

DISASTERS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIONS IN THE ARTS

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TWENTIETH CENTURY'S MOST PAINFUL ISSUES: NAZISM, EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN JOHN BOYNE'S NOVEL "THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS"

John Boyne is an Irish author who has won numerous literary awards. He is the author of ten adult books, five children's novels, and two collections of short stories. His writings have been translated into over 50 different languages. His novel "The Boy in the Striped Pajamas," which was written in 60 hours, touches the subject of the Holocaust.

War is always horrible, especially when children are suffering. The novel "The Boy in the Striped Pajamas" by John Boyne is one of the most heartbreaking portrayals of the Second World War. There are many pieces of literature which deal with the life of soldiers, convicts, and ordinary citizens, but the majority of them tell the story on behalf of an adult. This piece is unique in the way it illustrates the conflict through the perspective of children.

In 2008, the novel "The Boy in Striped Pajamas" was adapted into a film. Several significant cinema awards were given to this film. It is shot extremely close to the text, expressing the entire atmosphere in grey tones, but it is still weaker compared to the book, since the psychology of the boy and his parents is eloquently revealed, their actions are explained, and attention is drawn to extremely touching details in the book that are not depicted in the film.

The novel won two Irish Book Honors, the Bisto Book of the Year Award, and other international awards. The 80-week novel also won the Irish Bestseller List and the New York Times Bestseller List, along with becoming a best-seller in Spain in 2007 and 2008. The book has sold more than 9 million copies worldwide.

Bruno, a nine-year-old German boy, lives happily in a lovely five-story building in Berlin with his father, mother, and sister. However, their father's job requires them to move to a new location known as Auschwitz. Bruno's world is portrayed more completely, lavishly, and voluminously in the narrative; nonetheless, it is diverse and arranged, and it is also capable of motions. For example, because of migration, Bruno lives in Berlin on a regular basis; he has a family (father, mother, sister), grandparents who live apart, and three best friends. Bruno feels unable to accept the relocation, especially after learning that it is not a short-term vacation and that it is a long distance from Berlin. He loves his family and friends. The boy can't imagine his life without his small room upstairs with slanted windows.

When the family arrives to Auschwitz, they see numerous soldiers enter and exit the house. Bruno is annoyed since he has never liked soldiers. Every day, the teacher visits their home and educates his elder sister and Bruno. Although his educators respect history lessons and see art and reading as a waste of time, Bruno prefers to read adventure novels and despises

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history. Gretel, on the other hand, becomes a full-on Nazi because of her teachers and because the place where they reside. Bruno feels lonely since there are no houses near him, but there are hundreds of men and children dressed in the same striped pyjamas on the other side of the wire fence surrounding the garden. Bruno witnessed all of this from his room's window.

Bruno, who is attracted by adventure literature, decides to go on an expedition to the garden one day. After a long walk, he notices a boy in striped pyjamas with a shaved head on the other side of the wire fence. The child seems weak and depressed. And Bruno, like the other boy, sits on the fence's side and begins to talk. He discovers the boy's name is Shmuel. Soon after, Bruno decided to go to the wire fences every night, sit on the ground, and talk with Shmuel; it became a habit, and they became close friends. Sometimes he takes food from the kitchen and puts it in his pocket, takes it for Shmuel, and enjoys it when he sees the child's smile.

Bruno no longer misses his best friends from before, because Shmuel is now his best and only friend. Bruno eventually told his father that he wanted to return to Berlin since there were too many soldiers surrounding them and that two children could not grow up in such an environment. Although his father was angry at first, he later admitted that it was a logical assumption that everyone was happier there. As a result, they begin planning for the journey. Bruno, on the other hand, does not want to go back to Berlin. He refuses to leave Shmuel: "You're my best friend, Shmuel," he said. "My best friend for life."

When Bruno goes to meet Shmuel the day before the relocation, he notices that he is much more upset than he is. According to Shmuel, the father was transported to work and then did not return. They then decide to look for Shmuel's father together, with Bruno dressed in striped pyjamas. Despite hours of trying, they are unable to find his father. When Bruno was on his way home, the soldiers approached him and informed him that they would be taken for a stroll. Nobody understands what a stroll is. Bruno and Shmuel, on the other hand, will never return from their walk. They find themselves in a gas chamber with other boys and men. John Boyne wrote, "Their lost voices must continue to be heard."

In his writing, John Boyne addresses to several of the twentieth century's most painful issues: Nazism, equality, and human rights. He does not avoid the issue of education. The author observes what leads a nice, sincere child to turn into a cruel tyrant willing to harm millions of people for the sake of their ambition. John Boyne writes simply, showing history through the perspective of children.

This book has no long descriptions, author's musings, or "complicated" terminology. It is significant to note that the novel's language is not dramatic, and there are no violent scenes in the book. The author avoids them, but the reader recognises their existence and recognises the injustice and tragedy of these events.

The work's composition is as fragmented as a child's ideas when he or she does not understand anything. Such description clearly demonstrates John Boyne's style. The writer knows how to write about the most tragic pages in human history in an extremely simple way; he does not emotionally exhaust the reader, does not bring him to uncontrollable tears, but his books cannot be forgotten for a long time, they leave a lot of questions, and for quite a long time put a person in a state of shock. Bruno's extreme innocence, which does not correspond to the reality of the moment, is the only thing that can confuse the reader. In the 1940s, Nazi ideology infected the minds of German children.

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Is it surprising that an energetic German and a barely alive prisoner with “dried twigs” for fingers might be “alike as brothers?” Despite this, the piece has a pleasant aftertaste. In addition, the final phrases in the novel, in which the word “war” is not even mentioned once, sound like a call to all humanity to understand its foolishness and horrible effects, as well as a belief in a better future: “Nothing like that could happen again. Not in this day and age.”

References:

Boyne, J. (2016). *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Random House.