

Book Reviews

Review Coordinators: Charles W. Beegle, *Associate Professor of Education, University of Virginia, Charlottesville;* James B. Boyer, *Professor and Institute Director, Urban Education Institute, Kansas State University, Manhattan;* Wilma S. Longstreet, *Associate Professor of Education, University of Michigan, Flint;* and Edna Mitchell, *Head, Department of Teacher Education, Mills College, Oakland, California.*

The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales. Bruno Bettelheim. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1976. 341 pp. —Reviewed by Alexander Frazier, Professor of Early and Middle Childhood Education, Ohio State University, Columbus.

The recurrence of themes and plot motifs in myths, legends, and folk tales has long been noted; these elements extend across cultures and span the centuries. Also, psychoanalytic interpretation has familiarized us with the subterranean significance of many kinds of literature, both old and new. Thus, we should be prepared for Bruno Bettelheim's analysis of why fairy tales cast a spell upon children. But many readers will still be surprised. Who would have thought these old tales had so much meaning in them?

The first half of the book is concerned with defining some of the themes that carry the greatest emotional freight—the pleasure principle *vs.* the reality principle (“The Three Little Pigs”), transformation (“The Seven Ravens”), Oedipal conflicts and resolutions (“Snow White”). Advice on how to tell fairy stories (and why adults need to keep a tight rein on their tendency to explain things) is also offered.

However, the most absorbing pages for persons who work with children will be found in Part Two where explication of



An 1804 engraving—Little Red Riding Hood—from the jacket of *The Uses of Enchantment*.

specific tales is offered. Here we discover that “Hansel and Gretel” deals with oral regression. Nursing at the mother’s breast is certainly a pervasive and profound symbol of security. Sent out prematurely to forage for food on their own, the brother and sister find a gingerbread house where gluttony goes unrestrained. Turning the tables on the wily witch provides a most satisfying response to the ever-present threat of adult treachery and also, although Bettelheim fails to make note of this, yields a

possible new item for the children’s menu—baked witch.

“Jack and the Beanstalk” deals with a boy’s sexual development. First the cow dries up (weaning), then mother ridicules poor business transactions (further expulsion from the nest). The beanstalk is a phallic symbol, the giant a father figure to be put down. Jack’s safe return with the plunder signifies that self-assertion can be relaxed. The road to sexual maturity is now open.

The story that receives the most elaborate treatment is “Cinderella.” It is plainly more than just a tale of sibling rivalry. Narcissism is involved: Is Cinderella as put upon as she seems to think? The smut on her face, the cinders in her hair—does she really enjoy being dirty? Or maybe she’s not all that unclean; it could be a remnant of guilt about toilet training. As for the stepmother, perhaps she was not as mean as she is made out to be. The Oedipal impulse may be at work. Loss of the glass slipper, the search for its owner, transformation into a princess—these are sure-fire devices to reduce domestic strife. At the end, Cinderella is

ready to leave home, wishing only the best to those unfortunate enough to be left behind.

No doubt about it, this book gives the reader a lot to ponder. The same apparatus could be applied to other forms of children's literature as a basis for better understanding their appeal. What would we uncover if we also applied it to children's favorite television programs?

Education in National Politics.

Norman C. Thomas. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1975. 246 pp. —Reviewed by Carl Ashbaugh, Associate Professor of Education, University of Texas, Austin.

In this clearly written, concise treatment of policy making at the national level, the author concludes that most of the educational legislation during the Johnson Administration was designed to meet needs and deficiencies and to stimulate a reassessment of priorities. These were needs that the state and local governments—in the absence of federal leverage—had been derelict in meeting.

The scope of analysis is limited mostly to the study of the educational policy-making process during the 90th Congress, although passing references are made to the policy process during the Nixon Administration. The author develops this thesis: There is a distinction to be drawn between

policies that determine the amount of money to be expended and those that determine the manner in which that amount is to be distributed.

As a framework for his analysis, Thomas relies on the following policy-making stages:

1. *Formulation:* Ideas for formulating policy stances came largely from the academic community and task forces. Screening, analyzing, and establishing priorities were activities performed by the Bureau of the Budget.

2. *Adoption:* The adoption of policy was accomplished by Congress, where modification or defeat of the Presidential program occurred. Congressional impact was likely to be negative, restraining, and remedial rather than positive, encouraging, and creative.

3. *Implementation:* This was clearly the function of the various bureaus—Bureaus of Elementary and Secondary Education and of Higher Education.

Thomas asserts that the national policy process (during the period under investigation) was made up of an elite cadre of seventy-seven individuals occupying important positions in the bureaucracy, the Presidency, Congress, private associations, and organizations outside the federal government. These entities were influenced in their decision making by sub-

organizations, interest groups, and constituencies.

The education legislation of the 90th Congress revealed a rather stabilized policy process in which accommodations and compromises were achieved among the interested parties with respect to federal vs. local control, church-state relations, desegregation, programs for the educationally disadvantaged, and many other educational issues of the day.

Thomas postulates, and logically so, that the greater the frequency of communication between two individuals, the greater the probability that an influence relationship could develop. He observes, however, that although this in itself is not sufficient to reveal the structure of power and influence, it would suggest where these influence relationships were likely to develop.

The primary data for the book were gathered through interviews and brief questionnaires. This resulted in a rather complex assortment of data, protagonists, programs, governmental agencies, organizations, and special interest groups.

Each chapter is amply documented with references to scores of recognized scholars. Throughout the book, the author draws heavily from Edith Mosher and Stephen Bailey's study of ESEA legislation.

Thomas carefully relates his conclusions to the data col-

lected. In most cases, the interviews and checklists provide decided patterns and trends that allow him to make, if not relatively sound observations, then rather safe generalizations. Where possible, he corroborates his affirmations with the results of similar studies. Where the data are sketchy, Thomas is careful to advise that the reader should not accept a particular interpretation as a definite pattern, but as a general tendency based on limited responses to his inquiries.

A multitude of implications for educators emerge from this volume. One implication, for example, would be that if individuals are to be participants in the policy process at either the local or state levels, they must learn to organize effectively and discover where the critical power centers are.

Also, since Thomas illustrates that powerful associations and organizations exert great impact on the policy process, it is incumbent upon educators and those interested in education to maintain effective and responsive professional and interest group organizations, able to successfully lobby in the interests of their constituents.

Education in National Politics is worth reading. It will enlighten both the experienced scholar and the novice about an exceptional era of educational policy making.

Improving School Discipline.

Leslie J. Chamberlin and Joseph B. Carnot, editors. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1974. 230 pp. Youth in Crisis: A Radical Approach to Delinquency. Otto L. Shaw. New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1974. 135 pp. Classroom Discipline: A Positive Approach. Susan B. Stainback and William C. Stainback. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1974. 163 pp.—Reviewed by Bill M. Morrison, Associate Professor of Education, Central Connecticut State College, New Britain.

The editors of *Improving School Discipline* have compiled 63 readings in school discipline that cover a series of broad topics ranging from causes and prevention, to psychological approaches and legal ramifications.

Purported to be of interest to all segments of the school community, this reviewer found the general tone and depth of most articles to be especially relevant to preservice and beginning teachers. The "discussionette" at the end of each chapter provides thoughtful review questions and concepts that could well be utilized in undergraduate training classes. However, even preservice teachers might become frustrated with the repetitious nature of the numerous articles that present lists of the standard *do's* and

don't's of school discipline. One reading gave "58 Successful Hints Offered to Beginning Junior High Teachers." Perhaps the editors could have been more selective in their choice of readings and excluded some of those that covered essentially the same points as the aforementioned article.

The section on psychological approaches is the outstanding portion of this text, and I highly recommend the articles "Discipline Isn't Dated" and "Children Look at Their Own Behavior" as particularly significant for their positive approach. Also in this section, the reader will find an intriguing, controversial, well documented article entitled, "Aversive Control of Behavior."

The selections, while representative of a wide assortment of sources, do not present an in-depth variety of innovative techniques or points of view. For example, reinforcement theory, open education, and the ideas of Glasser, Kohl, Holt, Carl R. Rogers, and A. S. Neill are virtually ignored. This limitation, coupled with the general repetitiveness of some of the readings, detracts from an otherwise well organized collection of positive approaches to the improvement of discipline.

Conversely, *Youth in Crisis* is a succinct overview of the daily operations, problems, and philosophical outlook of the Red Hill School for delinquent

boys. Founded in 1934 near Maidstone, England, and patterned after A. S. Neill's Summerhill, Red Hill is a privately owned boarding school for the psychological and educational treatment of maladjusted boys who are accessible through psychotherapy, and whose I.Q.'s are 130 and above.

The striking element of Shaw's book is the manner in which the author and his staff provide an environment of tolerance, compassion, and acceptance to rehabilitate a variety of classic cases from aggressive behavior and psychosomatic illness, to larceny, sexual maladjustment, and obsessional neuroticism. Of the approximately 300 students who have attended Red Hill, Shaw claims to have achieved about a 90 percent success rate in curing delinquency through his so-called "radical approach" of love, understanding, and therapeutic community interaction.

Youth in Crisis is not a textbook, nor highly technical in terms of theory and content; the light narrative lends itself to quick and easy reading. However, given the apparent idealism and extraordinary success of Shaw's efforts and techniques, the book would have been more instructive if the reader had been given a thorough insight into the theory and application of selected cases, instead of brief vignettes of numerous case studies.

Classroom Discipline: A Positive Approach was primarily

written for preservice and beginning teachers and offers a survey of practical discipline techniques within the context of a programmed learning format of self-tests for each of the four major sections.

The first section briefly discusses common approaches taken toward maladaptive behavior—namely psychodynamic strategies that consider underlying psychological causes, sensory-neurological strategies that deal with physiological causes, and operant conditioning that focuses on behavior from the standpoint of variables operating in the environment. The latter point of view is dominant throughout, and as the authors suggest, is "the positive approach" outlined in this text.

Section Two considers preventative disciplinary techniques, as well as those that deal with disruptive behavior. Thus, while time-tested methods such as thorough lesson planning are suggested, the Stainbacks also discuss techniques to utilize if these methods fail. Of those mentioned, "reinforcement" and "extinction" are the most noteworthy. The former refers to the use of positive reinforcement in cases of appropriate behavior and the latter suggests that the teacher ignore inappropriate behavior.

In terms of theory and content, "Precise Techniques" is the pivotal chapter of this text. Here, the reader is guided through the general steps of behavior modification, and then

introduced to "Contingency Contracting" and "Token Reinforcement." The former is based on a contract with the errant pupil, is positive and clear in regard to what is expected, and is backed up by rewards. "Token Reinforcement" is nothing more than the use of tokens that may be accrued through an agreed upon behavior and then exchanged at various prices for candy, privileges, or some desired activity. Verbal praise and precise record keeping are integral aspects of both strategies.

This section also surveys criticisms of the behavioral approach, such as learning itself, and the underlying reasons behavior may be overlooked by the operant conditioner. The authors give positive answers to the rather weak criticisms they have chosen to discuss, but do point out that behavior modification is not a panacea and is only effective when applied correctly.

The last section presents some additional viewpoints that serve to augment what has already been stated elsewhere in the text.

Classroom Discipline is indeed a valuable book for anyone interested in positive approaches to classroom management. Although some excellent guidelines for operant conditioning are given, I would strongly advise the novice practitioner to seek more theory and practice than this text offers. [4]

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