of the things teacher had to discuss with parents on parents’ day. She is rather bashful and inhibited, will not approach teacher for anything (how I understand that!) but in general teacher has “nothing to complain about” regarding H.’s relationship and behavior toward her.

Concerning her general development all these past years, there was nothing irregular; H. will perhaps complete her high school studies, but the most she will ever become is a clerk of some sort.

Discussion With Dr. Nagler After My Home Visit

In comparison with Shmuel’s assessments, the picture now looks much more positive: a lively and satisfying social life. Good
motivation to learn. Interpersonal relationships with Loni during visit also very good.

It turns out that after her appendix operation those symptoms which N. had assumed to be psychoneurotic had vanished. Also, there seem to be no more eating problems.

The most important difference between then and now is the good social adjustment at present. Her language also does not seem to show such dullness.

Change of schools had a good influence on her development.

Visit of H., No. 81 and B., No. 82 to Haifa University (August 1973)

The girls (now age 16) arrived by train the day before the testing. It is nice to see them: good, slim figures, much taller than I am (something we laughed about later). Had they not recognized me, I think I would not have been able to recognize them.

H. is open, free, smiling in contrast to B.'s expression, which is rather grim, tense, uneasy and whose many questions show anxiety and suspicion. First I take them on a little sightseeing tour, which H. enjoys tremendously, whereas B. is all the while worried about something.

(Since this report concerns H.'s behavior, I do not go into details about her partner here.)

At the private home where the subjects stay overnight, B. uses the few minutes she happens to be alone in the room to try out the record player, although I had told her before that I was going to show her how to use it. Something goes wrong and it cannot be used afterwards. This upsets her very much. I feel I have to stay with her a while until she can relax and accept my reassurances. She bites her fingernails. I made arrangements for my son and his friend to take the girls out for a stroll in the evening. Next morning both girls are in excellent spirits when I pick them up. They are deeply impressed by the kindness of the landlady, and the fun they had with my son (who is a good entertainer). In the car, on the way to the university, H. takes it easy and B. does all the asking and talking regarding the location of the university, the streets leading there, directions, etc.

During the day at the university, H. cooperates very nicely. Since these months are summer vacations, the university restaurant is closed and I decide to take the girls to a restaurant not too far but beautifully located on top of the mountain. Forgotten are all the diets—they both enjoyed the Arab dishes, including humus, plenty of pita and meat. In the meantime we talked—but H. has to "translate" B.'s words, because I can hardly hear her, the way she speaks. She has not forgotten the record-player incident and must talk about it. (Details in B.'s report.)

H. has changed jobs frequently during these summer holidays. She is now working as a waitress at a hotel.

Neither girl has a steady boyfriend, but they show much interest in the subject. They tell me about the good times they are having socially. They consider themselves much too old for youth movements, and have no aspirations—political or otherwise. After lunch I have to "drag" them back to the university. But they cooperated very well all along—even B. warmed up considerably and enjoyed herself more and more.

H. invites me again and again to come to see her in N. B. does too, but I think under H.'s influence.

The Author

Loni Bonwitt was the coordinator of the subject visits and project secretary at the Oranim from the project's inception.