

IMPACTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF PROTAGONIST'S INNER CONFLICT IN THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS NOVEL BY JOHN BOYNE

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Abstract

This research examines the impact and the consequences of the protagonist's inner conflict in John Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* through Karen Horney's theory of inner conflict and neuroticism. The research investigates how Bruno, the novel protagonist, deals with the impact and the consequences of his inner conflict on the storyline. The research explores how environmental changes significantly affect Bruno's development, identity, and interactions in the narrative. The problem begins with Bruno's move from Berlin to Out-With, a concentration camp for Nazi prisoners. Bruno sees firsthand the horrific environment, torture, and injustice of the new place. Each storyline has conflicts and obstacles that make Bruno's inner conflict worse. This research uses qualitative analysis, which is expected to produce an understanding of protagonist development when dealing with the impact of inner conflict on children in a social context. The impact of Bruno's inner conflict is significant, affecting various aspects of his life and actions, causing unhappiness and oppression. Bruno felt deeply unhappy and depressed, experiencing isolation and an inability to express his feelings, which often led to feelings of loneliness and alienation. This research aims to explore the impact of inner conflict on the psychological and social development of children, particularly in the context of historical trauma such as the Holocaust. The novel serves as a vehicle to discuss the effects of witnessing violence and trauma on children, which is a significant issue in psychology and child development studies. The protagonist, Bruno, experiences a range of emotions and behaviours as a result of his exposure to the harsh realities of a concentration camp, which reflects broader concerns about how such environments can affect a child's mental health and identity formation. This research also appears to be motivated by the desire to understand how individuals, especially children, cope with and are affected by their surroundings, particularly in extreme or adverse conditions.

Keywords: Impacts, Inner Conflict, Holocaust, Nazi, Jews.

INTRODUCTION

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas (2006) by John Boyne is a poignant novel that explores the severe psychological impact of war and violence through the experiences of Bruno, an eight-year-old boy. This study focuses on how Bruno's inner conflict, triggered by his relocation to a Nazi concentration camp, shapes his personality and decisions. Using Karen Horney's theory of inner conflict, this research examines how isolation, confusion, and moral dilemmas affect Bruno's mental state and interactions, culminating in tragic consequences. This analysis aims to highlight the significant role that unresolved inner conflict plays in shaping identity, especially in hostile environments like those depicted during the Holocaust.

This research aims to explore the concept of inner conflict as articulated by Karen Horney and its manifestation in individuals, particularly children, through the experiences of the protagonist, Bruno. By examining the various factors that contribute to Bruno's inner conflict—such as feelings of isolation, environmental influences, and the dynamics within his family—this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the psychological complexities at play. Furthermore, it will investigate the psychological impacts of unresolved inner conflict on Bruno's emotional well-being, behavior, identity development and also the consequences throughout the narrative.

A significant aspect of this research is to highlight the role of interpersonal relationships, especially with authority figures and peers, in shaping Bruno's inner conflicts and moral dilemmas. Ultimately, this research aims to discuss the broader implications of inner conflict on personal growth and development, particularly in the context of historical trauma as de-

icted in the novel. Through this analysis, the study seeks to illuminate the profound effects of inner conflict on the psychological and emotional landscape of individuals in extreme circumstances.

Karen Horney defines inner conflict as a struggle between opposing desires, impulses, or needs within a person. These conflicts arise when individuals are torn between different psychological drives or values, often resulting in anxiety, tension, and emotional distress. Horney emphasizes that inner conflict can lead to neurotic behaviors if it remains unresolved, affecting how individuals perceive themselves and their relationships with others. Horney describes inner conflict as follows:

“The inner conflicts of a person are essentially struggles between different ways of dealing with life, struggles that generate anxiety, indecisiveness, and neurotic tendencies. These conflicts are a core part of human experience but can lead to significant psychological distress when not managed properly” (Horney, 1945, p. 15). This passage emphasizes how inner conflicts are deeply ingrained in personal development and can manifest in various ways if not addressed constructively.

In exploring the inner conflict of the protagonist in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, we can draw parallels with Kino's character in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. The journal *The Development of Psychosocial Characteristics in John Steinbeck's "The Pearl"* discusses how the mistrust experienced by Kino reflects the profound impact of his social environment.

For instance, it states, “Steinbeck's portrayal of mistrust is shown when Kino and Juana's desperate attempt to seek medical aid for their son Coyotito vividly exposes the harsh reality faced by marginalized communities, shattering Kino's trust not only in the medical establishment but

also in societal structures perpetuating economic discrimination” (Putrayuda & Thohiriyah, 2024, p. 7). This illustrates how Kino’s inner conflict is rooted in his experiences within an unjust society, a theme that resonates with the psychological journey of Bruno in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*.

Furthermore, the journal notes, “Kino’s journey in the novel prompts questions about his evolving identity and the complexities of his trajectory, where his sense of self undergoes a transformation fraught with inner conflict” (Putrayuda & Thohiriyah, 2024, p. 11). This quotation underscores how Kino’s shift in identity due to his inner conflict relates to the challenges he faces in seeking self-discovery. It parallels Bruno’s struggle to understand his position in a world filled with social boundaries, creating complexities in his identity development.

As Horney suggests, inner conflict can lead to a variety of psychological symptoms, including fear, depression, and impaired decision-making skills. Recent research supports this notion, demonstrating that inner conflict is closely related to psychological distress and maladaptive coping strategies. Horney’s theory posits that individuals can employ different interpersonal strategies to overcome inner conflicts and associated anxieties. By effectively utilizing these strategies, individuals can empower themselves, reduce feelings of fear and hostility, and cultivate closer relationships, all of which contribute to personality integration.

In line with this perspective, a study conducted by Denny et al. (2017) examined the impacts of inner conflict on the character Rinrin. Their findings indicated that Rinrin’s inner struggles not only led to emotional turmoil but also culminated in tragic events, highlighting the serious implications of unresolved inner conflicts.

Furthermore, Alwisol (2014) identifies three primary strategies for handling inner conflict: moving toward people, moving against people, and moving away from people. These strategies represent different approaches individuals may take in navigating their emotional challenges.

Adding to this discussion, Kroger (2007) emphasizes the importance of effective interpersonal strategies for resolving inner conflicts and promoting personal growth. This aligns with Horney’s assertion that adopting healthier interpersonal approaches can significantly diminish inner conflict and foster a more integrated and authentic sense of self. In her theory, Horney delineates three main interpersonal strategies that individuals utilize in addressing their inner conflicts. These strategies serve as crucial tools for individuals seeking to navigate the complexities of their emotional experiences and achieve greater psychological well-being.

The finding by Kroger is not far from the assertion of Horney that adoption of healthier interpersonal approaches can result in reducing inner conflict and a more integrated and authentic sense of self. In her argument, Horney defined three main interpersonal strategies people use in dealing with inner conflict. There are:

Moving Toward Others

Karen Horney explains the concept of moving toward others as one of the three main interpersonal strategies individuals use to cope with inner conflict. This strategy is driven by a deep desire for affection, approval, and support, often stemming from feelings of helplessness or insecurity. People who adopt this approach tend to depend on others for emotional validation and protection. They may become overly compliant or submissive in relationships, seeking harmony at the cost

of their own needs. Horney highlights that this strategy can be a way of coping with anxiety and fear but does not resolve the underlying issues, potentially leading to further neurotic tendencies.

“Moving toward others is characterized by a desire to seek affection and support due to feelings of helplessness, resulting in behaviors where individuals overly conform to the wishes of others to gain approval and protection” (Horney, 1945, pp. 46-47).

This concept is relevant in analyzing how individuals, especially those experiencing emotional distress or inner conflict, may lean on external relationships to feel secure, though this does not necessarily address the core of their inner struggles.

Moving Against People

Karen Horney explains moving against others as another strategy individuals use to cope with inner conflict. This approach is characterized by aggressive and hostile behavior, where individuals feel a strong need to dominate or defeat others in response to a perceived hostile environment. People who adopt this strategy often exhibit competitive, combative tendencies, aiming to assert their power over others as a defense mechanism against feelings of vulnerability or insecurity. They may blame others for their own struggles and are often motivated by a desire to protect themselves from perceived threats by controlling or overpowering those around them.

“Moving against others is characterized by aggressive behavior and a feeling of wanting to defeat or take revenge on the hostile environment, reflecting a deep-seated fear of vulnerability masked by the need for control” (Horney, 1945, pp. 73-74).

This insight is significant when examining individuals who respond to inner

conflict by externalizing their struggles through aggression, seeing others as opponents to be overcome rather than as potential allies.

Moving Away from People

Karen Horney identifies moving away from others as a defensive strategy employed by individuals who feel isolated, misunderstood, or overwhelmed by interpersonal relationships. This approach involves emotional withdrawal and a preference for detachment as a way to avoid the potential pain of intimacy or conflict. People who adopt this strategy tend to isolate themselves from others, creating emotional and psychological distance to protect their inner world. While this strategy might seem like a form of self-protection, it often leads to feelings of loneliness and can prevent individuals from forming meaningful connections. “Moving away from others is a strategy used by those who experience a sense of loneliness and misunderstanding, leading them to withdraw emotionally and avoid close relationships as a way to protect themselves” (Horney, 1945, p. 85).

Horney’s moving against people and moving away from people strategies differ significantly in their response to inner conflict. While moving against people involves aggression, domination, and hostility as a way to assert control over a perceived hostile environment, moving away from people is characterized by withdrawal, detachment, and avoidance of intimacy. In moving against people, the individual seeks to confront and overpower others, using aggression to mask vulnerabilities. In contrast, moving away from people reflects an avoidance strategy, where the individual distances themselves to avoid being hurt, preferring isolation over emotional engagement. Both strategies, however, arise from unresolved inner conflict and serve as de-

fense mechanisms against feelings of insecurity and fear.

Dissociative behaviour, on the other hand, in a manner similar to the aforementioned personality traits, results in an individual having a strong tendency or yearning to avoid extreme intimacy and close relationships. Such individuals tend to be independent and self-reliant, cautious in getting themselves in situations where one cannot help but be dependent on others, and have a fear of close relationships. This style is then linked with the difficulties present in deep and meaningful relationships, the reoccurrence of vulnerability exposure, or behaviours related to emotional closeness (Dawood, et al., 2018).

Those with a detached interpersonal style stay far away from trusting others and feel pressed to disclose their feelings, further cementing autonomy and dependence. This detachment intensifies feelings of loneliness and difficulty in making significant relationships, reflective of bigger problems in managing emotional needs and the needs of relationships with people (Carlson et al., 2021).

METHOD

In analyzing the novel *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* by John Boyne, literature research and qualitative methods are used to collect data from Boyne's literary works and relevant supporting concepts. Purbani (2010), defines qualitative research as focusing on an in-depth understanding and qualitative description of social phenomena, culture, or human behaviour, by prioritizing meaning, characteristics, and context over numerical measurement. This analysis is grounded in Karen Horney's theory of inner conflict, which states that unmet emotional needs will lead to feelings of insecurity, anxiety, and neurotic tendencies. Using this framework, the research explo-

res Bruno's inner conflict and their impact on his social interactions and personal developments, highlighting the role of environmental and social factors.

Karen Horney's theory, though originating in the 1940s, remains highly relevant today, especially in understanding the dynamics of inner conflict and its psychological influence on social and emotional behavior. One reason for its continued relevance is its comprehensive humanistic approach. Horney's theory emphasizes how inner conflict can profoundly affect an individual's psychological and social development. This is particularly applicable in analyzing characters like Bruno, who faces environmental pressures, loneliness, and the inability to express his emotions. Horney's three strategies for dealing with inner conflict—moving toward others, moving against others, or moving away—offer a clear framework for understanding Bruno's response to his new environment, his relationship with Shmuel, and how he deals with authority figures.

Furthermore, Horney's theory holds significance in the context of trauma. Her ideas about how an unsupportive social environment can lead to feelings of insecurity and neurotic tendencies in children are still highly relevant today. Children experiencing extreme situations such as war, forced migration, or bullying exhibit similar patterns of inner conflict. Bruno's inner struggles closely mirror those of children enduring such trauma, highlighting how feelings of insecurity and powerlessness can create long-lasting psychological impacts—a concept that remains a central focus in modern research on trauma.

Horney's theory also aligns with modern developments in psychology, particularly in the area of cultural psychology. She integrates psychological principles with

cultural and social contexts, making her work relevant in exploring the effects of cultural trauma and societal pressures. This approach is particularly useful for literary analyses of characters living under totalitarian regimes or violent environments, like Bruno. Moreover, current research on anxiety, depression, and other psychological issues often traces these conditions back to unresolved inner conflict and insecurity, concepts that Horney explored extensively. Studies on childhood trauma, bullying, and unsupportive environments continue to apply ideas from Horney's work to explain these psychological challenges.

Horney's theory also provides valuable insights into changes in identity and behavior. Her concepts are not limited to her historical period but are adaptable to various contexts, both past and present. The conflict between individual desires and external pressures, as seen in Bruno's experiences, remains relevant to many contemporary situations in which children or adolescents must navigate identity changes and social pressures. Horney's framework allows for a deeper understanding of how inner conflict can shape personal development and behavior, making her theory a versatile tool for both psychological and literary analysis in the modern era.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Inner Conflict Factors

Horney identifies various factors that contribute to the development of inner conflicts, including unmet emotional needs, early childhood experiences, and societal pressures. These factors can lead to significant struggles within an individual, resulting in anxiety, indecisiveness, and neurotic tendencies. According to Horney, inner conflict arises when there is a clash between one's desires, beliefs, and external expectations, which can significantly affect

personal growth and emotional well-being.

"Inner conflict is rooted in opposing forces within the personality, influenced by various factors such as early emotional experiences, social pressures, and unmet needs. These factors create a sense of division within the self, leading to anxiety and other neurotic symptoms" (Horney, 1945, pp. 32-33).

This passage emphasizes that inner conflicts are not solely the result of individual desires or impulses but are also shaped by external factors like societal expectations, early relationships, and emotional experiences. Horney explains that when these influences clash with an individual's inner needs or values, it creates a division within the personality, leading to unresolved tension and potential neurotic behaviors. In this research, there are several factors that lead to Bruno's inner conflict, including:

Family Dynamics

Bruno's relationship with his family is a pivotal factor that shapes his emotional landscape and inner conflict throughout *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. His father's authoritative role as a Nazi officer is a profound sense of fear and confusion in Bruno. This creates a power dynamic that prevents him from expressing his thoughts and emotions openly.

Bruno is caught in a world where obedience is expected, and questioning authority is discouraged. His mother, while caring, appears overwhelmed and conflicted about their new life at Out-With, often caught between her husband's demands and her own misgivings about the Nazi regime.

The lack of open communication within the family further isolates Bruno, as he finds himself unable to articulate his fears or feelings about the drastic changes in his life.

For instance, he feels that “Nobody seemed to care how I felt” (Boyne, p. 78), highlighting the emotional neglect he experiences.

This absence of familial support not only compounds his feelings of isolation but also leads to a deeper internal struggle, as he grapples with his need for connection in a disorienting environment. Bruno’s relationship with his family exemplifies how a lack of emotional dialogue can stifle a child’s ability to process complex emotions, ultimately contributing to his feelings of confusion and despair.

Environmental Context

The oppressive environment of the concentration camp has a profound impact on Bruno’s mental state and exacerbates his inner conflict. After moving from the familiar comforts of Berlin to the harsh and unwelcoming reality of Out-With, Bruno experiences disorientation and confusion. The stark contrast between his previous life—filled with friends, games, and familial comfort—and the brutal surroundings of the camp creates a psychological upheaval that he struggles to navigate.

As he witnesses the brutality inflicted upon the prisoners, particularly the violence against Pavel, Bruno finds himself grappling with moral confusion and ethical dilemmas.

He observes, “Bruno had never seen anyone treat another person so cruelly, and it confused him greatly” (Boyne, p. 148).

This moment signifies a critical point in Bruno’s emotional development, as he struggles to reconcile the innocence of his childhood with the harsh and often terrifying reality he now faces. The atmosphere of danger and fear that permeates the camp fosters a pervasive sense of anxiety within Bruno, intensifying his internal turmoil and contributing to the tragic conse-

quences of his actions.

The environmental context, with its vivid portrayal of oppression and inhumanity, serves as a constant reminder of the moral complexities that Bruno must confront, making his inner conflict even more pronounced.

Friendship with Shmuel

Bruno’s friendship with Shmuel serves as both a refuge and a source of conflict, significantly influencing the consequences of his inner turmoil. In a world where he feels increasingly isolated and alienated, Shmuel provides companionship that alleviates some of Bruno’s loneliness.

Their friendship becomes a crucial emotional anchor for Bruno, offering him a sense of connection in a landscape that feels hostile and overwhelming. However, this bond also exposes him to significant risks, particularly as he begins to grasp the implications of their respective circumstances. Bruno’s desire to help Shmuel and connect with him leads to pivotal decisions that ultimately shape his fate.

When he boldly states, “Let’s do it. Let’s go and find your father” (Boyne, p. 205)

The evidence reflects not only his loyalty to Shmuel but also his naivety about the dangers that lie ahead. This moment illustrates how the friendship complicates Bruno’s understanding of loyalty, morality, and the harsh realities of their worlds.

While the relationship offers an escape from his feelings of isolation, it also becomes a catalyst for his tragic end, emphasizing the intricate relationship between personal connections and the broader social context in which they exist. The bond between Bruno and Shmuel highlights the innocence of childhood friendship, but also the tragic consequences that arise from such relationships in an environment

marked by hatred and division.

Childhood Innocence and Naivety

Bruno's childhood innocence and naivety profoundly shape his interpretation of the world around him, significantly impacting the consequences of his actions. His simplistic understanding of complex issues, such as the Holocaust and the roles people play within it, leads him to underestimate the dangers he encounters in his new environment.

Bruno's belief that "they're just like you and me" (Boyne, p. 167) epitomizes his inability to grasp the severity of the situation and the moral complexities at play. This statement reveals his innocent view of human relationships, highlighting his struggle to comprehend the deep-seated prejudices and injustices that define his world. While his innocence protects him from fully understanding the brutality surrounding him, it ultimately renders him vulnerable to the consequences of his decisions.

As Bruno navigates his interactions with Shmuel and the adults in his life, his naivety acts as both a shield and a liability, complicating his ability to respond appropriately to the dangers around him. This juxtaposition of innocence and danger emphasizes the tragic nature of Bruno's journey, as his lack of awareness regarding the realities of the concentration camp leads to fatal consequences that reflect the broader themes of loss and the destruction of innocence in the face of evil.

Cultural and Social Context

The broader cultural and social context of World War II and the Holocaust plays a crucial role in shaping Bruno's experiences and conflicts. The pervasive ideology of the Nazi regime creates an environment filled with fear, prejudice, and discrimination, profoundly affecting Bruno's understanding of morality and

identity. As he witnesses the social divisions around him, particularly the treatment of Jews and other marginalized groups, he becomes increasingly aware of the harsh realities of his world.

The societal norms and expectations imposed by the regime complicate his moral development, contributing to his feelings of confusion and helplessness. This complexity is evident when he reflects on the treatment of Shmuel and others, struggling to comprehend why people are judged based on their identity.

Bruno's innocent observation that "They're not different at all" (Boyne, p. 167) underscores the tragic social divisions he begins to recognize, illustrating the internal conflict arising from societal pressures and prejudices.

This societal backdrop serves to heighten Bruno's confusion and moral dilemmas, forcing him to confront the stark realities of a world torn apart by hatred and intolerance. The external pressures of this cultural context further intensify his inner struggle, making it increasingly difficult for him to reconcile his innocence with the violent ideologies that permeate his environment.

Internal Psychological Struggles

Bruno's internal psychological struggles are a critical factor influencing the consequences of his inner conflict. As he grapples with feelings of guilt, confusion, and fear, he navigates the complexities of his new environment, which heightens his internal turmoil. These emotions create cognitive dissonance as he tries to reconcile his innocent view of the world with the brutal realities he witnesses.

For instance, after denying his friendship with Shmuel to Kotler, Bruno feels a profound sense of guilt that manifests in his thoughts and actions. He admits, "It's

not fair. I'm not a soldier. I'm just a boy" (Boyne, p. 134), capturing his struggle with the weight of expectations placed upon him and the moral complexities of his world. This internal conflict intensifies as Bruno attempts to process his emotions, leading him to increasingly isolate himself from his family and friends.

His inability to articulate these feelings exacerbates his loneliness and confusion, ultimately culminating in tragic consequences. Bruno's psychological struggles highlight the broader themes of innocence lost and the profound impact of societal pressures on individual morality. His journey serves as a poignant reminder of the vulnerabilities faced by children in times of war and the complexities of navigating a world filled with moral ambiguity.

Inner Conflict Manifestation

There are 3 manifestations for people who experience inner conflict, including:

Moving Towards People

Bruno, who feels alienated, lonely, and has endless inner conflicts, finally tries to find another way in his new environment by secretly adventuring around his house. Because basically, Bruno's soul is an adventurous soul who always plays and explores with his friends in Berlin every day, but that activity has just disappeared since his move to out-with.

Bruno was also initially hesitant to embark on the adventure, because he was always warned by his family not to leave his house, let alone to adventure through the forest, across which lies the concentration camp for Nazi prisoners. And when he finally did venture out, she was surprised to find a boy her own age sitting behind an electric fence wearing striped pyjamas. And that's where Bruno first met Shmuel. This made Bruno finally show his intenti-

on to establish a friendship with Shmuel, although initially he felt hesitant.

His desire to interact with Shmuel and build a friendship is an example of his drive to approach and understand others around him, even in difficult and challenging situations. This reflects Bruno's attempt to overcome loneliness and isolation by seeking authentic and empathic human connections, which is central to the concept of moving towards others.

"We're like twins," said Bruno. "A little bit," agreed Shmuel.

Bruno felt very happy all of a sudden. A picture came into his head of Karl and Daniel and Martin, his three best friends for life, and he remembered how much fun they used to have together back in Berlin and he realized how lonely he had been at Out-With (Boyne, 2006, p.109-110)

The quotation above proves that Bruno forgets the awfulness and sadness of the place as he finds friends his own age who feel the same way. Although they are separated by an electric wire, it doesn't matter to Bruno. After that moment, Bruno always visits Shmuel secretly, even bringing him food that he steals from his kitchen. As Shmuel is very thin and tired, Bruno empathizes with him and cares for him, which brings them closer together.

However, with each day that passed, he began to get used to being at Out-with and stopped feeling quite unhappy about his new life. After all, it wasn't as if he had anybody to talk to any more. 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.

Bruno's meeting with Shmuel made them best friends because they were the same age and understood each other, despi-

te being from very different backgrounds. However, this happy meeting for Bruno also became a new problem that eventually worsened his inner conflict. This was due to Bruno's lack of courage to admit to Kotler that he was friends with Shmuel.

"Shmuel! Here!" said Bruno, stepping forward and putting the slices in his friend's hand. "Just eat them. There's lots left for our tea - you don't have to worry about that." (Boyne, 2006, p.170)

The situation described above marks the beginning of a problem that eventually led to the worsening of Bruno's inner conflict. Initially, Bruno's intentions were good; he wanted to feed Shmuel when he saw him at his house helping to wipe glasses for his father's party. However, Lieutenant Kotler discovered this, which caused chaos.

"Did you steal something from that fridge?"

"No, sir. He gave it to me," said Shmuel, tears welling up in his eyes as he threw a sideways glance at Bruno. "He's my friend," he added.

"Your ... ?" began Lieutenant Kotler, looking across at Bruno in confusion. He hesitated. "What do you mean he's your friend?" he asked. "Do you know this boy, Bruno?" (Boyne, 2006, p.170).

Both Shmuel and Bruno were very scared of the situation. Bruno thought that if he admitted he was friends with Shmuel, he would not be prepared for the consequences. Remembering the incident when Pavel spilled the wine and was severely beaten by Kotler, Bruno became stressed and anxious, worrying about his own fate if he confessed.

Bruno wished he could run away. He hated Lieutenant Kotler, but he was advancing on him now, and all Bruno could think of was the afternoon when he had seen him shooting a dog and the evening when

Pavel had made him so angry.

"I've never spoken to him," said Bruno immediately. "I've never seen him before in my life. I don't know him." (Boyne, 2006, p.174).

Bruno ultimately chose not to acknowledge Shmuel as someone he knew. He didn't consider what would happen to Shmuel afterward; his primary concern was his own safety. But this decision was wrong. After the incident, Bruno was haunted by guilt for his cowardice. He felt compelled to make up for his guilt toward Shmuel by doing anything he could.

Every afternoon that followed, Bruno returned to the place in the fence where they met, but Shmuel was never there. After almost a week, he was convinced that what he had done was so terrible that he would never be forgiven, but on the seventh day, he was delighted to see that Shmuel was waiting for him, sitting cross legged on the ground as usual and staring at the dust beneath him.

"Shmuel," he said, running towards him and sitting down, almost crying with relief and regret. "I'm so sorry, Shmuel. I don't know why I did it. Say you'll forgive me." (Boyne, 2006, p.174).

After that terrible incident, Bruno never forgave himself. He was always haunted by guilt towards Shmuel and developed an even deeper hatred for Kotler. Shmuel was beaten by Kotler because of Bruno's mistake in not admitting that he had given Shmuel the food. Bruno seemed to curse himself, and from then on, he always tried to do everything for Shmuel to make up for his guilt. This exacerbated Bruno's inner conflict.

Moving Against People

Although not very prominent, there are moments where Bruno shows frustration and a desire to assert himself against

the injustices he perceives, especially in his interactions with Kotler and other authority figures. These instances of aggression are manifestations of his inner conflict and his attempts to navigate the hostile and oppressive environment imposed by the concentration camp. His confrontations with figures like Kotler reveal his underlying struggle to make sense of the cruelty and brutality around him. Although he is usually passive, these moments of assertiveness highlight his growing awareness of the moral and ethical dilemmas he faces.

Bruno's frustration often comes to the surface when he witnesses the unfair treatment of others, especially Shmuel and Pavel. For instance, in the novel *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* by John Boyne, Bruno is puzzled and deeply disturbed by the treatment of Shmuel, who is merely a boy like himself but is treated harshly due to his position on the other side of the fence. Bruno's confusion and emotional response are evident when he reflects on the arbitrary nature of the division between them:

"He had never seen anyone so unhappy before, and the more he looked at Shmuel, the more he felt that he should do something about it." (Boyne, 2006, p. 118).

This feeling of injustice evokes a deep emotional response in Bruno, prompting him to question the arbitrary divisions and rules imposed by the adults around him. Similarly, Bruno's reaction to Kotler's violent outburst against Pavel after the accidental spilling of wine reveals a critical moment of moral reckoning for him. Bruno's growing awareness of moral values and the ethical implications of authority is a central theme in his character development (Smith, 2010).

The disparity between his father's authority and the compassion he believes should guide one's actions becomes increasingly apparent. In one instance, Bruno

reflects on this inner conflict:

"It was as if someone had taken a large, heavy brick and smashed it into his head. He couldn't believe what he had just seen and felt confused, as though he was suddenly aware of something he had always known but never really understood." (Boyne, 2006, p. 145).

Despite the fear these authority figures still have in him, Bruno's interactions with them are characterized by moments of defiance and courage. His small acts of rebellion, such as secretly visiting Shmuel or expressing his disapproval of Kotler's behaviour, are significant. They signify his inner struggle to uphold a sense of right and wrong in an environment where such values are constantly undermined.

As Bruno's awareness of the atrocities around him grows, so does his inner conflict. He struggles to understand why his father, whom he admires, is part of a system that perpetuates such atrocities. This conflict is especially evident in his silent protests and the questions he begins to ask. Bruno's moral awakening, though gradual, underscores the profound impact of his environment on his developing conscience. It is through these moments of frustration and decisiveness that Bruno's character evolves, showing his journey from innocence to a more nuanced understanding of the complexities and injustices in the world.

Moving Away from People

Bruno's sense of isolation and misunderstanding is most evident in his secretive meetings with Shmuel. His reluctance to share this friendship with his family, coupled with his need to create an emotional distance from the camp's horrors, highlights his coping mechanism to maintain his innocence and inner world.

These clandestine meetings serve as

a refuge for Bruno, providing him with a semblance of normalcy and companionship amidst the overwhelming and terrifying reality of the concentration camp. By keeping this friendship hidden, Bruno attempts to preserve a part of his life that is untouched by the surrounding brutality and dehumanization. This secrecy underscores the deep divide between his innocent perspective and the harsh truths he is slowly beginning to comprehend.

His interactions with Shmuel offer a stark contrast to the ideologies espoused by his family, particularly his father, and reflect his inner struggle to understand and reconcile these conflicting viewpoints. In essence, Bruno's secret friendship with Shmuel becomes a crucial element of his emotional survival, illustrating his desperate need to cling to his sense of humanity and moral integrity in an environment designed to strip them away.

"I have a new friend," he began. "A new friend that I go to see every day. And he'll be waiting for me now. But you can't tell anyone." "Why not?"

"Because he's an imaginary friend," said Bruno, trying his best to look embarrassed, just like Lieutenant Kotler had when he had become trapped in his story about his father in Switzerland. "We play together every day."

Bruno's secret friendship with Shmuel and his reluctance to share this with his family is a classic example of distancing himself from others. This behaviour reflects his growing need to distance himself emotionally from those who are part of the oppressive environment at Out-With, including his family. This behaviour reflects his growing need to distance himself emotionally from those who are part of the oppressive environment in Out-With, including his family. By creating a priva-

te world with Shmuel, Bruno carves out a space where he can experience genuine connection and friendship, which contrasts sharply with the cold and often hostile interactions within his family and the camp.

Bruno's decision to label Shmuel as an imaginary friend when talking to his sister Gretel is a defense mechanism to keep this friendship sacred and protected from the adverse influences of the adult world. This lie signifies his attempt to create a boundary between his innocent world and the harsh reality imposed by his father and other authority figures. In doing so, Bruno essentially moves away from the people who represent this harsh reality, seeking solace in the only way he knows how-through his secret friendships.

Moreover, Bruno's emotional withdrawal from his family is indicative of his inner struggle to reconcile the love and respect he has for his parents with the growing awareness of their complicity in the atrocities taking place around him. This inner conflict causes him to retreat further into his own world, where he can maintain a sense of normalcy and moral integrity. His secret encounters with Shmuel become an essential element of his psychological survival, a safe place where he can express his true self without fear of judgment or reprimand.

Bruno's behaviour exemplifies the concept of distancing from others as a response to an overwhelming and stressful environment. By emotionally and physically distancing himself from his family and the horrors of the camp, Bruno attempts to maintain his innocence and moral compass. His friendship with Shmuel serves as a lifeline, giving him the emotional support and connection he desperately needs, even as he struggles to make sense of the world around him. This inner and external dis-

tance reflects his deep need to protect his inner world from the corruption and brutality around him.

Inner Conflict Impacts & Consequences

The terms impacts and consequences are often used interchangeably, yet they possess distinct meanings that are important to understand, especially in academic and analytical contexts.

Impacts refer to the broader effects or influences that an event, action, or situation has on individuals, communities, or environments, encompassing both positive and negative dimensions. They are qualitative in nature and can manifest as changes in behavior, attitudes, or relationships, illustrating how something shapes the psychological, social, or emotional landscape over time.

In the context of Bruno's inner, the impacts include feelings of isolation, confusion, and guilt, reflecting the emotional conflict he endures as a result of his circumstances. Conversely, consequences are the direct results or outcomes that follow specific actions or decisions and are often seen as inevitable consequences stemming from preceding events. They tend to be more concrete and can be immediate or long-term, usually implying negative outcomes. In Bruno's case, the consequences of his decisions, such as denying his friendship with Shmuel and ultimately choosing to help him, lead to the tragic events that culminate in his death. Thus, while impacts encompass a wide range of influences on an individual's emotional and social state, consequences focus specifically on the outcomes that arise from particular actions or choices, highlighting the interplay between broader effects and direct results in understanding the complexities of human behavior and relationships.

Inner Conflict Impacts

Feeling of Isolation and Loneliness

Bruno's inner conflict leads to a profound sense of isolation following his move to Out-With. He loses not only his friends but also the familiar comforts of his previous life in Berlin. This sudden upheaval creates a deep sense of loneliness that manifests as despair and unhappiness, significantly hindering his emotional development. The lack of companionship contributes to a growing sense of alienation, which Bruno struggles to articulate.

He expresses his feelings of isolation when he states, "I want to go home," while tears fill his eyes (Boyne, p. 47).

This poignant moment underscores his emotional distress and longing for the security of his old life. As the story progresses, Bruno increasingly withdraws from his family, who are unable to provide the emotional support he desperately needs. His secretive friendship with Shmuel becomes a coping mechanism, allowing him to escape his loneliness but also leading to further isolation.

For instance, he confides, "Everything here is horrible... I hate this house, I hate my room, I hate it all" (Boyne, p. 56), revealing his growing frustration with his situation and his inability to express these feelings to his family. This withdrawal not only exacerbates his feelings of isolation but also emphasizes the impact of his inner conflict on his relationships with those around him.

Moral Confusion and Identity Crisis

Bruno's inner conflict significantly complicates his moral understanding and identity. He finds it difficult to fully comprehend the realities of the concentration camp and struggles to make sense of his father's role as a Nazi commander. This confusion is illustrated by his reaction to

the cruelty he witnesses, especially towards individuals like Pavel and Shmuel. Bruno begins to question the actions of those around him, reflecting his inner struggle to discern right from wrong in a morally ambiguous world.

He observes, “Bruno had never seen anyone treat another person so cruelly, and it confused him greatly” (Boyne, p. 148). This revelation highlights the deep-seated moral confusion he experiences as he grapples with the stark realities of the camp.

Additionally, Bruno faces an identity crisis as he feels trapped between his old life in Berlin and his new life in a terrifying environment. The move to Out-With forces him to confront a new reality that challenges his understanding of self.

He articulates this crisis when he reflects, “Nothing feels like home anymore. I don’t feel like myself here” (Boyne, p. 72). This statement underscores Bruno’s struggle to maintain a sense of identity in an environment that feels hostile and unfamiliar, highlighting the emotional toll of his inner conflict.

Guilt and Regret

Bruno’s inner conflict is further complicated by feelings of guilt and regret, particularly after he denies his friendship with Shmuel in front of Lieutenant Kotler. This denial not only signifies a moment of moral failure for Bruno but also intensifies his inner conflict. He knows that his actions were wrong, which creates a haunting sense of guilt that follows him throughout the story.

He expresses this guilt when he admits, “I’ve never spoken to him. I’ve never seen him before in my life” (Boyne, p. 174). This betrayal of his friend reflects Bruno’s fear and helplessness in a world that demands conformity and silence. His guilt

becomes a driving force behind his desire for redemption, pushing him to help Shmuel find his father. However, this attempt at redemption is tragically belated, as it occurs just before the story reaches its devastating conclusion.

When Bruno decides to assist Shmuel, stating, “Let’s do it. Let’s go and find your father” (Boyne, p. 205), it illustrates his final effort to atone for his earlier betrayal. Yet, this choice ultimately highlights the fact that Bruno’s inner conflict remains unresolved, leading him to make perilous decisions that culminate in his tragic fate.

Inability to Cope with an Oppressive Environment

The transition to the concentration camp represents a profound loss of safety for Bruno, who struggles to cope with the oppressive environment that surrounds him. He finds himself unable to express his emotions to his family, which exacerbates his feelings of confusion and fear.

The chaos and violence he witnesses contribute to his psychological distress, leaving him feeling lost and vulnerable. He articulates his confusion when he reflects, “He couldn’t understand why Father would bring them to such a place” (Boyne, p. 104). This highlights Bruno’s inability to process the brutal reality of his new life.

Furthermore, he fails to integrate the experiences he witnesses—violence, injustice, and fear—into the framework of his upbringing, leading to cognitive dissonance. His attempts to find normalcy through his friendship with Shmuel ultimately fail to alleviate the confusion and emotional burden he carries.

He confesses, “Bruno couldn’t make sense of it all. Why were people here treated so differently?” (Boyne, p. 142). This statement underscores his inner struggle as he grapples with the contradictions between his sheltered upbringing and the

harsh realities of life in the concentration camp.

Failed Social Relationships

Bruno's inner conflict leads to an unhealthy dependence on his friendship with Shmuel, as he has no other companions in the camp. This relationship becomes his sole refuge from his feelings of isolation and serves as a coping mechanism amidst the overwhelming pressures he faces.

He acknowledges this dependency, noting, "Bruno realized how lonely he had been at Out-With. Shmuel was his only friend" (Boyne, p. 109). However, this reliance on Shmuel also exposes both boys to significant risks.

Additionally, Bruno's inner conflict profoundly impacts his familial relationships. He struggles to communicate his feelings with his parents, particularly his father, which deepens his sense of alienation.

He reflects in frustration, "Father didn't understand. Mother didn't understand. Nobody seemed to care how I felt" (Boyne, p. 78). This failure to connect with his family not only amplifies Bruno's feelings of isolation but also illustrates the long-term consequences of a lack of emotional support for children in high-pressure environments. The disconnection from his family exacerbates his inner conflicts, leaving Bruno more vulnerable to the emotional and psychological challenges he faces.

Inner Conflict Consequences

Bruno's journey in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* culminates in a series of tragic consequences that arise from his inner conflicts and decisions throughout the narrative. One of the most significant consequences is his eventual death, which serves as the ultimate outcome of his naivety and inability to fully comprehend the

implications of the world around him.

As Bruno grapples with feelings of isolation and confusion about his identity in the oppressive environment of the concentration camp, he finds solace in his friendship with Shmuel, a boy on the other side of the fence. However, this friendship puts him at significant risk. Bruno's innocent decision to help Shmuel find his father leads to a heartbreaking climax.

When he states, "Let's do it. Let's go and find your father" (Boyne, p. 205), he unwittingly crosses into a territory that is fraught with danger and horror. This moment underscores not only his desperation for connection but also his tragic ignorance regarding the reality of the camp.

The consequences of his decision manifest when both boys are rounded up and taken away, ultimately leading to their deaths in the gas chamber. This tragic end highlights the devastating impact of the systemic violence and cruelty inherent in the Nazi regime, as well as the vulnerability of children caught in such circumstances.

Furthermore, Bruno's tragic fate reflects the broader themes of innocence lost and the moral complexities faced by individuals in times of war. His death is not merely a personal tragedy; it symbolizes the loss of innocence for countless children during the Holocaust. The narrative poignantly illustrates how Bruno's naivety and lack of understanding about the realities of his father's role in the Nazi regime contribute to the fatal consequences of his actions.

He does not grasp the significance of the striped pajamas worn by Shmuel and the horrors that they represent. In one poignant moment, Bruno muses, "They're just like you and me. They're not different at all" (Boyne, p. 167), showcasing his inability to recognize the dire implications of the social divide that the camp represents.

This innocence, while endearing, ultimately becomes a source of fatal consequences, as it blinds him to the dangers he faces.

In summary, the consequences experienced by Bruno in the novel are multifaceted and deeply tragic. His innocent attempts to navigate a complex world result in his death, which is both a personal loss and a reflection of the historical atrocities committed during the Holocaust. Bruno's fate serves as a powerful reminder of the innocence destroyed by conflict and the critical importance of understanding the realities of one's environment. It illustrates the devastating outcomes that can arise from a lack of awareness, making his tragic end not just a personal failure but a poignant commentary on the broader human condition during one of history's darkest times.

CONCLUSION

Bruno's inner conflict in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* profoundly affects his emotional state, behaviour, and ultimate fate. The novel illustrates how unresolved inner conflict can lead to significant psychological impacts and tragic consequences.

Bruno's feelings of confusion, fear, and isolation stem from his lack of understanding about his new environment and his father's role, which contribute to his emotional instability. His inner conflict also fosters increased curiosity and empathy, driving him to seek understanding and support his friend Shmuel, even at great personal risk.

Despite his good intentions, Bruno's inability to effectively cope with his inner conflict results in a series of tragic events, culminating in his and Shmuel's deaths. This outcome highlights the severe impact that inner conflict can have on an individual's psychological well-being and decision-making.

Bruno's story underscores the critical importance of emotional support and resilience in navigating challenging situations.

The tragic consequences of his attempts to resolve his inner conflict emphasize the need for understanding and addressing emotional struggles to prevent such devastating outcomes. Thus, Bruno's experiences serve as a poignant reminder of the complex interplay between inner conflict, moral choices, and their far-reaching impacts in the face of violence and oppression.

We can see that the terms stripes and pyjamas symbolize two distinct elements, each with its own symbolism, rather than just a singular concept.

Stripes serve as a symbol of restriction and confinement. The stripes on the clothing, particularly within the context of Nazi concentration camps, represent both physical and mental imprisonment. Each individual in the camp is required to wear a striped uniform that homogenizes their identity, reducing them to mere numbers subservient to the system. Additionally, stripes symbolize the loss of freedom and individuality. The people in the camp lose their personal identities, trapped in a rigid social structure reflected by the endless lines that signify strict rules and limitations.

On the other hand, pyjamas traditionally represent comfort and safety, typically worn for sleep and associated with warmth and security. However, in the context of the concentration camps, the pyjamas worn by the prisoners ironically symbolize the loss of comfort and security. They sleep in fear and suffering, far removed from the original meaning of sleepwear as a protective and comforting garment. Furthermore, pyjamas signify vulnerability and weakness. In the camp, prisoners are forced to wear clothing that does not shield them from the harsh physical and mental conditions

they endure, reflecting their deprivation of all forms of protection.

When these two elements are combined in the striped pyjamas worn by prisoners in the concentration camps, their combined meaning underscores the erasure of human identity and total oppression—both physically and psychologically. Thus, while stripes and pyjamas can stand as separate symbols, together they form a deeper symbol of suffering, oppression, and the loss of humanity within the Nazi concentration camps.

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