Marginalization as Perceived by Children in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and *Life is Beautiful*: a Post-colonialism Perspective

THESIS
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Sarjana Pendidikan

Arum Widya Wardani
112008088

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
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Abstract

Marginalization as Perceived by Children in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and *Life is Beautiful*: a Post-colonialism Perspective

Racism is an inseparable part of human history and a common issue depicted in movies. A movie itself is more than just entertainment. It may imply human values, character building, social conflicts, art, history, as well as racism. Racism is an adults’ issue. Therefore, it is interesting to examine how children perceived marginalization toward the Jewish as depicted in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and *Life is Beautiful*. To reach that aim, the discussion section was divided into three parts i.e. racism, slavery, and genocide which are portrayed in the scenes in both movies. From Post-colonialism perspective supported by a brief discussion on children’s characteristic, the analysis and interpretation reveal that children behave mostly by imitating what the adults do around them or by listening to adults’ explanation about things. This makes them perceived marginalization differently from adults because the idea of marginalizing others is far beyond their mindset who think all human are the same and; therefore, should be treated as equal. By reading this study, the readers of this paper will get a better understanding of how children perceive marginalization, particularly one addressed to a different race since children have a different way of perceiving marginalization from adults.

Keywords: marginalization, children, racism, post-colonialism

A movie is more than just an entertainment. As Indrasuwita argues, a movie reflects people’s cultural mindset and the spirit of the era (1). When watching movies people will get some lessons about life, such as human values, character building, social conflicts, art and history. Due to the development of technology, people nowadays will be able to see what was going on in the past through clear moving pictures equipped with good quality of sounds and effects rather than just read history books. Therefore, they can learn about many aspects of human life in the past through movies.

One issue which is frequently depicted in films is World War II, in which nations and countries in three different continents were involved in an armed conflict or war. Among those involved were the German (Nazi) and the Jewish. In 1940s, the Jewish were dehumanized by the Nazi, i.e. when they were treated badly as if they were not human beings, because the dehumanizers believed that they owned or occupied the dehumanized ones. Dehumanization is a form of marginalization, as are slavery, discrimination, genocide, or in
short, any terms that refer to those who are unrepresented. Edward Said defines marginalization as,

Means of seeing other people as the “others” and inferior to the powerful ones, in this case between the East and the West. The East is also seen as homogenous, the people there are anonymous masses, rather than individuals, their actions determined by instinctive emotions (lust, terror, fury, etc.) rather than by conscious choices or decisions (qtd. in Barry 193).

Western people heartlessly oppressed the East, the countries which they colonized because they saw the East as the “others”. That era which was begun around AD 1400 is called imperialism when European explorers found new land and trade route (enotes.com). The East was seen as less valuable nations than the West. Moreover, the West also saw the East as inferior as they thought that they had more power and even rights compared to the Eastern people.

The Jewish, one of the races which represent the East was dehumanized by the Nazi in the era of World War II. It then becomes interesting issue to be made into movies as it was a great tragedy in human history. There are a number of movies reflecting the conflict between the Nazi and the Jewish such as The Pianist, Schindler’s List, The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas, and Life is Beautiful. The last two movies were chosen to be analyzed in this study because they portray a part of the history of the Jewish and Nazi, where Holocaust, a systematic attempt of German authorities during World War II to kill all Jews wherever they are to be destroyed as a group, took place (Hawaii.edu).

More specifically, the two movies were selected because they portray marginalization from the perspective of the children characters who were also victims of the Nazi. This is an interesting perspective since children are not aware about racial differences. As Graham and Cohen’s argue, “Regardless of age, race, or sex, and for both relationship measures, children showed a greater bias favoring same-sex peers than same-race peers (355).” It is clear that children think that any races are the same and; therefore, people should be treated in a similar
way. Children are more interested in friendship with the same sex regardless their races. It must be very confusing for them seeing the racial bias of the adults around them who concerned very much on their differences of races.

Therefore, this study aimed to answer the following research question:

How is marginalization represented in The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas and Life is Beautiful as perceived from the children’s perspective?

To find out the answer of the above research question, post-colonialism would be utilized as a tool of analysis. It is employed because post-colonial literature is literary works which simply reflects the effects of colonialism (O’Reilly 6), and the two films portray colonialism. Colonialism which is closely related to marginalization evokes deep emotion or even traumatic feeling to the marginalized ones. As John McLeod maintains, colonialism is perpetuated in part by justifying to those in the colonizing nation the idea that it is right and proper to rule over other peoples, and by getting colonized people to accept their lower ranking in the colonial order of things – a process we can call ‘colonising the mind’ (18). Therefore, colonialism is a systematic way to rule others for such a long time and it deeply affects the marginalized ones.

Since colonialism generally refers to Western and Eastern nations, Edward Said’s notion of Orientalism would also be relevant. In his theory, Said criticizes the West for being too cruel in marginalizing the East.

There is a specific expose of the Eurocentric universalism which takes for granted both the superiority of what is European or Western, and the inferiority of what is not. European cultural tradition of Orientalism means a particular and a long-standing way of identifying the East as “Other” and inferior to the West. This means, in effect, that the East becomes the repository or projection of those aspects of themselves which Westerners do not choose to acknowledge (cruelty, sensuality, decadence, laziness, and so on). At the same time, and paradoxically, the East is seen
as a fascinating realm of exotic, the mystical, and the seductive. (qtd. in Barry 194-194).

In short, I can conclude Said’s *Orientalism* is saying that the West is logic, superior, subjects, main ones, and masculine; while the East is illogic, inferior, objects, othered, and feminine.

Supporting Said, John McLeod also criticizes the West (white/colonizer) for marginalizing the East (colored/colonized). He writes, “That imaginative distinction that differentiates between ‘man’ (self) with ‘colored man’ (other) is an important, devastating part of the armoury of colonial domination, one that imprisons the mind as securely as chains imprison the body (21).” The domination of the colonizer toward the colonized is very vivid and it prevents the colonized to behave like a real ‘man’. Because they are colored, they were seen as ‘the other’, not a real ‘man’.

My search for the previous studies about these two movies took me to Alice Curry’s work entitled “The ‘Blind Space’ that Lies Beyond the Frame: Anne Provoost’s *Falling* and John Boyne’s *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*.” In her study, Alice explored the complex dynamics of cultural inclusion and exclusion and illuminated the dangers of cultural ignorance by examining the disabling effects of blindness and prejudice (66). Because I would analyze the same movie (*The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*) using the concept of marginalization and othering as perceived from children’s perspective, this study is different from Curry’s.

Through this study I hope that we as adults can learn something precious from little kids. The readers of this paper will get a better understanding of how children perceive marginalization, particularly one addressed to a different race since children have a different way of perceiving marginalization from adults. The findings are expected to give readers a more thorough understanding of marginalization.
Review of Literature

This study is done from the perspective of postcolonialism, particularly marginalization, because the movies employed for this study depict the German’s marginalization toward the Jewish.

Edward Said, defines marginalization as,

…means of seeing other people as the “others” and inferior to the powerful ones, in this case between the East and the West. The East is also seen as homogenous, the people there are anonymous masses, rather than individuals, their actions determined by instinctive emotions (lust, terror, fury, etc.) rather than by conscious choices or decisions (qtd. in Barry 193).

By viewing the East as inferior “others”, the West put the East far below them. The East is also unimportant to the West that they are “anonymous masses”, meaning they do not have identity nor voice. Besides, implied in the above quotation is the West’s seeing the East as stupid, emotional, and illogical creatures.

Said also points that rarely did Western travelers in these regions ever try to learn much about, or from, the native peoples they encountered. “Instead, they recorded their observations based upon commonly-held assumptions about the Orient as a mythic place of exoticism, moral laxity, sexual degeneracy and so forth (qtd. in McLeod 22).” By making assumption that the East was the Orient, it can be seen clearly that the West tend to marginalize the East. This marginalization is done because of the ego of the colonizers who do not want to know properly about the colonized ones, including their culture. They come as strangers, but they want to rule over.

In addition, there are three basic concepts of colonialism (Barry 193-198) that will also be used in this study. The first one is there is a space between the culture of colonizers (West) and the colonized (East) which is called “cultural gap.” The colonizers do not want to
be similar with the colonized because they think that the colonized people are not equal to them. The second basic is that there are natural and human exploitations which benefits the colonizer. On the other hand, the colonized will always suffer because they have to work very hard, but they never receive any advantages from of their hard work. Then the third basic concept of colonialism proposed by Barry is there is marginalization of the colonized people. Marginalization means pushing people to the very corner so that they will be considered as the very last choice. As a part of dehumanization, marginalization refers to treating people as if they are not human. When seeing the colonized, the colonizer will ignore them as if they are invisible and if they have to have contact with the colonized ones they will do it in a very cruel way, such as by giving very loud commands, physically insulting them, etc.

As McLeod writes in his critique to the West’s marginalizing the East, “That imaginative distinction that differentiates between ‘man’ (self) with ‘colored man’ (other) is an important, devastating part of the armoury of colonial domination, one that imprisons the mind as securely as chains imprison the body (21).” The domination of the colonizer toward the colonized is very vivid and it makes limitation for the colonized ones to behave like a real ‘man’. Because of they are colored they are seen as ‘the other’, not a real ‘man’.

Stressing McLeod’s opinion about othering, Frantz Fanon through his famous book *Black Skin, White Masks* writes “The white world is the only honorable one, barred me from all participation. A man was expected to behave like a man. I was expected to behave like a black man (qtd. in McLeod 21).” As a black, Fanon is treated differently. Obviously, the issue of racism is one way of marginalizing the others. Fanon looked at the cost to the individual who lives in a world where due to the color of his or her skin, he or she is rendered peculiar, an object of derision, an aberration (McLeod, 20). Being treated like an object means being treated like stuffs. This already gives a clear idea that the colonized ones are not human.
DISCUSSION

To analyze how marginalization perceived by children in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and *Life is Beautiful*, I divide the discussion into three parts, i.e. racism, slavery, and genocide as portrayed in both movies.

A. Racism

According to Kroeber a race is “a distinct population of humans distinguished in some ways from other humans. Generally, people observed races based on skin color, facial features, ancestry, genetics, and national origin” (124). They differ one and another mostly by seeing physical appearances. It either directly sustains or proposes to establish a racial order, a permanent group hierarchy that is believed to reflect the laws of nature. Since there are countless ethnic groups, racism commonly happens in our society. Sometimes it even leads to a greater conflict which influences many aspects. One of the racism issues found in the world is between the Nazi and the Jewish.

The issue of racism is indirectly reflected in both movies through what the characters do and say. When Bruno, an eight-year old white boy, the main character of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, asks his father about a group of people wearing striped pyjamas, whom he thinks are farmers, his father introduces him to racism.

Bruno: “Why do the farmers wear pyjamas? I can see them from my window.”

Bruno’s father: “The thing is Bruno, those people, can you see they are not really people at all?”

Hearing his father’s answer, Bruno seems confused. He thinks that those people in striped pyjamas are farmers because he sees them cultivating the land in the camp and Bruno even doesn’t know they are called the Jewish who are in the process of vanishing led by his father. By stating that those people are not human at all, Bruno’s father humiliates them and teaches
his son racism. To Bruno, the group of people attracts his attention because they wear pyjamas as reflected in his question to his father. The white boy doesn’t consider them lower or humiliating although their bodies are shaking and their clothes are always dirty. He doesn’t understand what his father means by saying they are not really people at all. It is the first time for Bruno to be told that there are other people who are not really human. In his mind, he is pretty sure that ‘the farmers’ are humans, just like him and his family.

In the white families in both movies, parents tell their kids that they are different with the Jewish because the white occupy higher social position than the Jewish. It was the explanation that Bruno got when he asked her mother whether he could play with those “farmers’” children or not.

Bruno: “I can still play with them though? The children.”

Bruno’s mother: “I don’t think so, Bruno. No. Like you say, they are a bit strange. A bit some..., well, they are different. Don’t worry darling, we’ll find you some new friends but they won’t be coming from the farm.”

He doesn’t understand about the differences told by his parents because he thinks that they are just the same. Though Bruno notices that the Jewish are physically a bit different from his family, which is one sign of racism according to his parents, but it doesn’t matter for him. What Bruno means by ‘the children’ is Smuehl, whom he secretly met and loves to play with. He finds no differences at all between them. As Graham and Cohen explain, children do not consider race and age as their preference in choosing friends. Instead, they differ friends based on gender (355). For children, they will feel more comfortable of having friendship of the same sex peers rather than race peers. Bruno also thinks that finding a friend to play with in such a small rural area far away from everything familiar in the crowded town where he used to live, is an amazing thing. Moreover, his new friend is a male whom he can play football with.
Similarly, in *Life is Beautiful*, racism is also taught from adults to children. In a kindergarten school of white children only, the teacher asked the inspector to explain to the kids about the differences of their race and the others.

Teacher: “The good inspector has been sent here to explain to you about the proclamation of race which has been signed by the most enlightening Italian scientist. He will, and without no doubts will do it, demonstrate to us that our race is really superior, the best of them all. Go ahead inspector.”

Inspector: “I’ll explain our race...”

Teacher: “…is superior.”

Children from their young age have been told there are differences of race and white race is the most superior among other races. Because the inspector is sent to give speech about racism in a school, it is obvious that making the children aware of racism is a part of the curriculum. Therefore, in *Life is Beautiful*, the transferring process of teaching children about racism is more systematic and planned than the one in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Children are easy to imitate what the adults around them do and they also tend to believe what the adults tell them. As supported by Bhroin and Kennon who said, “this protective impulse is situated within a constellation of concepts and assumptions about children’s state of innocence and their attendant vulnerability to what might be considered to ‘dark’ ideas and experiences (12).” What is meant by ‘dark’ ideas here is the imagination of the children. Children often wander about things happening in their surrounding and many of them can become their first experience of something. Often times they can be really unsure about what is right and wrong. It is the duty of the adults, especially their parents, to consequently stir their children’s way of thinking into a good one. Parents also tend to see children’s state of innocence and mistreat them by telling children what’s right or wrong. Therefore, if white children are told that colored children are not really human, they will have a mindset as told so.
Gretel, Bruno’s older sister, is an example of how Bruno’s parents are successful enough in teaching racism to their children. Bruno becomes more and more confused with the things happening around him, but it seems like nobody can explain anything to him. His father is too busy with his army and his mother is busy too with household stuffs. The only explanation that he gets is from Gretel.

Bruno: “But Dad just sat there.”
Gretel: “What did you expect him to do? The Jew deserved it.”
Bruno: “Can I ask you something, about the farm?”
Gretel: “Oh Bruno, you didn’t still think it’s a farm, do you? It’s a camp, well, could a work camp. For the Jews, obviously.”
Bruno: “Just Jews? Because they are the best workers?”
Gretel: “They are not in there because they are good, silly. They are not good at anything. They are in there because they are evil. They are the enemy.”
Bruno: “The enemy? But I thought we are fighting...”
Gretel: “They are evil, Bruno. Evil, dangerous ones. They are the reason we lost the great war.”

By saying that the Jewish are silly, evil, dangerous, and not good at anything, Gretel expresses a racist remark. She uses words which reflects mocking. Even she calls the Jewish as the enemy and evil, but she also doesn’t realize that she is a racist already. Forms of racism can be both verbally, like mocking, and physically, such as torturing. This is supported by Simmone who states that racism can trigger feeling or act of hatred or violence (10). When a particular race can’t accept the existing of another race they may feel insecure and worried if another race will defeat them in the society. This may cause violence among races. As shown in both movies, Aryan race can’t accept the existing of the Jewish and they marginalize the Jewish in some ways such as being racist, making the Jewish slaves, and killing them.

Gretel’s explanation seems to confuse Bruno even more. He doesn’t know which side he should choose. He’s pretty sure that the Jewish are kind and weak, so how they can be their enemies. On the other hand, he also thinks his father is a good person.

Bruno: “Dad isn’t horrible, is he? He’s a good man.”
Gretel: “Of course, he is.”
Bruno: “But he is in charge of a horrible place.”
Gretel: “It’s just horrible for them, Bruno. We should have to be proud of Dad now more than before. He is making this country great again.”

Here we can see the differences between Gretel and Bruno. Gretel feels proud of their father who sends the Jewish into horrible place and humiliates them. She learns it from the home teacher who comes regularly to their house. She is even aware that the ‘horrible place’ is just horrible for the Jewish. Her ignorance of the Jewish’ fate implies that she is a racist already. On the other hand, Bruno still can’t believe Gretel’s words easily. When Gretel says they have to be more proud of their Dad he doesn’t say he is agree. He is just being silent. He is still unsure that what their father does, which is humiliating the Jewish, is right. Bruno believes Jewish people are good, like Smuehl.

In Life is Beautiful, white children also become racists. Joshua, a five year old Jewish boy, once wanted to join white children in a play ground, but he was caught by their maid when the maid called them for meals. Fortunately, the maid thinks he’s a white kid. Joshua then has dinner with white kids. He’s very happy because he can eat many delicious food, unlike what he has been eating usually in the camp. He sits with two white kids at a table, but those white kids do not talk to him. The white children look at him with questioning face as if they are wondering they’ve never seen this kid before and he looked different and dirty. Joshua doesn’t understand why white people treat him (the Jewish) differently, especially to his father, Guido.

Guido talked to Joshua during the time when Joshua had meal with white kids. The maid of the white children saw that.

The maid: “I told you talking to the children is prohibited!”
Guido: “I’m sorry.”
This makes Joshua feel pity. Though he has been told by Guido that they are in a game and he has to follow the rule, which is not talking to everyone except his father, he is still in doubt because white people always talk to his father in loud voice. His doubtness is expressed when he asked his father to just go home and leave the game.

Joshua: “Papa. Let’s just go home. I’m tired of this game. They (white) always talk loudly. And I want to see Mama too.”

Joshua doesn’t like the way white people talk. Whenever Nazi soldier come into their hut, he always hides behind his father’s back. He thinks that white people are scary. He’s afraid of loud and attacking voice from strangers. According to Bergman and Escalona, unusual sound and noises seem to have an extraordinarily intensive impact upon these children at a very early age (333). They will be afraid if being shouted at or people talk to them in loud command. Joshua may not know that the white talk that way because they are racist and would like to show their power, but he is definitely sure that they are scary, not only because they talk loudly, but also because they always carry gun to anywhere.

B. Slavery

In both movies the picture of slavery is shown in a vivid way which is also related to the previous issue discussed, i.e., racism. In this case, racism leads to slavery because it’s not based on economonic condition, but because Nazi are racists to the Jewish. There are several Jewish being used as slaves to help around in the property in Bruno’s house. None of the helpers are white people. They can be considered slaves because they have to work all day long without receiving any payment. As supported by Hargrove, who was once a slave herself, “If I was an employee, I would be making more money. I would get better because I
would be getting a paycheck and people wouldn’t look down at me like I was crazy anymore (qtd. in Boris 28).” Therefore, the Jewish working in and around Bruno’s house can be called slaves.

Slavery can be done in groups or individual. *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* depicts individual slavery. As experienced by Pavel, an old Jewish doctor who worked for Bruno’s family as a maid. One of Pavel tasks is serving the family while they are having meals. Worse than what Hargrove describes about how slaves are treated, Pavel not only worked for free, but was also treated cruelly.

When Pavel was serving the family dining one evening, he did it slowly because he was sick. His slowness made the commandant shouted at him. When he spilled the wine he was pouring into the glass, he was hit by a soldier. It made Bruno felt quite surprised. Bruno heard Pavel screamed a lot and loudly. Bruno even saw the cruelness of his father’s soldier who hit Pavel violently. He showed confused face, but at the same time he also didn’t dare to ask to his parents to help Pavel. Bruno’s confused face describes how he feels toward the situation. He feels pity for the old Jew but on the other hand, he also thinks about his father. He looked at his father, then turned to the Jew who was being hit, turned to his father again, and turned to the Jew again. Bruno seems questioning and hopes his father will do something, but he doesn’t.

It was the last time Bruno saw Pavel in the house. He couldn’t find him anymore the next day after that horrible dinner.

Bruno: “When will Pavel be back? Mom?”

Gretel (Bruno’s older sister): “Never, stupid!”

Bruno’s question implies that he wants to know what Pavel’s condition after being hit. It shows that he cares to the Jew and he wants to know about Pavel. However, Gretel’s answer
stresses that the old Jew has nothing to do anymore with the family. He is mistaken and he deserves his punishment. Again, Gretel presents an image of a racist.

Similarly, in *Life is Beautiful*, slavery also becomes a confusing issue for the main character here, a 5-year Joshua. In this movie, slavery is shown in groups. He is always alone while his father works as a slave in the concentration camp with the other Jewish people. Even when Joshua’s father is sick, he still has to work. In the camp, all the Jewish have to work really hard and being watched by Nazi soldiers. One little mistake will make them get heavy punishment. That’s why they are afraid of the soldiers and they can’t protest because they do not have any other choices except obeying whatever Nazi soldiers command them to do.

As slaves, they are treated very badly inside the camp such as being given very terrible food, very awful place to sleep, very inappropriate clothes, etc. The condition of the camp itself is far from appropriate to live in. The camps consists of many huts where the Jewish live in groups. They are also being separated between men and women. Inside the hut, there are only hard boards for them to sleep on. They also only wear striped pyjamas and not allowed to wear any other clothes.

Back to *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, since Bruno wants to see Shmuel’s family, Smuehl brings him entering the concentration camp to see his father. His father is the only family he still has. It is the first time for Bruno to enter the camp. He once watched a video about the camp showing a happy and wealthy life inside the camp, but the fact that he experiences inside the camp is a totally different one.

Bruno: “Smuehl, can we go to the cafe or something?”
Smuehl: “Cafe?”
Smuehl shows a confuse faced, and so does Bruno. The video that Bruno saw in his father’s room was just made to please the soldiers. Bruno thought that the camp was an amazing and
fun place, but then he begins to realize that it’s a scary place. It is dirty, dark, smells bad, no happy children playing around, and no entertainment at all. People there who are just working and sleeping looked ill, hopeless, weak, shaking, and terrible in their striped pyjamas.

As Peter Barry says, there are human’s exploitation which benefits the colonizers where states of marginality, plurality, and perceived ‘otherness’ are seen as source of energy and potential change (131). Everything the slaves do are just for the sake of their masters which are seen as the source of energy. In Life is Beautiful, the Jewish work so hard in the concentration camp. They have to move huge and heavy steel back and forth. A scene shows Guido and the other Jewish men work but they feel the work is just too much for them and they feel sick.

Guido’s friend: “I can’t stand it anymore. This is too heavy. Let us stop for a while.”
Guido: “No, we can’t. We have to survive. If they (Nazi) know we are sick, they’ll separate us with our room mates and we’ll never be back again.”

The quotation expresses that the workers can not stop working. If they do, they will get really heavy punishment, which is being brought to the gas chamber. The penalty also happens to those who are unable to work. The Jewish who work as slaves are those who are adults and healthy. The ill ones, children, and elderly are vanished soon. It’s the reason why Guido always told Joshua to stay inside their hut, so that he will not be caught by the white soldiers because he’s not wearing striped pyjamas like the other Jewish. White people want to take benefit as much as possible from the slaves. That’s why they only want healthy adults to work and kill those who are not useful. Joshua once visited his father in the building where he worked because he is bored of being alone in their hut.

Joshua: “Papa!”
Guido: “Joshua! What are you doing here? I told you to stay inside the hut!”
Joshua: “I’m bored, Papa. I have nothing to do in the hut. What are you doing here?”
Guido: “I have to move these steels so that we can get more points to make us win the game. You, just go back to the hut before the enemy sees you here.”
Joshua: “I don’t want to win the game. I want to go home.”
Guido: “But we almost win, Joshua. Don’t worry, I’ll be back to the hut very soon.”
Joshua then ran back to their hut. In his age, he believes all his father tells him, that they are in a big gam, not in a concentration camp and that they are going to win the big prize which is a tank. He can’t digest what actually happens around him, marginalization from the Nazi toward his people. He even doesn’t realize he is being closer to a tragedy, Holocaust. He is just being tired of living inside the camp and how he really miss their home. He once said that the ‘game’ separates him from seeing his mother. Therefore, it can be said that Joshua perceives marginalization as something unpleasant. He also doesn’t like the camp where they have to live in because it’s dirty and he has no friends to play with.

C. Genocide

Rummel defines Genocide as one of the worst moral crimes a government; i.e. any ruling authority, including that of a guerrilla group, a quasi state, a Soviet, a terrorist organization, or an occupation authority) can commit against its citizens or those it controls. He adds that the major reason for this is what the world learn about Holocaust, the systematic attempt of German authorities during World War II to kill all and every Jew no matter where they were found-to destroy Jews as a group (Hawaii.edu). Those who do that are totally heartless because they even don’t care if there are children in the groups of the Jewish that they kill.

Genocide is shown pretty clearly in both movies. Related to the previous issue discussed in this study, slavery depicted in both movies, are parts of a systematic process of genocide. The Jewish were forced to move to concentration camps where they were going to be killed in groups. While waiting for their turns to be killed, they had to work as slaves for the Nazi’s benefits.
To Smuehl, genocide means sudden loss of people close to him without any reasons. As the boy told, he lost his grandfather. He didn’t know why his grandpa suddenly disappeared. He doesn’t know that his grandfather is already dead because Nazi doesn’t need weak and old man who is not strong enough to work. For Bruno, what he does seems to be just doing something fun, like visiting a friend’s house when he enters the camp. Bruno and Smuehl are not aware of the danger in front of them.

Bruno: “Maybe I should go home.”
Smuehl: “But what about my Papa?”
Bruno: “Yeah.”
Smuehl: “We’ll check our hut first.”

As a friend, Bruno wants to help Smuehl looking for his father. His loyal feeling to the friendship keeps him to stay inside the camp, even though he realizes already that the camp is really strange, unlike what he imagined before. Unfortunately, they couldn’t find Shmuel’s father. Instead, Jewish people in the Shmuel’s hut were forced to go to a room where they would be vanished. Shmuel and Bruno didn’t have any idea of what was going on there, so they just followed the crowd entering the “death room” in hope that they would find Shmuel’s father. However, it was the last time they could breathe the fresh air.

Soldiers: “Wake up! Wake up!”
Bruno: “What’s happening?”
Smuehl: “I don’t know.”
Bruno: “It’s alright. I think we just wait here till the rain stops.”
Soldiers: “Clothes off!”
A Jew: “Where are we going?”
Other Jew: “No, it’s just a shower.”
Bruno: “Shower?”
They still do not realize it was genocide. It is something confusing because they have never thought about it. Yet it arouses their curiosity. They think that they are going to have shower, something fun, playing with water. For Bruno, when they have to put their clothes off, Bruno can clearly see the difference of skin between his and the Jewish, but he doesn’t think that it creates any difference, he isn’t a racist. He still sees that every human are just the same, regardless the difference of the color of their skin. The door of the chamber then closed. Both of the innocent boys are the victims of the cruel genocide which tragically, led by Bruno’s father itself who has high position among Nazi’s soldiers.

In this movie, genocide that was done by Nazi is pretty successfull, even it also got a white children as a victim. However, the movie doesn’t give a clear ending as we don’t know whether Nazi still continues the process of genocide or stops after their leader’s son died in it.

In the second movie, Life is Beautiful, genocide was also shown in similar portrayal. The old men and the kids would go first to the “deathly room”, then it was followed by the adults both women and men. The adults went later because the white took advantage of them to work as long as possible, while the elderly and children had no power to work.

Joshua is not aware of the genocide. All he knows is about the game and he wants to get the tank as the first prize. When his father said they have to defeat others to get into the first place, he always follows all his father says. Even when Guido is about to be killed because he went around to search his wife and get caught, Joshua believes that it’s a part of the game. It shows how children’s way of thinking often times is influenced by adults, especially their parents. There is a narration in the movie narrated by Joshua when he already becomes an adult and knows it wasn’t a game. He says, “This is my story. This is the sacrifice my father made. This was his gift to me.” Therefore, when he was a kid he doesn’t
realize the sacrifice his father did for him and how Guido doesn’t want Joshua to be afraid if he knew what actually was going on.

However this movie has a happier ending compared to the previous one. The Jewish are released from the camps because Nazi soldiers have to face a war and they can’t take care of the camps any more. Even though Guido was killed in the camp when he looked for Joshua, but in the end, Joshua and his mother are released from the camp together with other Jewish.

CONCLUSION

Both movies portray how children perceived marginalization as expressed in racism, slavery, and genocide. To the children characters in the movies, marginalization is scary, confusing, and even illogical because they think everybody is just the same. Generally, marginalization doesn’t exist in children’s mindset. Yet, adults around them have a role to influence how they should think and behave.

Racism in both movies is shown to be transferred from adults to children in formal and non-formal setting as as well as through verbal and non-verbal ways. As children are innocent, they act differently. Some of them just follow whatever their parents tell them, but there are some children who think more critically, like Bruno in The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas and Joshua in Life is Beautiful. To both of them, racism is confusing.

The second form of marginalization discussed in this study is slavery. Slavery shown in both movies are done in groups and individually. However, To Bruno, it is a confusing unfamiliar idea. He considers those who help around in his house, part of the family. When a Jew who was once a maid in Bruno’s house disappeared after being hit by one of his father
soldiers, he feels pity and sad. To Joshua, slavery makes him lonely. It was the time when his father has to work so hard all day and it makes him feels lonely inside their hut of the concentration camp.

In both movies genocide becomes the ending of the story. However, those two portray it in different ways. The first movie has a sad ending with the succesful holocaust done by Nazi so that genocide removes a race. Bruno sees genocide as having a shower together in a big bathroom, because the soldier asked them to put off their clothes before entering the gas chamber. In the second movie, genocide leads to a happier ending because even though Guido, the father of Joshua died, but luckily Joshua, his mother, and the other Jewish are released from the concentration camp. Joshua even is not aware of genocide because all he knows is they are in a big game, not in a concentration camp.

After reading this study, the reader are expected to be more sensitive to children since they still have an innocent way of thinking and to be aware of how they should teach children about living together with others peacefully. For further research, there are many movies depicting Nazi’s marginalization toward the Jewish. It’s a very complex issue so it can be analyzed from another perspective.
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