

(2023 October 16) On Bruno Bettelheim

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1990/04/24/for-bruno-bettelheim-a-place-to-die/5fa1f843-be85-4eae-966b-0d5abe7b8fb9/>

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruno_Bettelheim

<https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1966/10/06/children-without-parents/>

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie-Louise_von_Franz

I first became aware of Bettelheim through *Children of the Dream* (1969), his book on the kibbutzim of Israel (a foretaste of which can be found in his 1966 review of Peter Neubauer's book on kibbutz children in the *New York Review*).

At the time I was one of the professed adults in the commune-style Hearthshire School (a self-designated certified freeschool based in the Mission District of San Francisco), and owner-operator of the hippie schoolbus, painted in appropriate style by school members and prominently displaying their name for the bus, Mother Duck.

Bettelheim's book was of interest not only for his discussion of the children, but of the kibbutz concept itself, one of the many commune styles many of us were investigating in those days.

I knew nothing of the controversies about Bettelheim that later grew into a full-blown debunking (see the Wikipedia entry linked above), but even after learning of these and his 1990 suicide I still valued his kibbutz book and the one book of his I read years later, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (NY: Random House, 1975), which I found to be an insightful complement to Maria von Franz's Jungian studies of fairy tales, some titles of which have been a major component of my myth and folklore library since grad school.

Gaining a clear understanding of what the meaning of one's life may or ought to be . . . is what constitutes having attained psychological maturity.

- Bruno Bettelheim

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