



**SUBLIMATION AND PROJECTION AS REFLECTED BY BRUNO AS  
THE MAIN CHARACTER IN JOHN BOYNE'S THE BOY IN  
THE STRIPED PYJAMAS**

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**PAGE APPROVAL**

This thesis has been approved by the advisor on 18 November 2015 to be examined by the board of examiners.

Advisor,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Valentina Widya', written over a vertical line.

Valentina Widya, M.Hum.

## SUBLIMATION AND PROJECTION AS REFLECTED BY BRUNO AS THE MAIN CHARACTER IN JOHN BOYNE'S THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS

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### ABSTRACT

The life of children and teenager has different characteristics compared to that of adult's. One of the ways to understand their respective characteristics is by being involved in their daily life. Young adult fictions are usually concerned with the representation of children's passion, dreams, and life. In its development, this type of fiction can be a medium to help society to understand about the life of children or teenager. The Boy in Stripped Pyjamas written by John Boyne is a famous novel which tells about how a child named Bruno who survives in around Nazi concentration camp. This study is aimed to analyze the defense mechanism of Bruno to live in his new environment. The researcher used descriptive qualitative method to find out the way Bruno uses the defense mechanism after he moved to the new house. The data collected were analyzed by reading the novel. The researcher presents all the data by the quotation through general description, conflict, and setting. The result of this research shows that Bruno uses Sublimation and Projection to reduce his anxiety in his new environment. Bruno did some activities such as exploring, playing, and making a friend as his sublimation, while in the projection Bruno did in another way such as blames the situation of the new house, looking for social justification, looking for a protection, and blame father's job.

**Keywords:** *Defense Mechanism, Sublimation, Projection, The Boy in the Stripped Pyjamas, Young Adult Literature*

### INTRODUCTION

According to Michael Cart in *The Value of Young Adult Literature*, the term "young adult literature" is inherently amorphous, for its constituent terms "young adult" and "literature" are dynamic, changing as culture and society which provide their context change. When the term first found common usage in the late 1960's, it referred to realistic fiction that was set in the real (as opposed to imagined), contemporary world and addressed problems, issues, and life circumstances of interest to young readers approximately 12-18. In this case, young adult literature usually related with themes such as identity, sexuality, science fiction, depression, suicide, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, familial struggles, bullying, and many others.

Young Adult Literature explores important aspects in teenage life such as relationships to authority figures, peer pressure and ensuing experimentations, diversity issues, gender, socio-cultural, and socio economic status.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas is a novel which tells about two kids. The main character in this novel is Bruno, son of Nazi commander. Bruno felt uncomfortable since his family moved in his new house. This family has no neighbor around the house. This condition is really different from Bruno's old house in Berlin. Bruno has so many friends and good environment in Berlin, but now he hasn't. His new house is closed to the concentration camp of Nazi. This is the place where Jewish people arrested and killed by Nazi Soldiers. Indeed, this condition is not good place for young boy to grow up. Bruno feels sick in his new house, furthermore he has conflict with his family members especially his sister. In the end of the story, Bruno met Shmuel, Jew children in concentration camp. This story shows us how a child uses self defense to live in non ideal childhood .

Defense mechanism is ways to protect a person from overwhelming anxiety. Freud defined this mechanism as a mental strategy used by the individual to defend against open expression of id impulses and opposing super ego pressures.

Sublimation is one of defense mechanism to protect a person from overwhelming anxiety. Sublimation uses for person who has unacceptable impulse to become more acceptable in social or thought. Projection as a defense mechanism, it involves the process by which the person attributes unacceptable internal thoughts, feelings, and behavior to other people or to the environment. Projection thus enables a person to blame someone or something else for his or her own shortcomings.

The aim of this study is to find and describe self defense mechanism experienced by the main character. This study is conducted by employing psychological approach especially defense mechanism and projection. The method used in this study is descriptive one.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Data and Subject**

The data of this study was John Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*

### **Unit of Analysis**

The researcher used intrinsic elements to analyze general description of main character, conflict experience, and setting of the novel. Then the researcher also analyzed the sublimation and projection experienced by the main character.

### **Technique of Data Collection and Analysis**

In this thesis, the researcher used descriptive qualitative method to analyze the novel and analyzed the main character based on the intrinsic element in this novel. Those are general description, setting, and conflict experienced by the main character in this novel. The researcher also analyzed the defense mechanism of the main character which are sublimation and projection.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

The researcher found that there were general description of Bruno as the main character, two kinds of conflicts, and three kinds of settings described in Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. The researcher also found sublimation and projection experienced by Bruno.

### **Discussion**

#### **General Description of the Main Character**

##### **Brave**

According to Cambridge dictionary, brave means showing no fear of dangerous or difficult things. Bruno is a brave boy. He is really honest to himself that he doesn't like the new house. He explains to his father that he does not feel comfort to live in the new house. Bruno understands that telling to his father is risky, but he keeps doing that. His father is so powerful in that house. He is commandant in the camp, that's why everybody is afraid of him. By saying "no" to his father, Bruno can be considered as a brave boy. He is not afraid to say his honest opinion to his father. It can be seen in the quotations below:

'What do I think?' asked Bruno. 'What do I think of what?' 'Of your new home. Do you like it?' 'No,' said Bruno quickly, because he always tried to be honest and knew that if he hesitated even for a moment then he wouldn't have the nerve to say what he really thought. 'I think we should go home,' he added bravely. (The Boy in the Stripped Pyjamas, 2006 :28)

##### **Innocent**

According to Cambridge dictionary, Innocent means has no experience or having no knowledge of the unpleasant and evil things in life. Bruno is an innocent boy. It is probably because he is too young to understand adult people's problem. Sometimes, he doesn't get the point of implicit words. It can be proven when his mom asks the maid to pack Bruno's things. Bruno doesn't know that he and his family are going to move to another place. He doesn't expect that he will move out of Berlin and leave his best friends Karl, Daniel, and Martin. It can be seen in the quotation below:

'Mother,' said Bruno, marching towards her, 'what's going on? Why is Maria going through my things?' 'She's packing them,' explained Mother. 'Packing them?' he asked. (Boyne, 2006 :6).

##### **Curious**

According to Cambridge dictionary, Curious means interested in learning about people or things around. Bruno is a curious boy. He feels so curious of the people that he sees through a window in his room. He sometimes stands for hours to stare and watch these people activities. Bruno observes these people's life and gets to know about these people. He tries to define what and who they are. By his curious, it will lead him to do an exploration to that place. This exploration gives him a lot of information about the people of the concentration camp. An

exploration is proved that Bruno gives an effort to get to know or find out what he interested in. It can be proved by following quotations:

Bruno stood up, and for the first time they stood there together, shoulder to shoulder, and stared at what was happening not fifty feet away from their new home. (Boyne, 2006 :23)

### **Critical**

According to Cambridge dictionary, critical is saying that someone or something is bad or wrong, or giving opinion or judgement. Bruno is a critical boy. It can be proved when he does not feel very comfort to live in the new house. He misses his old house in Berlin and plays with his best friends Karl, Daniel, and Martin. Bruno cannot accept the fact that he has to move to that place. He criticizes many things he does not like and shares it to everyone in the house. Sometimes he talks to himself or convinces himself that he will not be able to live in that place. Bruno said to people in the house that move from Berlin is a bad idea. It can be seen in the following quotation:

‘I think this was a bad idea,’ he repeated. ‘I think the best thing to do would be to forget all about this and just go back home. We can chalk it up to experience,’ he added, a phrase he had learned recently and was determined to use as often as possible. (Boyne, 2006 :12).

### **Visionary**

According to Cambridge dictionary, visionary means the attitude of a person with ability to imagine how a country, society, industry etc, will develop in the future. Bruno is a visionary boy. He can think or imagines the things that will be happened based on the fact that already has happened. He can analyze some cases or problems and relate them to his rational knowledge. It is proven when Bruno and his family are going to move out of Berlin. He asks to his mom about the school and the house in the future. He is afraid of not being able to continue his study. Bruno feels that school is important thing in his life. It can be seen in the quotation bellow:

‘But what about school?’ said Bruno, interrupting her. (Boyne, 2006 :8)

Bruno also worries nobody will take care the old house. He can imagines what it would be like if nobody takes care of it. It can be seen in the quotation bellow:

‘But what about our house?’ asked Bruno. ‘Who's going to take care of it while we're gone?’ (Boyne, 2006 :7)

### **Conflict Experienced by Bruno as the Main Character**

#### **Bruno Againts Himself**

After moving to the new house, Bruno feels so dissatisfied. He feels little bit surprise when he arrivestat his new house. The house surroundings are quiet places, It such a loneliest place in the world. It is the place that Bruno doesn't expect to live

in. Everything seems opposite of Bruno's old house in Berlin. It can be proved by following quotations:

Everything about it seemed to be the exact opposite of their old home and he couldn't believe that they were really going to live there. (Boyne, 2006 :10)

### **External Conflict**

#### **Bruno against His Mother**

One day, Bruno has an argument with his mother when they will move out of Berlin. Bruno disagrees to this decision. He thinks this is unfair because they have to move without Bruno's agreement. Bruno is not involved of the discussion about their move. It can be proved by following quotations:

'I'm sorry, Bruno,' said Mother, 'but your plans are just going to have to wait. We don't have a choice in this.' 'But, Mother!' 'Bruno, that's enough,' she said, (Boyne, 2006 :9)

#### **Bruno against Grettel**

Bruno and Grettel have a bad relationship. They always fight and never have the same perspective. Grettel believes that his brother still like a baby who doesnot understand adult's stuff, while Bruno thinks that his sister pretends to be an adult. Because of that, they never play together. It's also the reason why Bruno feels so lonely in the new house. It can be proved by following quotations:

'Stop it, Kurt,' said Gretel, drying her eyes. 'He doesn't understand you. He's only nine.' 'Oh, will you be quiet please,' shouted Bruno, (Boyne, 2006 :42)

#### **Bruno against His Father**

Bruno's father is so busy with his business. He does not have time to chit-chat or play with his son. It makes Bruno sad, but Bruno could understand that his father has important position in the job. Sometimes Bruno wants to say hello to father, but he does not want make silly things. Bruno realizes that his father is not typically man who likes a chit-chat or does something unimportant. It can be proved by following quotations:

Bruno walked slowly down the stairs and hesitated for a moment outside the door. He felt sad that Father had not come up to say hello to him in the hour or so that he had been here, but it had been explained to him on many occasions just how busy Father was and that he couldn't be disturbed by silly things like saying hello to him all the time. (Boyne, 2006 :27).

#### **Bruno against Shmuel**

Bruno and Shmuel have different perception about soldiers. Bruno believes that soldiers are good people. He believes it because his father is a soldier. He also wants to be soldier like father in the future. Meanwhile, Shmuel really hates

soldiers. He saw many bad things in the concentration camp. Soldiers separate him to his family. It can be proved by following quotations:

‘There aren't any good soldiers,’ said Shmuel. ‘Of course there are,’ said Bruno. ‘Who?’ ‘Well, Father, for one,’ said Bruno. (Boyne, 2006 :75)

Bruno sat back in surprise. ‘I'm sure they don't hate you,’ he said. ‘They do,’ said Shmuel, leaning forward, his eyes narrowing and his lips curling up a little in anger. ‘But that's all right because I hate them too. I *hate* them,’ he repeated forcefully. ‘You don't hate Father, do you?’ asked Bruno. Shmuel bit his lip and said nothing. He had seen Bruno's father on any number of occasions and couldn't understand how such a man could have a son who was so friendly and kind. (Boyne, 2006 :102)

### **Bruno against Environment**

After move to the new house, Bruno feels so uncomfortable. The new place he lives now is very opposite of his old house. Nobody do activities around the house except military stuff. There are no other houses around also families or other kids, and definitely no shops or fruit and vegetable stalls. Bruno doesn't like it. He thinks that it's the loneliest place in the world. It can be proved by following quotations:

All around the house in Berlin were other streets of large houses, and when you walked towards the centre of town there were always people strolling along and stopping to chat to each other or rushing around and saying they had no time to stop, not today, not when they had a hundred and one things to do. There were shops with bright store fronts, and fruit and vegetable stalls with big trays piled high with cabbages, carrots, cauliflowers and corn. But there were no other streets around the new house, no one strolling along or rushing around, and definitely no shops or fruit and vegetable stalls. (Boyne, 2006 :11)

### **Setting Described in Boyne's *The boy in the Striped Pyjamas***

#### **Setting of Time**

Every afternoon after the class, Bruno always meet Shmuel in around of the concentration camp. It is like routine schedule for Bruno because that activity can make up all the things in Berlin. Bruno finally found his new friend in around the concentration camp. In the afternoon after finish the class is the right time to meet Shmuel. It is because everybody in the house is busy with their own business. It can be proved by following quotations:

Every afternoon when classes were finished Bruno took the long walk along the fence and sat and talked with his new friend Shmuel



until it was time to come home, and that had started to make up for all the times he had missed Berlin. (Boyne, 2006 :73)

One Friday is the time when Bruno's gone. At that time, Bruno comes to the concentration camp to visit Shmuel. They plan to explore and make a journey in the concentration camp. They probably come into the cyanide's room. It can be proved by following quotations:

The next day – Friday – was another wet day. (Boyne 2006 :104)

### **Setting of Place**

Bruno's new house is so different with his old house in Berlin. The house is like a desolate place because no other houses around that house. Bruno does not have neighbors in that place which means that no other children to play with. The street is so quiet. The closest place of that house is a camp. It is a concentration camp for Jews. It can be proved by following quotations:

The new house, however, stood all on its own in an empty, desolate place and there were no other houses anywhere to be seen, which meant there would be no other families around and no other boys to play with, neither friends nor trouble. (Boyne, 2006 :10).

### **Setting of Social**

Bruno lives in Nazi era. It can be proved by the slogan "Heil Hitler" that said by the soldier. Hitler is one important figure in Nazi. In that era, there is a policy to do expulsion to Jewish in entire Europe and massively in Poland.

'Heil Hitler,' he said, which, he presumed, was another way of saying, 'Well, goodbye for now, have a pleasant afternoon.' (Boyne, 2006 :32).

One day, there is a diner in the Bruno's house. Bruno's father invites one of the important figures in his job. The fury here can be implied as Hitler, while Eva can be implied as Eva Braun, Hitler's wife.

The Fury and Eva stayed for the best part of two hours and neither Gretel nor Bruno were invited downstairs to say goodbye to them. Bruno watched them leave from his bedroom window and noticed that when they stepped towards their car, which he was impressed to see had a chauffeur, the Fury did not open the door for his companion but instead climbed in and started reading a newspaper, while she said goodbye once again to Mother and thanked her for the lovely dinner. (Boyne, 2006 :66-67).

### **Sublimation**

Exploring is one of Bruno's activities in the new house to reduce his anxiety. Bruno does the exploration because his instinct drives into personally and socially acceptable. He explores some places in and around the house until he found the concentration camp. Bruno's curious is the main reason why he did some

explorations. His brave also leads him to do an exploration in the concentration camp. The situation in the house makes Bruno feels boring. It is also can be the another reason for Bruno to have an exploration.

One day, Bruno remembers that he enjoys exploration around his old house in Berlin very much. He thinks that he has not done anything new around his new house and it is maybe the time to have new experience. He explores his new house by exploring to the concentration camp. It can be proved by following quotations:

‘When I was a child,’ Bruno said to himself, ‘I used to enjoy exploring. And that was in Berlin, where I knew everywhere and could find anything I wanted with a blindfold on. I've never really done any exploring here. Perhaps it's time to start.’ (Boyne, 2006 :54)

Because there is no certainty that Bruno will meet his best friends, Karl, Daniel, and Martin in Berlin, he thinks that it is the time to find a way to make him entertained. Bruno tries to do some activities, which make him happy. He initiates to make a cradle. Bruno tries to look for materials for making a cradle such as rope and used tires. He is successful in getting the materials with Pavel’s help, a Jewish who works in his house. It can be proved by following quotations:

Several weeks after Bruno arrived at Out-With with his family and with no prospect of a visit on the horizon from either Karl or Daniel or Martin, he decided that he'd better start to find some way to entertain himself or he would slowly go mad. (Boyne:38)

There were only two things that Bruno needed to create his new entertainment: some rope and a tyre. (Boyne 2006 :40)

Bruno feels lonely when he has just moved to his new house for the first time. He loses his best friends in Berlin. It is impossible for him to play with Grettel, his annoying older sister. His father is too busy to play with him. Once he meets someone who is possible to be asked to play together, Bruno feels excited and tries hard for the person. The person is Shmuel. It is seen that Bruno starts the conversation to get a new friend. Bruno’s braveness leads him to make a friend with a stranger. Although Bruno realizes that the place is not nice and quiet far from home. It can be proved by following quotations:

‘Hello,’ said Bruno. ‘Hello,’ said the boy. (Boyne, 2006 :58)

‘Have you found anything?’ asked the boy. ‘Very little.’ ‘Nothing at all?’ ‘Well, I found you,’ said Bruno after a moment. (Boyne, 2006 :58)

### **Projection**

One of projection that Bruno did to reduce his anxiety is by blaming the situation of the new house. As critical person, Bruno blames everything he doesn’t like in the new house. The internal conflict of Bruno against of environment can be one of main reason for Bruno to do that.

Bruno often feels that his new environment around his home is not pleasing. He feels suffered because his beautiful life in the past is gone. He feels that his new house is totally different with his old house. In Berlin, the situation as well as the environment is so pleasing. There are many people selling some items and people are walking around. Also, he has best friends named Karl, Daniel, and Martin. Unlike in the new house, Bruno feels lonely. He feels that he does not have friends at the beginning of moving into the new house. It can be proved by following quotations:

Everything about it seemed to be the exact opposite of their old home and he couldn't believe that they were really going to live there. (The Boy in the Stripped Pyjamas, 2006 :10)

'Karl's not here and Daniel's not here and Martin's not here and there are no other houses around us and no fruit and vegetable stalls and no streets and no cafés with tables outside and no one to push you from pillar to post on a Saturday afternoon.' (Boyne, 2006 :29)

Because Bruno does not feel happy with his new environment, he tries to find out whether the other family members are happy living in the new house or not. It tends to be Bruno looks for social justification that not only he but also others feel the same way about the new environment. Bruno will feel relieved when someone thinks the same way. It means that his willingness to move to Berlin is supported by others. Critical, the general description of Bruno can be main reason of this thing. However, it seems that it does not work. It is proven when he keeps asking Maria about moving to the new house. It can be proved by following quotations:

'What do you think of all this, Maria?' he asked after a long silence because he had always liked Maria and felt as if she was one of the family, even though Father said she was just a maid and overpaid at that. 'All what?' she asked. 'This,' he said as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. 'Coming to a place like this. Don't you think we've made a big mistake?' (Boyne 2006 :13)

Actually, Bruno wants to tell his father that he does not feel happy living in the new house. He wants to say to his father since his father has the authority in making decision at home. However, he has not done yet since he is afraid of his father. Then, he asks his mother to do so. He asks his mother to tell father about moving back to Berlin. It means Bruno is looking for a protection from others. Thus, he is able to avoid from his father's anger. As the researcher mention in the general description, Bruno is visionary boy. It can be main reason for Bruno to do this. He understands that if he talks to father directly, his father will get angry to him. It can be proved by following quotations:

'Well, I don't know that we do,' said Bruno. 'I think you should just tell Father that you've changed your mind and, well, if we have to stay here for the rest of the day and have dinner here this evening

and sleep here tonight because we're all tired, then that's all right, but we should probably get up early in the morning if we're to make it back to Berlin by tea-time tomorrow.' (Boyne 2006 :12)

Bruno feels that moving to new house is because of Father's job. His new father's job makes him suffer and lonely at home. He wonders why his father is willing to be moved to such suffering place now. Bruno thinks that his father may do something wrong in the previous work. Thus, it makes his family and him have to move to the torment place. Bruno asks his father to apologize to ask forgiveness from his boss so his family can move back to Berlin. It means this is contradicting to the facts that his father gets promotion so he moves to new house.

In this case, the general descriptions of Bruno which are innocent and critical are the main reason for Bruno to blame father's job. His innocent can be proved when he judge his father did mistake in previous work. Bruno still doesn't understand the concept of father's job promotion. His critical can be proved when he critics father's decision to takes the new job. I doesn't makes any sense for Bruno that Father prefer to chose terrible place than a nice place such as Berlin. It can be proved by following quotations:

'In Berlin, on our nice quiet street, we only had six houses. And now there are so many. Why would Father take a new job here in such a nasty place and with so many neighbours? It doesn't make any sense.' (Boyne, 2006 :23)

'Well, I don't think you can have been very good at your job if it means we all have to move away from a very nice home and our friends and come to a horrible place like this. I think you must have done something wrong and you should go and apologize to the Fury and maybe that will be an end to it. Maybe he'll forgive you if you're very sincere about it.' (Boyne, 2006 :30)

## **CONCLUSION**

After analyzing Bruno in John Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, the researcher can concludes these followings. Bruno is the main character of novel *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* because he is the important character who has most of actions. Bruno can be categorized as round and dynamic person. It is because he has complex traits. His personality has changed from the beginning till the end of story. Furthermore he is described as a brave boy, innocent, curious, critical and visionary boy.

The main character has several conflicts. He has internal and external conflicts. One of Bruno's internal conflicts is when just arrived to the new house. He misses his old friend in Berlin Karl, Daniel, and Martin. The external conflicts are when Bruno against his mom because Bruno's critic of the new house, Bruno against Grettel because Grettel always pretends as an adult woman and she thinks

that her brother still like a innocent boy, Bruno against father because Bruno can't accept the fact that he has to move from Berlin, and Bruno against Shmuel because they have different perception about soldiers.

Bruno experienced the defense mechanism in some places. He explores around the house especially the concentration camp. In that camp, he can meet his best friend, Shmuel. Bruno goes to that camp every afternoon after finish Mr. Lizz class. Bruno lives in Nazi era, which all military stuff dominates all aspect of life in Germany. Bruno's father is a commandant, that's why he lives close to the concentration camp.

Bruno as the main character Bruno did some defense mechanism In order to calm his anxiety. He uses sublimation and projection to reduce his anxiety. Bruno does all these things unconsciously. He does not realize that all he did purpose to calm his anxiety. In sublimation, Bruno does some activities such as Exploring, playing and making a friend. While in projection, Bruno does another way such as blame the situation in the new house, looking for social justification, looking for a protection, and blame father's job.

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