

## ABSTRACT

Made to Order: How English Society Uses the Boarding School System  
to Form the Ideal Boy

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English society uses the British boarding school system as a means to mold children into proper adults. The boarding schools encourage virtues and ideas that society demands of adults and it shuns ideas that society dislikes. This system creates two types of students: those who successfully are reformed by the schools, and those who are unable to become what society demands of them. It is not that these students are not smart or do not show potential, but their inner identity does not comply with the outer identity that society wishes they would embody. By looking at a variety of British literature, both fiction and nonfiction, one can see how different characters are affected by the boarding school system. By comparing these characters, it becomes clear the various positive and negatives aspects of the boarding school system, but even beyond that, it displays the positives and negatives of English society.

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MADE TO ORDER: HOW ENGLISH SOCIETY USES THE BOARDING SCHOOL SYSTEM  
TO FORM THE IDEAL BOY

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## INTRODUCTION

### The Forming of a Proper Schoolboy for a Proper Society

The British boarding school system is made up of a variety of highly prestigious schools that prepare the privileged youth of England as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. As children of the social elite, these children will become the future leaders of English society and must be trained in the ways of such a society. Therefore under the watchful eyes of the headmasters the children are developed into what British society deems the “ideal” student. Vyvyen Brendon explains in her book Prep School Children: A Class Apart Over Two Centuries that the “ideal training for imperial service was the ‘Roman Rule’ of a school like Clifton which according to Newbolt, inculcated the ‘virtues of leadership, courage, and independence’. It also encouraged ‘the sacrifice of selfish interests to the ideal of fellowship and the future of the race’” (Brendon 51). Only by accepting the role that society desires them to fill can the children find success in their life.

By looking at various pieces of literature, from both fiction and nonfiction genres, readers get a glimpse at what school life is like, even if it is a foreign school system. Having attended school in America, I have not experienced the British boarding school system myself, but that is not the only divide separating an outsider from the system. Many cultural differences add to the complexity of trying to understand how the system operates. By allowing the experiences of people who are accustomed to the culture to

guide the reader through the system, the reader can begin to see how each individual's identity grows. Students who grow up in this system develop into individuals due to such factors as isolation, or independence from their parents, sports, one's studies, and art. Some children take this opportunity to grow in their own direction away from their parents. For many this is the first extended period of time they find themselves separated from their parents. How well they handle this greatly influences how successful they will be in school. Other students find their identities in sports, and their physical domination in the school is what gives them a sense of power and authority. On the other hand, the academically-minded students find their identity in their education. They study hard to be able to apply to some of the most exclusive schools in England. Their focus is not on their current state, but rather on what they might become if they simply pass the correct tests, social as well as academic. Even though all of these various forms of identity are found in school, art and artistic expression is the ultimate window into the individual. With art students take whatever is on the inside and externalize it. To some the externalization is found in sports, others in a good book, and even crafts. It is important for all children to be able to be themselves, but this is where some of the issues lie. Society wants only certain virtues to survive the school system. Society has one mold that it wants every child to loosely fill. If the children cannot fill the mold, then they are viewed as of a lower class because they are not proper. Not every student ends up like this though, and many students excel in these schools. If any single entity is to blame, it is not the school system itself, but the society that places all of the expectations and desires on the students and also on the educational system. That is what creates an immense

pressure to succeed on the students and to be the shining picture of perfection that they have been told they should be.

To illustrate this argument, I chose three works of nonfiction and three works of fiction. Taken together, we can see similar issues of identity formation emerging. A memoir offers a unique window into a student's own perspectives, and an excellent example of this genre is Paul Watkins' autobiography Stand Before Your God. Watkins is American, but to his own surprise saw himself educated at the Dragon School in England. As a child he found himself in unfamiliar waters and thus his views and opinions are those of an outsider's. All of the other Dragon students were raised in England. They were accustomed to the culture and the rules that they were supposed to be following. Watkins did not have such privilege. Since Watkins lacked the knowledge of the culture, he reacted with emotion. When the other students were able to hold back their tears, Watkins could not (Watkins 40-41). Thus Watkins presented the reader with an uncensored version of these events. Unlike the other texts, which are written by English authors, Watkins never fully adopted the identity that the Dragon and Eton dressed him in. Instead Watkins embodied a mixed identity. He knew how to handle and survive in the English boarding school system but he elected to return to America to finish his education. Likewise, where one English author might cut back on some of the emotion of his experience, Watkins did not have such reservations. English culture would have one appear strong at all times and never show signs of defeat, such as tears, but Watkins tells it all.

A different sort of nonfictional approach can be found in Vyvyen Brendon's Prep School Children: A Class Apart Over Two Centuries, and as the subtitle suggests, the text

serves as a timeline. Brendon's historical approach tracks the changes in the school system and comments about the pros and cons of each change. The majority of the text deals with issues that arise from the system. The first chapter is titled "A Little Roughing it" and argues that tough conditions built character. Through this text the reader gets an idea about where the school system has come from, and it culminates in the final chapter that discusses what has changed in the modern English boarding school system. During the conclusion, Brendon will play an important role as I discuss how the changes to the modern boarding school effect the various identities being developed. Also Brendon has collected many examples among many well-known Englishmen and other authors and maps out their boarding school experiences.

A third nonfictional approach can be found in Nick Duffell's The Making of Them: The British Attitude to Children and the Boarding School System. In this book, Duffell blends journalism and memoir to produce what might be called "creative nonfiction." Duffell spent ten years as a student in a boarding school and briefly taught at one for about one and a half years. His best credential, however, is that he has received many letters from others. This all began because of a workshop titled "*Boarding School Survivors*" and a matching newspaper column. Duffell writes, "I began to receive letters from complete strangers, some who wrote to the paper, and others who found me independently. These were very emotional and revealing letters from people who said that they were delighted that at last someone was speaking out about this subject" (Duffell 5). Duffell, then, is writing this book not only with his memories but with the aid of each individual who wrote to him. He had opened a topic of conversation that so many

people had been waiting for to be opened, and he quickly became a champion for their cause.

No less than nonfiction, fictional works can also reveal truths about culture and identity. Evelyn Waugh's comedic novel Decline and Fall uses humor and exaggeration to bring out the shortcomings of the boarding school system. What makes this work's perspective unique is that the narrative is presented through the eyes of a completely unqualified teacher. This book is an inside look at the lives of the teachers, and it demystifies them. It illustrates that not every teacher is a paragon of virtue and brilliance. It comments on the theatrical aspect of the school, where the teachers and headmaster simply do what must be done to make the parents happy and keep funds flowing into the school. As long as the parents can believe that their children are being properly educated and exercised then they will keep paying the school. This book provides a glimpse of what a boarding school is like when run poorly.

Although the boarding school is often associated with Britain's past, Kazuo Ishiguro's novel Never Let Me Go has a futuristic setting where the boarding school systems still prevail. This novel places a great emphasis on the student's capacity to create art. This artistic ability, the novel argues, is what proves that the students are worthy of society. Ishiguro focuses on how society views the students and asks what is required of the students. He also shines a slightly more positive light on the school. It is the school that is actively fighting back against a repressive society and trying its best to promote artistic expression. This points to society as the place of error, and the school tries its best to convince society that these students should belong in society.

Perhaps the most famous series set in a boarding school is J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. They are a prime example of everything that can be great about the boarding school system. Hogwarts is a dream come true for Harry, and while at the school he develops into a hero. Several other characteristics develop in most of the students at Hogwarts, even in Draco Malfoy. Hogwarts instills great virtues into its students by having a great staff, who help Harry become the wizard he is destined to become. Without Hogwarts, Harry would still be living with his abusive aunt and uncle in a cramped closet beneath the stairs. Hogwarts is the best thing to ever happen to Harry, and it serves as a great example of what a school should strive for, even if there is no magic in actual schools.

By taking what each book has to offer, one can piece together a broad picture of the boarding school experience. Taken together, these works provide a scale of school performance, so the reader can understand how both good and bad schools operate. There is a wide range of points-of-view, ranging from an adult who survived boarding school to student to teacher. By considering all of these books together I will explore the growth of individuals as they find their identity in their school as well as the pros and cons of this system. By studying these pieces of literature one can become acquainted with English societal expectations and can better understand English culture.

## CHAPTER 1

### The Role of Family Dynamics within the Boarding School

In the majority of cases, the children have absolutely no agency in deciding which school they attend. The school environment, and the expectations that come attached to the reputation of each school, are chosen before the children are born. These factors are determined by family image, history, and tradition. It becomes the duty of the child to fulfil the legacy of the family. This can take form in various ways, the most obvious of which is that the child attends the same school his family has been attending for generations. This way the child becomes a champion of the family in the new generation, ensuring that the family retains relativity. Other times, families may save up money to send their children to better schools, hoping that the new generation will bring new success where previous generations may have failed. Regardless of the motivations behind these decisions, the children do not get an opinion on the matter. They are governed by the actions and identities of their ancestors. This leads to a ceremonious atmosphere inside the schools. Children pick up roles that have been handed down through history. If the children are attending the same school as their parents, it is likely that they will have some of the same teachers. These teachers already know the role that these children will be playing and they know how to act accordingly. This system makes the process of teaching easy and familiar. Problems arise when a child breaks character and is not acting how his family tree suggests he should act. Many teachers will be able to adapt, but cannot help being caught slightly off-guard by the change in behavior. The

children that are sent off to boarding schools look to what is familiar in order to move forward. They look to the only other people that they have had significant interaction with family and mold their behavior in a similar manner.

One of the greatest mysteries in this system is why parents keep sending their children to the same schools that they were forced to endure. Not everyone had a negative experience at these schools, but many people have come forward with horror stories about their school experiences. So why, then, would parents want to subject their children to similar experiences? Maybe the parents believe that the schools have changed over time. Vyvyen Brendon in Prep School Children: A Class Apart Over Two Centuries, writes, “Generation after generation of parents assured their offspring that these schools were less harsh than they had been in their day; but it is only in the last thirty years or so that this claim has had any real foundation” (Brendon 2). The parents have been outside of school for a while at this point and the memories of their experiences have receded with time. What may have been a big deal to a child has been forgotten or palliated as an adult. As members of society, parents want their children to become a part of the same society. So to some parents, boarding school is a necessary evil and in the end the social advantage will be worth the suffering. Nick Duffell, in The Making of Them: The British Attitude to Children and the Boarding School System, shares a letter that a mother wrote about her experience sending her child off to school. Duffell summarizes that, “The mother is obviously torn, but manages to override her instinctual responses with all the familiar rationalizations which are currency in her social class. One of these includes the bizarre idea that the child will benefit from being a temporary member of a country estate. This is so clearly a parent’s aspiration rather than a child’s that it is hard to take

her seriously. . . ‘It’s not until you’re grown up that you know what’s good for children’” (Duffell 44).

Another explanation could be that the parents do this unknowingly. In the previous quote from Brendon, she refers to children as offspring. This is a slightly less personal term than children, sons, or daughters. So instead of making an active decision about this, parents simply send away their offspring when the time is right, just as their parents did to them. It is not a matter of whether or not the parents love their children; it is simply tradition. These experiences will help develop their offspring to be like them, and identical in outlook to every ancestor in the family tree. The children understood this rather well. Brendon states, “It is not so much my purpose to debate these matters as to shed light on the experience of separated children, most of whom did not question why they had been sent away. If they did, they often assumed that their parents simply did not want them at home” (Brendon 2). Deep down the majority of kids did not even wonder why they were being sent away. Somewhere in family culture it is apparently understood that children are to be sent away to school. Even when questions are asked, the questions are not requesting a particular school but are asking about why such practices exist inside of family dynamics.

Whether or not the children are fine with the unavoidable school experience, they have little knowledge of how to interact with others that are not family. In this transition from the family to school, the child brings his knowledge of how to interact with others. So what effect does this have on how a child develops into an individual? The child begins to take social interaction that he had with his family and impose that on his new life at school. Duffell explains that the child “has only just learned the code in his own

family, facing rivalry from his siblings, or whatever behaviors this particular family's mythology demands" (Duffell 33). This statement confirms many things about how one's family is constantly shaping who they grow up to be. Duffell makes it clear that these behaviors are unique to each particular family. That means that no two children from separate families will deal with the experience the same way. Some are only children and are used to having all of the attention, and others constantly have to deal with siblings. Therefore, some kids will be able to adapt to their new environment quicker than others. At other times, the influence of home and family has to be erased. If a family is from an unpopular area and has the distinct characteristics of that area, it is common to drop certain lower-class distinctions in order to succeed. Duffell provides an example of this occurrence when he writes, "Some would have to disown their roots by abandoning their regional accents for the 'standard received pronunciation'. Such losses are deep and can leave an individual with a feeling of being an exile" (Duffell 41). It would seem that in this scenario, the family is relying on the child to bring their family into a higher class. The irony in this idea is that he is effectively exiling himself from the rest of the family. He will lose his accent and his ability to clearly and effortlessly communicate with his ancestors, but this is a gamble by the family to reach a higher class. If the child succeeds, the family will have a form of revival. The old will fade away, but in time the new generation may revive some of the old traditions.

What happens, though, if a child has no parents, such as in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel Never Let Me Go? The students at Hailsham have no parents and therefore lack the knowledge of any form of family dynamics. They spend the entirety of their lives with peers of the same age group. The only time that they have an elder to influence them is at

the schools. This is what drives the searches for their possibles, the people that they are cloned after. They want to know how they are supposed to behave. Normally children learn this by observing their fathers and mothers, but these Hailsham students have no authority on their lives to imprint proper behavior. Since every student at Hailsham lacks unique family dynamics, then everyone at Hailsham should be vastly similar. This, however, is not the case. Tommy is vastly different from the other boys. He cannot make art and express himself. Ruth and Kathy are vastly different in character and temperament. Somehow even without parents, these kids have created unique personalities. In families it is likely that parents and offspring have a learned similarity of morals, virtues, and actions. In his novel, Ishiguro promotes such ideas by the search for possibles. The children have absolutely no idea where they come from, but they use their own morals, virtues, and actions to help narrow down the search. Their parentage, their legacy, is the missing piece of the equation of their life. To find out where they originated would affirm the morals, virtues, and actions that they take. There is an innate need to know where one comes from, and that is what drives one of the conflicts in the novel. These students do not know who or where they come from and they have no legacy to live up to. They have no goal placed in front of them. They have to self-motivate and create their own goals for life. That is a very large responsibility that a child should not have to face alone. In Ishiguro's novel this works out totally fine. The purpose of these students is to be harvested for organs. They are not supposed to become doctors or lawyers. They are to simply exist but not go anywhere important. Sure, they can daydream about what they might be capable of, but in the end Ruth declares that they

come from trash. They have no family history to help carve out a future, they simply exist to be harvested.

A lack of parents is not always an issue. Harry Potter in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone lost his parents when he was just a baby. He cannot remember his parents but throughout the many books he is constantly told bits and pieces about who his parents were by other wizards. Thus, by the end of the series, Harry has a very strong connection to his parents. In fact, the series is full of strong family connections. This is most notably seen in the Houses that the children are sorted into. It is very common that a child is sorted into the same house as his or her parents. Both Ron and Harry are placed into Gryffindor, as were their parents. Draco went to Slytherin just like his father. Harry's placement once again illustrates some innate connection to parents. He did not get to spend a lot of time with his parents. There is no way he could have learned what it meant to be a Potter in the little time he spent with his parents, but he still knew deep down that he belonged in Gryffindor, even though he could have made a fine Slytherin. There are exceptions to this rule, as when a wizard is born to a family that is either half-wizard or not magical at all. Then the wizard has no previous mold to follow, and it is up to him or her to create the mold for the following generations. This could explain why Hermione always has her nose in a book. In order for her to be as successful at school as Draco, Ron, or Harry she has to make sure that she knows what she is doing. She does such a good job of this that she quickly passes up her peers when it comes to knowledge. On the other hand, Harry is a natural wizard and quickly learns what he needs to know. All of these characters follow in their parent's footsteps.

Not every child that has gone to Hogwarts has kept with family traditions. A great example of this scenario is played out by the Black family. The Black family is dominated by Slytherins, and they are willing to do whatever it takes to achieve power. In an act of rebellion, just as Harry is able to communicate to the sorting hat and effect where he is placed, the eldest Black son, Sirius, is sorted into Gryffindor. While many Slytherins favor the mindset of “the end justifies the means,” Gryffindors are all about honor and doing the right thing. Sirius’ rejection of his family values is an attempt to pull his family out of the gutters. As a point of comparison, Regulus Black, who was his younger brother, kept with family values, and was sorted into Slytherin. Regulus was the apple of the Blacks’ eyes. Sirius even admits that Regulus was a better Black than he was. Regulus embodied what it meant to be a Black, while Sirius was trying to turn the family in a new direction (Rowling, Order of the Pheonix 111-112).

In the Black family, Sirius’ break from tradition was very intentional, but in Evelyn Waugh’s Decline and Fall Paul Pennyfeather falls from his family’s good graces after being kicked out of school for accidental indecent exposure. His guardian then proceeds to inform him that his father’s will states that “In the event that your education being finished before that time, he left me with complete discretion to withhold this allowance should I not consider your course of life satisfactory. I do not think I should be fulfilling the trust which your poor father placed in me if, in the present circumstances, I continued any allowance” (Waugh 11-12). Even though this guardian is not Paul’s family, he has the power to represent the family’s best interests, and he has judged that Paul has been a disgrace to the family. The only way for Paul to repair what has been damaged is to get a job and make his own way through life. If Paul were to have avoided

indecent exposure, he would have been a good representative of his family and his guardian would have no option but to give him his allowance.

Students range from a variety of social classes, and this class distinction makes a profound impact on how certain students are treated at school. Waugh introduces this notion by placing an emphasis on Lord Tangent's attendance at Llanabba Castle. In informing Paul about the school itself, Dr. Fagan states that "Many of the boys come from the very best families. Little Lord Tangent has come to us this term, the Earl of Circumference's son, you know. Such a nice little chap, erratic, of course, *like all of his family*, but he has tone" (Waugh 16; italics added). Fagan begins with a broad statement, but he quickly chooses his favorite student. This just so happens to be the student from the highest class in attendance. The other children are also aware of such distinctions. When Paul is trying to take attendance on his first day in the classroom, half of the class claims to be Tangent (Waugh 44-45). This may be the boys being mischievous, but also it could be that by claiming to be Lord Tangent, they are trying to become part of the same higher class to which Lord Tangent belongs. Families in the upper classes want an upper class education for their children. These families have the power to influence England, so the schools take extra care raising their children. A similar idea is seen in Harry Potter. The basis of the entire conflict is the legitimacy of "mudbloods" in the wizarding world. Based on factors that the children have absolutely no control over, they are judged, by a portion of society, as either pure or contaminated. Voldemort's most loyal forces are pure-blooded wizards who do not think that they should be counted as equals to "mudbloods." In both novels, it is clear that the social class of a student's family plays an important role in how they are treated at school.

Every child has certain expectations that they are supposed to reach, and the greater the family, the greater the expectations. But how is the greatness of one's family judged? Paul Watkins in Stand Before Your God remembers the talks that he had with his friends from the Dragon. Watkins writes, “‘No, no, no!’ Cuddly shouted. ‘What did they do in the war and what did they do back in the time of Henry the Eighth and what is your family crest?’ So While Nightingale was railing on Cuddly about how his grandfather had been a boxer in the army and gave people the One-Two punch, I thought about what my family had done hundreds of years before. . . I didn’t think my family had been in any wars, and hadn’t discovered any islands in the South Pacific or been in Parliament. There was a mountain range under the Atlantic Ocean named Watkins Ridge that had been named after my father, and he said it was as big as the Rockies. . . But neither Cuddly nor Nightingale seemed impressed, since the whole thing was underwater and therefore you couldn’t climb it and put a flag at the top” (Watkins 16). Here greatness arises from action. Cuddly wants to know about what wars and what their ancestors accomplished in the past. Nightingale focuses on his boxing grandfather. Paul on the other hand, informs them that a natural formation was named after his father, but the others do not care because there is no action. What good is a mountain if you cannot place a flag on it to claim it as your own? Paul later makes the false claim that his family owns special underwater climbing gear that lets him climb it (Watkins 16-17). Also how far back you can track your family the better. Paul does not know the accolades of his grandfathers, but he understands that he descends from common people. The other students at the Dragon have been rehearsed in their own family histories. That way they can better represent their families. The scene comes to an end as “Cuddlybum was going on about

how he could trace his family back to William the Conqueror and how his family crest had been granted by King Henry the Fourth” (Watkins 17).

With family histories like these, no wonder there is so much pressure placed on children in these settings. Harry Potter is the son of two very powerful wizards, and as it turns out he is the “chosen one.” He has to carry a huge burden during his school days. Not only does he have to attend his classes and develop his wizardry, but if and when Voldemort shows up everyone looks to Harry to be the solution to the problem. It is not coincidence that before he goes into the forest to face Voldemort, Harry speaks to his parents. Before he does his duty he looks back to his family and seeks their advice about the coming fight. Through his parents he manages to find peace as he approaches his death willingly. Another character who has to deal with his family and their expectations is Ron Weasley. Ron voices his frustration to Harry on the Hogwarts Express: “I’m the sixth in my family to go to Hogwarts. You could say I’ve got a lot to live up to. Bill and Charlie have already left –Bill was head boy and Charlie was captain of Quidditch. Now Percy’s a prefect. Fred and George mess around a lot, but they still get really good marks and everyone thinks they’re really funny. Everyone expects me to do as well as the others, but if I do, it’s no big deal, because they did it first. You never get anything new, either, with five brothers. I’ve got Bill’s old robes, Charlie’s old wand, and Percy’s old rat” (Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone* 99-100). The Weasleys, as a whole, are doing great. Their family has gathered tons of accolades; as an individual, however, Ron has no way to fulfil his legacy. Regardless of how well he does, he does not feel that he will be as appreciated as his siblings who have beat him to it. In order to bring pride to his family,

Ron believes that he has to go beyond the deeds of his siblings, and this desire helps drive his acts of heroism.

Family plays a huge role in the lives of these students. Many times school becomes a huge ceremony where each student has a role to play. These roles at the beginning are heavily based on family dynamics. Nick Duffell expands on this: “If he comes from a family where his father he will already know precisely how to do this. Perhaps he will become a clown or a bully or a hero or a swat. He will need some role, something to do so that he becomes distracted from his feelings, his abandonment, his loss of parents, his fear. . . Each child will already have learned to conform to the mores of his family, his position in the pecking order, and adopted some particular role. Perhaps he will be the responsible older one, or the clumsy one who makes everyone laugh. In order to keep the heat off him and belong amongst his fellows, he will carve out a comparable role in the peer group” (Duffell 34-35). In this passage, Duffell focuses on the various roles that are played. If there are roles then there must be a show of some sort. School therefore is a type of show where the teachers and students take on roles. The roles originate from the numerous unique family lives of the students. These roles are familiar to the teachers, who know how to respond to such roles. It is when there is a Sirius Black who does not fill the role that he is expected to fill that issues begin to arise, either within the family or within the school. Family is the basis of every identity because that is where every individual originates.

## CHAPTER 2

### Learning in Isolation: The Development of Self-Reliance

In order to properly examine the growth of the individual that occurs in the English boarding school system, one must also examine the environment that the children are placed into, specifically the remote locations, the teachers, and various methods of discipline. These environmental factors greatly shape how the students behave and what they will gain or lose from the experience. Vyvyen Brendon writes in her book, Prep School Children a Class Apart over Two Centuries, that the ideal prep school meets three criteria: “rustication, separation, and preparation. In other words it was an isolated rural establishment where boys aged between seven and thirteen were grounded in the Classics and fitted with the character required for entrance to the public schools. These arrangements suited nouveau riche parents who sought a gentlemanly education for their sons” (Brendon 30). Such an experience had many varying effects on the various students. Some students such as Tom Brown felt “‘the pride and excitement of making a new step in life’,” and others like William Makepeace Thackeray “‘departed for school alone in a ‘Defiance’ stage coach” (Brendon 9). If some boys did not want such an education, why then did their parents enforce such methods? According to a journal entry of Charlotte Guest, wife of Sir Josiah John Guest, MP, “‘It seems a sad prospect but everybody says that it is the only way to bring up boys’” (Brendon 31). Already, when the practice is still normal, there are certain flags being raised. While Charlotte’s

concerns were likely ignored due to her gender, Charles Darwin wrote to his cousin, William Fox, that he “despised ‘the old stereotyped stupid classical learning’ and hated ‘the whole system of breaking down through the affections of the family by separating the boys so early in life’” (Brendon 32). The boarding schools snatched up these children way before they hit puberty and introduced them to independent learning. In America boys may bring homework home and their parents may help try to explain the work to their kids, but at the boarding schools the parents are not present and thus the kids must learn to learn by themselves in order to survive. As Darwin noted, it was rough, but in theory it would be the catalyst that changed boys into men.

How then, did the various boarding schools create such a transformation? According to Nick Duffell in The Making of Them The British Attitude to Children and the Boarding School System, it was accomplished in this way, “A glance at any independent school brochure will show pictures of happy, busy children. The text will be full of reference to values, to community. . . Such schools typically aspire to the highest values. The cultivation of excellence, fair-play, team spirit, leadership, individuality, and spiritual values are proposed as the school’s purpose. This appeals to a sentiment that evokes both the tradition of the grand days of Empire and a confident modern elitism” (Duffell 36). With such an impressive grouping of values, who could turn down such an opportunity? “The problem,” Duffell writes, “is that a child’s personal concerns, feelings and sensitivities can easily be overlooked in such a value system, and there can be a heavy personal price paid for allegiance to such a flag” (Duffell 36). The key to succeed in such a system, Duffell suggests, is to feel safe and to belong: “The best route to safety is of course to become one of ‘the club’. If you can’t beat them join them” (Duffell 36).

With such a solution, the students give up their individuality, one of the qualities supposedly praised by such institutions, yet many students succeed in these institutions by doing just that. This leads to a life that is structured around the values that one conformed to during school. People who went to the same school would normally find each other likable, even if decades separated the two because they both experienced and conformed to the same values.

To examine the darker side of this system, one must consider the child's personal concerns, feelings and sensitivities. This first of these is the obvious great distance, both spatial and temporal, that separates the boys from their mothers and fathers. While some boys may have shown no signs of distress at such a move, others were not so strongly willed. Paul Watkins writes this about the day he was dropped off at the Dragon School: "Where's my dad?' I flipped my cards from one hand to the other, hoping that he would ask about them. 'He's gone.' The man crouched down until I was no longer looking at the buckle of his belt but at his face. 'Your father has gone home. I am Mr. Vicker and I am your housemaster. From now on you must call me 'sir'' (Watkins 2). He is an American boy separated from his family by the Atlantic Ocean, and he has to take this in as a sudden surprise. Watkins, who at the time was only seven years old, was so desperate to remain with his parents that he thought it would be a good idea to seek a job as a deckhand on a ship heading back to America. He is constantly thinking and behaving like a child while his mind is trying to process what has just happened to him. How could Watkins ever grow to become safe in such a scenario? On his first night there, the other children throw his teddy bear out of the window to "Christen" him (Watkins 4). Watkins finds himself placed in an environment that he does not and cannot understand. If it were

not for his friends Cuddlybum and Nightingale, he may have never been able to adapt enough to survive the upcoming years of his life. He was thrown into a new world, one with different values and customs that he would have to learn, but how could he focus on learning about such values and customs when he is most concerned about his parents? This is not a one-way street as both of his parents are also emotional about his schooling. Watkins writes that his mother could not bear to be present when they left him at the school and was crying before they left, but he writes this about his father: “ ‘Good-bye,’ my father said, and shook my hand. His face was hard and serious” (Watkins 1). The mother realizes what trouble might come of such schooling; while the father treats this as a business opportunity and serious. One can easily picture the mother still crying as they fly back to America and the father with the same serious look on his face, as if he did what he had to do.

The values that the schools promised to instill into the children did not appear out of thin air, but instead these values came from the careful instruction of their teachers. Thus one would expect the teachers to be of the highest quality. This was not the case with Paul Pennyfeather. In Evelyn Waugh’s novel Decline and Fall, Paul is granted a job as a teacher. In Paul’s interview scene, Waugh writes, “ ‘I have put you in charge of the fifth form the rest of this term,’ said Dr. Fagan. ‘You will find them delightful boys, quite delightful. Clutterbuck wants watching, by the way, a very delicate little chap. I have also put you in charge of the games, the carpentering class, and the fire drill. And I forget, do you teach music?’ ‘No, I’m afraid not.’ ‘Unfortunate, most unfortunate. . . I have arranged for you to take Beste-Chetwynde in organ lessons twice a week. Well, you must do the best you can’ (Waugh 23-24). It would seem that at least in this situation the

teachers are swamped. Not only are Paul's responsibilities widespread, but he has to teach a subject that he has no idea how to do himself. On top of his inexperience, Paul is only teaching because it is his last chance to make some money. He lacks passion and is very unskilled, but at least he will be working around other experienced teachers who can help him out. These fellow teachers give him this advice: "'Oh, I shouldn't try to teach them anything, not just yet anyway. Just keep them quiet.' 'Now, that's a thing I've never learned to do,' sighed Mr. Prendergast" (Waugh 43). With this advice and one final look as Prendergast enters his room, "Dumb with terror" (Waugh 43). Immediately it is clear that he cannot control the class, until Mr. Grimes shows up and gives Paul a walking stick, a weapon. With weapon in hand he is able to assert his authority and make inappropriate threats such as, "'Then I shall very nearly kill you with this stick" (Waugh 45). Despite such harsh threats he is still considered a "decent" master by his students (Waugh 47). These three teachers do not deserve to be teaching in an institution that seeks such great virtues as these types of schools boast.

Waugh's representation is definitely playing with extremes and the average teacher would not have been as unqualified as these three teachers were, but Waugh's comic novel does suggest that many such schools were plagued with an incompetent faculty. Such is not the case in Watkin's autobiography. The majority of the teachers at the Dragon School, one of the greatest schools for the age group, were professionals. For example, Pa Winter actually knew French and Latin and had a system in place to help him teach his class (Watkins 11). The only problem was that Pa Winter had a temper and was easy to anger. Teachers are not there to be friends, so this is slightly excusable, but there are still some bad eggs even at the Dragon School. The teachers are seen as such

authority figures that sometimes they just do whatever they want to. Such is the case with the one teacher that keeps his students after class to molest them, using the excuse that he needs to look over their work (Watkins 41). In Kazuo Ishiguro's novel one can see this distance being created again. The teachers are given proper respect but the distance is so great that the students are alerted to the fact that certain information is being held from them. This is evident in Mrs. Lucy's conversations with Tommy and her constantly trying to tell him the truth but protect him at the same time. For example Ishiguro writes, "she suddenly stopped, and I thought she'd dropped something else. But she was looking at me, like this, straight in the face, all serious. Then she says we've got to have a talk, a good talk. I say fine, and so we go to the Orangery, into her study, put all of her stuff down. And she tells me to sit down, and I end up exactly where I was the last time, you know, that time years ago. And I can tell she's remembering that time as well, because she starts talking about it like it was only a day before. No explanations, nothing, she just starts off saying something like: 'Tommy, I made a mistake, when I said what I did to you. And I should have put you right about it long before now'" (Ishiguro 107). Clearly there is more to this than Mrs. Lucy is telling Tommy, and she fears she may have told him too much or misinformed him. Tommy cannot help but begin to worry when this distance is so great. He is still trying to grow up and mature, but how can he if certain key facts are being withheld from him?

The third characteristic of the boarding school system is the various methods of discipline. In J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, The students are held to high standards and discipline is handed out in the awarding or removing of points from each individual house. The exact system is defined by Professor McGonagall: "While

you are at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn you House points, while any rule breaking will lose House points” (Rowling 114). The points are gathered at the end of the year and the house with the most points wins the House Cup, a great honor. Under this system there is both a clear punishment and reward for students, but this is not the only way to discipline the students. Hagrid’s expulsion is constantly mentioned in the first book, and Harry and friends are constantly trying to avoid getting caught wandering around the school after hours. This definitely makes it seem clear that the threat of expulsion was a real one and that it would be the worst of any possible punishment at Hogwarts, as they even broke Hagrid’s wand after he got expelled (Rowling 83). One problem that arises from such schools with systems like this is that the points and severity of punishments ranges from teacher to teacher. Snape is highly biased towards his Slytherin, even though Hermione clearly knows what she is doing. Professor McGonagall allows Harry to play on the Gryffindor Quidditch team, though all first years are prohibited to own a broom (Rowling 152). While Harry may be the protagonist, the other students are being left out by such bias.

Most of the time, however, the students could not do anything about such matters. In Paul Watkins’ autobiography, he writes about this time he and a friend were playing tag with one of their teachers. The game got out of hand quickly and the teacher chased them into a restricted area. Regardless of their arguments both boys were punished for the incident. After entering the restricted area, Paul writes, “Pa Winter stood at the end of the alley, hands on knees and red-faced. ‘You know the playing fields are Out of Bounds. It says so very clearly on the notice board.’ ‘But you chased us, sir.’ ‘You’ve broken the rules. Both of you. The rules are perfectly clear.’ ‘But, sir . . .’ ‘Both of you of you can

come to my study after tea this afternoon. And bring your gym sneakers''' (Watkins 39). Here there is a focus on how clear the rules are and that a violation is a violation, no exceptions. Such practices help the teachers instill responsibility in the students. Pa Winters, like Hogwarts, had a daily system that relied on marks instead of points. In this case there are red marks and black marks. If a student did not stumble in his Latin then he received a red mark, but if they messed up they received a black mark. If a student collected three red marks he would get a chocolate bar, but three black marks meant that they would get spanked and then handed a chocolate bar (Watkins 12). Under such a system favoritism is not so much an issue because the rewards and punishment are based on one's progress within class. This is both good and bad. Ideally everyone has an equal shot at not getting spanked, but certain boys will have no trouble while some others will struggle until they leave the school. It is hard to say that this system is totally fair, but it does remove personal bias, and while they may be harsh at times, these systems are what supposedly mold the boys into men.

Just as the discipline can be harsh but justified, there are certain redeeming qualities that can be found both in the long distance from family and in the remoteness of the teacher, who as of this point have been displayed as poor or very distant. The most admirable aspect of the long distanced education is the ability for one to develop the skills he will be using the rest of his life to be independent and support his own family. At some point he must partially cut his family ties anyways, unless he wants to be the thirty-year-old single man living with his parents. So they do this early in their life to make sure such a strong reliance does not develop. Vyvyen Brendon quotes this from a comment James Bryce made in the Taunton Report, an educational survey that reported

on the parents' expectations in the education system, that, "When a Lancashire merchant or manufacturer sends his sons away from home, he desires as often as not to send them a long way off, partly that they may lose their northern tongue, partly that they may form new acquaintances, and be quite away from home influences" (Brendon 30). So the three reasons given here are mainly focused around the boy coming out a proper businessman. He will have a proper accent, have business partners, and will not need to rely upon his family to support him. Such high expectations can put a lot of pressure on a boy and they do normally come out of the boarding school seemingly having achieved such goals. While Watkins' experience may seem very harsh to some readers, it is not crazy to state that he matured faster than his American counterparts. He goes home and is expected to mingle with guests instead of being sent to his room (Watkins 60). At the boarding school he was so focused on surviving and following the rules and adapting that he was forced to mature faster than a kid normally would. This was only after one year as well and he still had more years to come, and while his conversations were very child-like he was still being forced to act as if he lived in an English manor house. Harry Potter is a great exception to the general scenario. Normally when one reads about a boy going off to boarding school and leaving his parents, he would expect a sense of sadness or loss. In Harry Potter, the reader is relieved when Harry is separated from the Dursleys. This is because his situation at home was one of horror and mistreatment. The boarding school helps him escape a life of imprisonment, such as in other cases it breaks family ties. It allows Harry to make acquaintances in the Wizarding world, of which he was destined to be a part of. He drops the accent of the muggles and pick up Wizard terminology. Through Hogwarts, Harry meets the Weasleys, who play the part of his pseudo-family.

This clearly meets the requirements stated by James Bryce, but in this case not only is the experience accelerating his maturation, it sets him free; and unlike Paul Watkins, Harry does not want to go back home during the holidays.

Finally the teachers may be distant but that does not mean that they do not care about the students. In Kazuo Ishiguro's novel the same teachers that are clearly keeping a dark secret from the students turn out to be the only ones that truly care about the students. In his world, the students have no actual parents, and therefore the teachers take a certain limited parenting role. This is most evident in Mrs. Lucy and her continuing to try to help Tommy, but part of her job as a teacher is to remain distanced. There is always a certain looming feeling of guiltiness in the room when Mrs. Lucy begins to enlighten Tommy, but she clearly cares strongly about the students. In the end it is revealed that all the teachers were similar in their caring of the students but were much more formal about it. This brings up this issue of trying to balance professionalism with one's personal feelings. This is also present in Watkins tale. Right before Pa Winters can punish Paul, Paul begins to cry. This has been warned against countless times but Paul just cannot hold in the tears this time: "Now stop crying," Pa Winter said. "What do you think this is?" "I'm not crying, sir." "What do you think this is?" he asked again. "Get out of my chair and come over here." . . . "Get out of that chair and come here!" . . . "Please not this time, sir. Please can't you let me off this time? It was just a game, sir, and we didn't go very far onto the fields." "If you don't get over here this instant, you'll be sitting in that chair and doing Latin homework every free afternoon for the rest of the term!" "I moved foggy-eyed to his desk, bent over, and shouted in pain as he gave me the Six." Then he was hugging me. He said it was all right. He pressed my face into his sweaty shirt and

then he shook my hand and gave me a chocolate bar” (Watkins 40). There is a clear struggle going on within Pa Winters. The reader can pick up on his temper getting raised and his voice raising. He wanted the procedure to go on like normal business without emotion because after all Pa Winters is only doing his job. This time Paul’s crying made that nearly impossible. Afterwards Pa Winters has to hug him and let him know that it is all right. Clearly this is a new side of Pa Winters that never shows up again. The teachers know that some of their punishments may be harsh but they have to adhere to the rules just as much as the students do; however, sometimes it is hard to stay professional, especially in personal situations.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Path to Success is Through the Proper Identity

During their time at their various boarding schools, the children form an identity that will either follow them throughout life or be shed once they leave the school. Nick Duffell argues that there are essentially two identities present within every person: an inner identity and an outer identity. The inner identity can be interpreted as each individual's self-interpretation of who they really are. Duffell does mention that, while this inner identity is open to slight changes, this interpretation is largely unconscious and therefore unchanging. The outer identity is then the identity intended for the outside world and is uniquely constructed based on each individual's surroundings and needs. Duffell writes, "Thus our identity is created around roles, behaviors, attributes, styles which have been supported by circumstances and the influential figures in our life" (Duffell 193). Under such a system, then, the boarding schools, if properly run and executed, should be a great surrounding for children who are forming their identities. Duffell says that a student may hope to "become a person who is independent, confident, adult, self-reliant, grown-up, successful, middle-class, rational, certain, responsible, and so on" (Duffell 193). This would be the ideal set of characteristics that one picks up from school, and these are what society wants one to pick up from school. So as long as the child leaves the boarding school with these traits, society will accept them. On the other hand, not every student has the greatest experience in boarding school. Duffell states that these students "would have been seen as dependent, childish, lazy, vulnerable, self-

doubting, passive, instinctual, irresponsible, uncontrollable, messy, not grown-up, depressed, unambitious, struggling, failing, sad, lonely, overwhelmed, bewildered, and so on” (Duffell 194). Unlike their shiny counterparts, these “failures,” as society deems them, are pushed away. In order to be successful in life, it would seem that each student must, regardless of their opinion of boarding school, outwardly appear mature.

In some cases this is not a problem, but sometimes the student will create this outer identity to please society, while inwardly he may identify more with inferior qualities such as immaturity. This leads to a state of confusion where the inner and outer identities are constantly fighting. Duffell defines the conflict as resulting from “incomplete support for our developing self-image, and the need to repress those behavioral aspects associated with the child and not supported” (Duffell 194). In other words, the outer identity is trying to be an adult, while the inner identity still thinks itself a child. Such internal conflict leaves students even more vulnerable to outside sources. They are constantly being influenced in many directions, so it can be very hard for them to find where they belong in society. Some use nicknames, and these nicknames, no matter how irrelevant they begin, can greatly impact how one views oneself. Others are sorted into groups, and these groups embody certain traits and attributes believed to be possessed by each member in the group. Some people go on journeys to discover things about themselves that they may have never known. One can also find identity in his or her occupation or schooling. All of these methods are ways in which the student emerge from boarding school as an individual with an identity. Some of these methods deal with the outer identity and others are in relation to the inner identity. Ultimately the only way to truly succeed within the boarding school system would be to remain true to the inner

identity, while portraying a strong outer identity that shows success and maturity. This can only happen once both identities are in harmony with each other. This might not be so difficult if society were a little more accepting of these children and allowed the inner identity to play a larger role in their development without having possible negative effects on their futures.

Harry Potter certainly finds his identity at Hogwarts. Prior to Hogwarts, Harry did not even know that he was a wizard. This is an example of finding one's identity in his occupation. To this point Harry has been treated as a slave, and thus he acts as a slave. His circumstances required his outer identity to take on this submissive form, but as he does not originally know that he is a wizard there is no major conflict between his inner and outer identities. Only once he learns that he is a wizard does this conflict begin to arise. His outer identity has been that of a slave for so long that he finds it hard to believe the news at first. After he learns about his parents and how they died, he begins to understand what it means to be a wizard. It is then that a distinct difference emerges. Harry's inner identity becomes one of great morals and doing the right thing, but outwardly Harry maintains this lowborn, common appearance. This difference does not cause Harry to have a terrible school experience, and in fact it has made him a better person. He has the morals of a great wizard, but is humble and very mature for his age. It is also through wizardry that Harry ultimately finishes what he started as a baby. If Harry never found out that he was a wizard then it would be very possible that Voldemort would have returned and killed a defenseless Harry.

Upon arriving at Hogwarts, all students are sorted by the sorting hat. This hat does not sort based on outward appearance, but instead looks within each student and places

them into houses that are defined by certain attributes. Ron and Hermione are both sorted into the house of Gryffindor, which is the honorable house. Like a true hero, Harry also ends up in Gryffindor, but the sorting hat almost places him into Slytherin, the house of ambition. The sorting hat is persuaded by Harry's own desire to be sorted into Gryffindor, showing the reader the state of Harry's inner identity. Determining by which house each character is sorted into gives the reader an easy characterization for each of them. All Gryffindors are honorable and are normally seen as heroes, while Slytherins are ambitious and are normally seen as villains. Hufflepuffs are noted for their loyalty, and Ravenclaw is full of intelligence. The sorting is a mixing of the outer and inner identities. The sorting hat is able to look inside each student and places them within a house according to their inner identity. By doing so each student is placed in a position to advance and meet other people who are like-minded. Harry, by being surrounded by other Gryffindors, is able to accelerate the growth of his inner identity, while not having to construct an outer identity that is different. This creates a stable environment where Harry can truly thrive and focus on being the best wizard he can be without having to constantly deal with internal conflict.

Harry is nicknamed "The Boy who lived." This name carries with it a lot of weight. It is by this name that Harry is known to the majority of the wizards. This name has garnered great respect and reverence for Harry, even though Harry has no idea what exactly he has done. This nickname gives Harry a great first impression and opens a lot of windows for Harry. When Harry goes with Hagrid to get his supplies, he is greeted with much respect at the Leaky Cauldron (Rowling 69). Even Draco Malfoy originally greets Harry with respect and an outstretched hand (Rowling 108). Every wizard knows

who Harry is and what he has accomplished, but Harry has no idea how he accomplished it. Harry's quest to find out who he truly is ends with his confrontation with Voldemort, and along the way it is in his parents that he finds himself. He is constantly being reminded how much alike he is to them and he uses this to help shape his actions and virtues. He walks in their footprints at Hogwarts, he meets their teachers and friends, and he visits their final resting place. In the end Harry gets to meet his parents and they give him advice right before his confrontation with Voldemort in the woods. Harry is always identified as somehow connected to his parents, but as he never got to grow up with his parents, this identity remains weak for a large portion of the story.

Lastly Harry identifies himself as belonging to Hogwarts. In the fourth book it is revealed to the reader that there are other schools for wizards. Each school can have its own merits and downfalls, but Harry, like most of the characters present in the story, are tied to Hogwarts. Harry takes pride in learning under the care of Dumbledore, the greatest wizard to ever exist. Hogwarts is rooted in tradition, so regardless of when a wizard attends there is a shared connection. This connection can help Harry emerge from school and find work and success. With such a network in place, Harry can ideally focus on developing his inner identity without having to construct a false outer identity.

A similar identity is discovered by Paul Watkins while he is attending Eton. In the closing months of his education at Eton, Paul Watkins has a realization while in the chapel. Watkins writes, "Being in the chapel did not make me think of God. Instead it made me think of how many hundreds of boys had come here before me. Because so much had stayed the same, I felt as if I could have met an Eton boy from a hundred years before and started up the same talk with him that I could with Rupert, who was sitting

next to me now and mumbling his French subjunctives as he prepared for a test. I thought of the boys who had gone out and what had happened to them” (Watkins 229). There is a certain identity that students gain simply by attending a specific school. At Eton, Watkins experienced the same events and circumstances as any other Etonian, past, present, or future. There were two distinct fates for those who left Eton: the “ones who died too soon and the ones who lived long and worked hard and made their names immortal” (Watkins 229-30). Both of these groups Watkins defines in a literal sense, referring to the deaths of young soldiers in WWI and the statues of old successful Etonians. This can also reflect on the various identities and how each student leaves the school. Those who are broken by the school are doomed to failure and, shortly after leaving, their careers would halt; but those whose identities are strong and at least are able to display confidence and maturity would go on to make a lot of money and live a good life. Being associated with Eton would have allowed Watkins the option to continue his education at some of the highest schools England had to offer, as many of his classmates did.

So why would Watkins turn down such a seemingly guaranteed path to Success? Watkins provides this explanation: “I decided to attend Yale University in America, because I had come to know what it meant here not so much to be an Etonian, but to be an old Etonian. I knew what people thought of you, whether they admitted it or not, and I knew what they expected of you, both the good and the hideously bad. Moriarty would be spending the rest of his life trying to hide the fact that he went here, and Rupert would tell people every chance he got until he keeled over dead in his worn-out corduroys, his lungs a smelly bog of old Roth Händle smoke” (Watkins 237). The identity that Watkins would be forced to embrace as an Etonian, or Old Etonian, was set in stone long before

he entered the school. There was no escape from it while he remained in England. Eton may have had one of the best reputations in England, but many people did not like Etonians. This can arise from the Old Etonian view, as Etonians have not changed through time. Their ideas are old and they tend to have a lot of pride in their identity. Watkins and Moriarty did not want this sort of reputation. Watkin's solution is to attend university in America, where "being an Old Etonian was more of a novelty. It had the same effect on people as saying you stormed ashore on the Normandy beaches in WWII, or that you used to be an astronaut. They treated it as an experience that they could not expect to understand completely, and they usually left it at that" (Watkins 237). In America he had more control over who he would become. Americans would see an Old Etonian and wonder "what is that?" There are no negative old qualities in this situation, but he also loses the positive attributes of this high identity.

What might have made Watkins react in such a way is his mixed upbringing. He has attended some schooling in America before he begins attending the Dragon. He is constantly flying across the Atlantic for breaks and then back for school. He can no longer identify as an American because he has had so many traditional and unique experiences that are not found in America; however, he clearly is not English as he sticks out in the Dragon from his first day at the school. When he goes home for the holidays, the stories that he brings with him are foreign to everyone except perhaps his father. When he is at school, his American past limits his experience. For example, early on at the Dragon, all of the children are discussing their ancestors. Each child seems to be well rehearsed in their family history for several generations. Watkins cannot participate in this as he does not know much at all about his family history because he never thought

that it would be an important thing to know. In America such things are reserved for curious minds to look at and smile at but at the Dragon, everyone seems to have some person of importance in their family whom they cannot let down. Watkins is ill-prepared to take on the social interactions expected among the students, and he cannot help but feel insecure about his position. The boarding school system is designed to create men with English virtues and characteristics who are from English backgrounds. Watkins did not fully meet these requirements, and it reflects in his experience.

Watkins, like Harry, also had a nickname: Watty Dog Watkins. While some may expect this name to be relevant to who Watkins is, much like the boy who lived, the name is simply meant to follow a tradition. At the Dragon, there was another boy named Watkins and he walked like a dog, and he was given the nickname Watty Dog. When Paul arrives they give him the nickname Watty Dog and make the older Watkins change his nickname to Big Watty Dog. While this name may have made sense for its previous owner, it holds no relevance for Watkins; however, the nicknames become a part of each student. Watkins provides one of his school friends as an example: “So if your name was Codrington, you might never have known that your name sounded like Cuddlybum. But from then on your name would be Cuddlybum, and not just until the end of the Dragon School but until the end of time. You knew suddenly that deep into the future, you would find yourself one day walking into a building in the city to ask for a job. And the man behind the desk would take one look at you, jump to his feet and yell ‘Cuddlybum!’” (Watkins 9). Several nicknames in the end do self-fulfill themselves. Cuddlybum begins to perform homosexual acts. At first these acts seem as if he is being forced into them, but throughout the story he is no longer being forced into them. Watkins, who inherited

his name from an older Watkins, inherited the Dragon School from his father, another older Watkins. These names, which in Watkins' case was given to him simply because he shared a last name with another kid in the school, burrow their way into the children and become part of their outer identity.

So how can students strengthen their inner identity? Kazuo Ishiguro would argue that students can reveal their inner selves through artistic expression. In his novel, the students, viewed by society as empty husks, are being raised solely for organs. Society does not think that the students even have an inner self. So a group of people gather together these children and try to teach them in special schools. These schools place a heavy emphasis on artistic creativity. The "Madame" collects the best pieces and takes them to show society that these children are capable of inner feelings and of allowing those feelings to take shape in the physical world. The idea is that if society could see that these children are capable of creating art, then society will come to accept that these children also have some kind of inner being, for the teachers would argue that they have a soul. When Tommy is incapable of creating "real" or "good" art he is publically shunned, not just by the teachers but by the student body as well. People place great importance on whether or not the Madame selects a piece of their art for her collection. How well one can express their inner identity determines their rank and status within this school. Tommy leaves this experience in a semi-confused state because of his numerous meetings with Mrs. Lucy and realizing too late that his art truly does matter, but Kathy and Ruth, who both are able to create decent art, leave the school with more confidence. These students project their inner identities and makes them into a form of outer identity. They take their inner feelings and put them out there for the world to see.

Like Harry Potter, these students many times also embark on quests, and they do discover more about themselves. Harry gets compared to his parents constantly throughout Rowling's novels, but Ishiguro did not give these students any parents to be compared to. Instead the students look for their "possibles" in public. Ruth undergoes one such journey in the novel, and the reader gets the feeling that this carries a lot of importance. Being a clone, Ruth naturally wonders about who she was cloned from and wonders what kind of life her possible leads. She has a huge fantasy picked out where she will one day work in an office and have some power. So when her friends say that they think they may have spotted Ruth's possible, Ruth is intrigued to go and look for her. The possible seems to match Ruth physically and mentally as she also works in an office. In a way one's possible, or the view that one has of his or her possible, becomes a role model for the potential of the clone. This view can be rewarding but it can also crush some people. Ruth's dreams get crushed by the realization that this is not her possible. Ruth and her friends only realize this once they get close to her, but Ruth takes it hard because she was so close to having her dreams affirmed. Tommy and Kathy both try to reassure Ruth, saying, "It's daft to assume you'll have the same sort of life as your model. I agree with Tommy. It's just a bit of fun. We shouldn't get so serious about it" (Ishiguro 165). Where once Ruth thought that her possible could be a businesswoman who did important office work, she now believes that "we all know it. We're modelled from trash. Junkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps. Convicts, maybe, just so long as they aren't psychos. That's what we come from" (Ishiguro 166). Ruth and, if her statements is true, all her fellow students are cloned from some of the most immoral stereotypes in existence, but that never stopped them before. Before this trip, Ruth and Kathy both excelled in school at

Hailsham and showed great promise. The quest to find her possible has deflated the identity that Ruth had constructed for herself. She does not seem to be able to understand that she is a separate being from her model doomed to be trash for the rest of her days. Ruth begins to allow society to judge her. These new views of herself and her friends are based on societal views of these children. Her inner identity becomes weak as this outer identity, based off of society grows stronger.

Each student reacts to the boarding school system differently. If the student likes the boarding school environment, like Harry Potter, and is not having to pretend to be someone he is not, then both of the student's identities grow stronger. In other cases, the students are forced to become a perfect representation of English culture, or run the risk of failing throughout the rest of his life. In both cases, the school system is being used as a tool to promote virtues that the English society marks as worthwhile.

## CHAPTER 4

### The Competitive Spirit and Glorifying Physical Excellence

In the British boarding school system, students are pushed to succeed both academically and physically. The students' minds are constantly being molded by the school system and what Society deems necessary, but how much importance is placed on their physical development, and how does this help carve out their unique identities? To what extent does the school system glorify physical fitness? The main avenue to physical growth inside a school is through sporting events. These events require practice and dedication in order for a student to be a good representative of the schools, and at the end of the day sports are a tool to bring more prestige into each school. With the prestige that comes from such sporting competitions each school is constantly improving its chances to attract more boarders. The more boarders that attend the more likely that the school will see even more success on the playing fields. It is a cyclic effect that helps a school grow a strong reputation.

The schools are not the only entity to prosper from athletics. Students develop the ability to work well with others. They learn to put their own needs behind the needs of the team. In post-boarding life this translates into putting the needs of one's community before his individual needs. Society prospers by encouraging such beliefs in students. At the same time, being on the same team is an easy and quick way to bring together students who may never have mixed. The team is bigger than class in the sense that for a

brief period of time, class lines are abolished and high and middle classes are able to come together to try to accomplish a common goal. Eventually the teamwork shown on the playing field begins to take place in everyday life as friendships begin to take root. In this case it does not matter whether the team succeeds or fails; the players are all experiencing the same rush of victory or the same disappointment of defeat. Even in defeat, an athlete grows stronger. Competition and practice develop mental toughness inside of the athletes. They never back down and they always get back up. They refuse to give up and they fight until the last. They are the kind of people who will always find a way to succeed in life, even if they have to take a pounding along the way.

Sports have not always been so important in the boarding schools. In earlier years, teachers and adults viewed sports as simply games. Vyvyen Brendon in Prep School Children discusses a change in the general attitude of society: “Significantly, the question discussed at the first of their gatherings, chaired by the fearsome Rev Tabor, was whether boys under fifteen should be allowed to use full-size cricket balls. The debate reflected the new cult of athleticism that developed to reflect and promote the increasingly competitive spirit of the age. Manliness was overtaking godliness as an ideal, which expressed itself in a passion for organized games. By the 1880s the games ethics had become ‘dominant across the public school system’ and the 1900 Report found a similar state of affairs in prep schools. Football and cricket were usually compulsory, with lesser sports like hockey, rounders, boxing, golf, raquets, paperchasing, bicycling, swimming and athletics also on offer” (Brendon 52). The “cult of athleticism” is spreading throughout each level of education. The choice to become an athlete is not even left to the child. Instead certain sports become compulsory. Again the students are at the mercy of

society and what society wants them to become. If the students do not willingly make the decision to become athletes, everything they accomplish becomes part of their exterior identity that society wants to see. While their exterior identity is living up to society's wishes, their inner and personal identity may not even care about how well they can kick a ball, but others love the competition. Sports gives them a stage on which to perform and show the world what they are capable of. This is one of the ways that students are able to show their uniqueness in comparison to their peers.

The playing field plays a much larger role in a child's development than a mere opportunity to show up one's peers. In fact, the competitive nature of these sports often seems to contradict the desired traits in an athlete. While a good athlete is able to separate himself from the crowd by his athletic ability, a great athlete is one who can do the same but is modest about his abilities. Brendon describes one of these great athletes, Arthur Collins: "Arthur had been born in India where his father had served as a judge, and the boy was now an orphan. Both his parents had died in Burma, a country recently annexed to the British Empire. A reserved lad, he did not relish being hailed a hero in the press . . . and never liked to be reminded of his famous innings. . . His imperial origins, sporting prowess, self-effacing modesty and military career – even his chivalric Christian name – made Collins the model prep school product of his age" (Brendon 51). Being an athlete alone is not enough to be a "model prep school product." Instead, the model athlete needs to show modesty in his ability. Modesty can only be accomplished through defeat, and thus sports help the student develop his strength; however, it also teaches them to know their own strengths and to respect their competitors. On the opposite side of the equation is pride. Pride is nice when it shows great confidence in one's abilities, but also it is

rather naïve. The modest athlete comes to the field knowing that there is a chance that he might fail, but he is prepared to give everything he has in order to come out victorious. The prideful athlete arrives expecting to crush his opponent, but his high opinion of his own ability often blinds him to the strength of his opponent. At the same time, the modest athletes believe in the team and know that every person plays a role in the team's success. As an adult, the ex-athlete has to find a job and join a new team. If he is modest he will find this transition easy, as he just has to do his part to the best of his extent, and he does not need to be praised to know he has done a good job. This idea of teamwork is summed up by the headmaster of Wolborough Hill: “the boy who learns to play for his side at school will do good work for his country as a man” (Brendon 53). Arthur Collins, the great athlete, went on to join the army and served his country in the best way one can. By encouraging students to participate in sports, society wants to mold students into model citizens who will serve their country for all their lives.

One such model student is Harry Potter. Potter reveals his good character and selflessness when he breaks the rules concerning using his broom unsupervised in order to retrieve Neville's remembrall. When faced with a decision to do the right thing or obey the rules, Harry decided to help his friend and do the right thing. This act is praised by his friends who constantly are trying to defend him from Professor McGonagall and what they assumed was punishment. It is then the natural reaction that such an act should be rewarded and not punished. This proves to be true when McGonagall in the privacy of her office allows Harry to join Gryffindor's quidditch team, but it is not only his selfless deeds that interest professor McGonagall. Harry has a natural talent for quidditch. In a rather excited conversation McGonagall introduces Oliver Wood to Harry: “Potter, this

is Oliver Wood. Wood – I’ve found you a Seeker.’ Wood’s expression changed from puzzlement to delight. ‘Are you serious, professor?’ ‘Absolutely,’ said Professor McGonagall crisply. ‘The boy’s a natural. I’ve never seen anything like it. Was that your first time on a broomstick, Potter?’ . . . ‘He caught that thing in his hand after a fifty-foot dive,’ Professor McGonagall told Wood. ‘Didn’t even scratch himself. Charlie Weasley couldn’t have done it’” (Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone* 151). There is only one problem remaining in Harry’s path to being on the team, the rule that bars first-years from playing. Here, Harry’s talent is so great that Professor McGonagall, a professor portrayed as a strict rule-keeping teacher, is the very one pushing for the rule to be bent: “‘I shall speak to Professor Dumbledore and see if we can’t bend the first-year rule. Heaven knows, we need a better team than last year. *Flattened* in the last match by Slytherin, I couldn’t look Severus Snape in the face for weeks . . .’” (Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone* 152). The teachers have just as much to gain or lose by Harry’s performance. Right before this scene ends McGonagall lightly warns Harry “‘I want to hear you’re training hard, Potter, or I may change my mind about punishing you’” (Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone* 152).

If Harry is the natural athlete, then Ron is the athlete who shows potential but will have to work at it. Unlike Harry, Ron does not join the team until his fifth year at Hogwarts, and unlike Harry, Ron is not given a spot on the team; he has to try out and practices each morning enchanting balls to fly towards him. This speaks volumes about who Ron is as a person. No matter what it takes Ron will do whatever in order to help the team. In quidditch, Harry plays the role of seeker, a role in which Harry has the most control in ensuring Gryffindor’s victory. Catching the snitch is a guaranteed win. Ron is given the position of keeper, and it is his job to defend his team’s goalposts. His team

must rely on him to keep the goals protected. Ron's fulfillment of this role on the quidditch field reflects his supportive role to Harry and the rest of the wizarding world. Since Ron lacks Harry's natural ability, Ron must always be practicing. Luckily for Ron, Harry is a good teammate and the current team captain, Angelina Johnson, is very aware of Ron's needs. She comments to Harry: "'Look, I know he's your best mate, but he's not fabulous,' she said bluntly. 'I think with a bit of training he'll be alright, though. He comes from a family of good Quidditch players. I'm banking on him having a bit more talent than he showed today, to be honest. Vicky Frobisher and Geoffrey Hooper both flew better this evening . . . Anyway, we're having a practice session at two o'clock tomorrow, so just make sure you're there this time. And do me a favor and help Ron as much as you can, okay'" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 276). Ron is a gamble for the team; Angelina is willing to take a chance on him but wants Harry's help training him. This is the other side of the spectrum. Harry received praise and support from his friends and jealousy from certain Slytherins. Ron receives support from his friends, but the rest of his peers are unsure about how Ron will do. Both of his brothers tease him and voice their concern to Harry during their first team practice with Ron. The Slytherins call him names and chant disrespectful cheers towards Ron in order to discourage him. Ron lacks confidence and continues to do so into the sixth book of the series. In his second tryout for keeper, Ron seems just as nervous as he was during his match the previous year. Harry hopes that by now Ron would be more confident in his abilities in order to keep his position as keeper. Thanks to a little interference on Hermione's part, Ron manages to barely make the cut. Ron embodies the athlete that works for his ability. He is very unsure of his potential and does not consider himself to be very good. Ron is a shining

example of the unknowing star athlete. He doesn't think he stands a chance, but he manages to lead his team to a win he thought impossible. This was not due to some spell or luck potion, but all it took was Ron to believe that he was a good keeper. Ron had an abundance of modesty, and while he denied his ability, he could never reach his full potential.

Each year the four houses in Hogwarts compete in the inter-house quidditch tournament. This tournament rewards the winning team two things: the quidditch cup, and house points. Both of these rewards bring prestige to each house, which is one of the most desirable characteristics of sports to a school. In order to attract new boarders, or new wizards, each school wants as much prestige as possible. At Hogwarts, each house's success on the quidditch field directly effects how a house does to distinguish itself from the others. While Harry is on the quidditch team, Gryffindor gains a lot of prestige and becomes the dominant house at Hogwarts. The other houses all have their notable witches and wizards, but Gryffindor has the most fleshed-out cast among students as well as other famous wizards. While a lot of this is due to Harry and his friends' involvement with Gryffindor, the points awarded by the quidditch cup certainly helps keep Gryffindor at the center of attention.

The parents who send their kids to boarding schools expect their children to develop both mentally and physically. Schools put on competitions not only for the students to flex their muscles and compete but also for the parents to be able to observe the progress their children have made. Such is the case in Evelyn Waugh's Decline and Fall. Here Dr. Fagan has the idea that the school should host a track meet and have the students run races, only in his school things are not completely fair: ““And, Pennyfeather,

I hope you will see that they are distributed fairly evenly about the school. It doesn't do to let any boy win more than two events; I leave you to arrange that. I think it would be only right if little Lord Tangent won something, and Beste-Chetwynde – yes, his mother is coming down, too. 'I am afraid all this has been thrown upon your shoulders rather suddenly. I only learned this morning that Lady Circumference proposed to visit us, and as Miss Beste-Chetwynde was coming too, it seemed too good an opportunity to be missed'" (Waugh 61). This event is an opportunity for fund-raising. Dr. Fagan does not care about the competition; all he cares about is how the school looks to the wealthy parents. The idea for the track meet arises because the school is being visited by certain families. The families are visiting for their own reasons and not to go to a track meet, but Dr. Fagan calls it an opportunity too good to be missed. So he creates an event because of their visits, not to showcase the athletic abilities of his students. Also the track meet is so poorly run that it shows how inexperienced the school is at such events. Mr. Prendergast is wearing his collar because he has no clothes appropriate for a track meet. Lord Tangent gets shot in the foot and the parents are too alert to not notice when a student cheats in order to come in first in a race. All in all, the track meet fails its purpose and the school does not gain any prestige.

Not every sporting event is to benefit the school. Children often play sports in their free time, picking up the skills required to work together. Tommy in Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go gives two opposing attitudes towards the team. The first view given is that of an arrogant kid who has talent but expects that he will be given special treatment: "The two captains who emerged were from Senior 3, though everyone knew Tommy was a better player than any of that year. They tossed for first pick, then

the one who'd won stared at the group. 'Look at him,' someone behind me said. 'He's completely convinced he's going to be first pick. Just look at him!' . . . Then when Tommy was left standing alone, and the boys all began sniggering, I heard Ruth say: 'It's coming. Hold it. Seven seconds. Seven, six, five . . .' She never got there. Tommy burst into thunderous bellowing, and the boys, now laughing openly, started to run off towards the South Playing Field" (Ishiguro 8-9). Kathy admits that Tommy certainly has skill, but he is approaching the sport in the wrong manner. He is expecting to be treated like a superior and not as an equal. Also Tommy is quick to throw a tantrum and is a bad sport when he does not get what he wants. Nobody likes a sore loser, and that proves true in this case. Shortly after this scene, Ishiguro portrays Tommy in a different light: "Then it all stopped, not overnight, but rapidly enough . . . It started with a period – it might have been a month, maybe longer – when the pranks went on pretty steadily, but Tommy failed to lose his temper. Sometimes I could see he was close to it, but he somehow controlled himself; other times, he'd quietly shrug, or react like he hadn't noticed a thing . . . There was something about Tommy himself – the way he carried himself, the way he looked people in the face and talked in his open, good-natured way – that was different from before, and which had in turn changed the attitudes of those around him" (Ishiguro 21-22). After this his peers begin to stop mocking him. He is allowed to play with them on a team, and even when he gets fouled he picks himself up and continues to play. He plays to play the game and not to show everyone how great he is. This new Tommy does not get easily upset and is cool tempered. What was causing Tommy to get so easily upset was his inability to succeed in the classroom. With no path to academic success present, Tommy looked to prove his worth in sports, which he was good at, but his

temper and serious attitude made him stick out from the team and not make many friends. At this point Miss Lucy has told Tommy that his success or lack thereof should not cause him distress. Tommy is rewarded by relaxing and just enjoying the game and by his ability to play it well.

Playing sports can become a rite of passage for the children at the schools. Paul Watkins finds himself in such a predicament in his days at the Dragon. Watkins describes this transition as a code, or a feeling that overcomes his body when certain circumstances are met. While at the Dragon school he is never able to figure out what conditions are required, but this feeling occurs twice: once when he is throwing a javelin and then again during a race right before he leaves the school. The first occurrence is after a javelin lesson in which his father tells Watkins that he should never quit, and Watkin's whining made his father very upset. The lesson his dad wanted him to learn sank in: "A couple of months later, I figured it out on my own. I was running down the ash-covered path in an athletics meet at a place called Eagle House, javelin raised high above my head and ready to throw. Suddenly I knew what I was doing. All my muscles worked in the right way and I was not gangling and stumbling anymore. When I let go of the spear, I saw it rise and rise, carried by the angels, and I blew out the Eagle House record by three and a half meters" (Watkins 85). Even though his father stops trying to teach him how to throw the javelin, Watkins keeps at it enough so that he was participating in the event at Eagle House. It is here that he senses a feeling of manliness enter his body. His muscles move according to some internal design that Paul has no idea his muscles are capable of following. This was Paul's first taste of manhood, and he wanted to figure out where it came from, but despite his efforts he could not discover where this power sprung from.

The second time that Paul felt this force was shortly before he left the Dragon: “I felt something strange one day in my last term at the Dragon, when all the classes competed in athletics against each other. I was the last runner in the 4x100-meter relay and had just started to gather some speed, arm held out behind me to take the baton from the runner coming up behind. We were out in front. The ground seemed to shake with spiked shoes thumping the ground. Then the baton slapped into my palm and I gripped it and ran. In the first huge leap of my sprint, I felt a strength in me that had not been in me before. It was the strength of not being a child anymore. Perhaps it had been growing in me for a while, but I had never felt it until now. I tried not to laugh as I moved down the track. I knew I would come in first. The boys behind me were still flip-flopping along with child’s muscles and I had new ones” (Watkins 102). Not only does this effect occur as Paul is transitioning school, but it occurs in a relay race. The baton being passed and the start of a new leg of a race are both symbolic of the transitional period in front of Paul. In order to accomplish this his body needs to advance and become that of a man. Paul still does not know what it is that caused this feeling to manifest, but he knew that he was ready for what came next.

Sports are often required in the boarding schools and, as in others areas, some students excel while others lack natural ability. Those who are not naturally gifted are not out of luck, for athletic success can still be achieved through hard work and practice. To be a successful athlete is to be a selfless individual always placing the team’s interests before one’s own. In return, sports offer all students the ability to improve their physical prowess and connect with their peers, while still able to make their own identity at the same time. This we see when Harry becomes Quidditch captain but does not let it go to

his head. Such accolades as that help set certain students apart from others and, as long as they are able to remain modest, society does not have any issues with that. It is when an individual begins to believe that he is better than his peers and deserves special treatment that society begins to show negative reactions towards him.

## CONCLUSION

### A Shifting Society and a Shifting Attitude Towards Boarding Schools

Throughout the years the British boarding school system has served as an intermediary between society and its children. Society uses this connection in order to encourage the development of proper adults. To achieve this transformation the schools guide their students to embrace an outer, public, identity that society accepts as successful. In some cases the student is able to adapt and wear this successful identity without having to compromise his own unique identity. The problem arises when the student is forced to deny his inner identity in order to pretend to be somebody he is not. Still, many parents believed that boarding school is the best option in regards to preparing their children. In the harsh school environment children are expected to develop into independent adults who embody all of the virtues that society claims are necessary. Away from their parents, students had to fend for themselves and look to their instructors for guidance in all aspects of their lives. Students were not babied, and crying was strongly discouraged. It was not a system for the weak, and parents knew this as they were sending their children away. Once at the schools, the children were greeted by strict instructors that took their jobs very seriously. While the classroom and dormitories were very ordered, the children had few boundaries. Many times students would leave the school and travel into town or go on pilgrimages much as Watkins does in his journey to the battleground. The schools, in order to promote independent thinking, allowed the

students to take such excursions. It was widely believed that the boys would benefit from having to rough it here and there and that it built character in the boys.

As time marched on, society began to shift with it. One of the first major changes to take place inside the boarding school system was the admittance of girls. Vyvyan Brendon in Prep School Children remarks that “even by the eighties, some prep schools had found it advantageous to admit girls. These numbered over 7,000 by 1981. . . historians see this change as helping to make prep schools more relaxed, as well as less tough and noisy” (Brendon 183). This change was brought around because it was found to be advantageous to the schools. Here change began in order to help the schools survive. Over time this small change has had a ripple effect and has changed more than originally anticipated. This change had a calming effect on the schools and lightened the mood. Brendon offers Duncan Wiltshire’s experience as an example of this: “When he [Duncan] went back to visit a friend’s sister at the Abbey, which took in girls shortly after he left, he was amazed by the transformation in the headmaster, Mr Dewar. He could not believe this man with ‘girls climbing all over him’ was the same headmaster from whom he had cowered” (Brendon 183). The headmaster had become a much softer person in just a few years, and even if he is still as strict as he was, it is hard to take a man serious with “girls climbing all over him.” Whereas boys were expected to rough it, girls were not subjected to similar expectations. So by introducing them into the system, the system must shift in order to groom model boys and model girls. The system becomes softer as it tries to correctly guide both sexes, and it ends up improving the environment. One way that boys directly benefitted from the admittance of girls is the addition of female sports. For example, “at Abberley Hall, the advent of co-education brought a

bonus to the boys in the form of girlish sports such as horse riding, which they could enjoy too” (Brendon 183). Such a simple change teases at changes to gender identities. In the past, and to some extent today, horse riding has been associated with females. By introducing such sports at boarding schools, members of both genders can associate with the sport. Students, both male and female, are able to take on new identities thanks to co-education. A comment by Brendon illustrates how dominant the switch to co-education has been in Britain in recent decades: “The co-educational trend has accelerated over the last three decades so that, of the schools mentioned in this book, only sixteen still cater exclusively for boys” (Brendon 183).

Another aspect of the school that was changed was the tradition of boarding. As time moved on, more research arose in child psychology. This change from home to school was difficult for some and easier for others. Brendon describes the attitude of society: “Traditionalists may dismiss the doubts of psychologists, but over the years parents’ attitudes have been profoundly affected by the views of Dr Spock and like-minded writers. Dr John Bowlby, for example, concluded after years of studying children that ‘a secure base and strong family’ sustain rather than sap self-reliance . . . To the surprise of devotees of boarding such as Philip Masters, most parents really do believe ‘that the contribution they can themselves make to their boys’ development balances the advantages of boarding school life’. . . By 1990 only a quarter of prep school pupils were full boarders, the rest either attended daily or went home at weekends” (Brendon 184). This change is largely due to advances made in other fields. As more knowledge became available to the public it became harder to ignore old practices. Who would have guessed that sending one’s children hundreds of miles away to “rough it” would have been bad

for their development? After all, that had been the tradition for as long as the parents could remember, but now new evidence has shed light on what used to be done simply because that is the way it has always been done. Under their parents' care, students are now able to find shelter where their inner identities do not have to be repressed. Parents tend to provide a more nurturing environment and can still help form their children in to model citizens. If boarding is selected, parents have decided to choose schools closer to home in order to allow frequent visits home. Some schools unfortunately relied on the belief that isolation helps encourage the development of the best virtues and sought remote locations. Such schools as Temple Grove began to lose enrollment during this time period and, even after becoming co-educational, had to shut their doors (Brendon 185).

One of the most important changes to the boarding school system has been the addition of new technology. In the past, schools relied heavily on censorship, especially in regards to mail that students would send to their parents, and wanted to make sure that the parents were assured that their kids were doing well at school. Today, however, technology is so advanced that there is no way to censor the students in the same manner as before. Brendon writes, "In the age of laptops and mobile telephones there is no point in staff trying to censor pupils' letters – even if they can get them to put pen to paper. While many boarding school are holding out against the mobile phone, they now usually make it possible for pupils to have ready contact with their families through unchecked email and letters as well as private telephone conversations" (Brendon 186). No longer can the schools create a false attitude about the conditions of their schools. In the past, if a student was unhappy, they would not be able tell their parents the truth. Any kind of

discomfort would have to be extremely watered down, and then the parents would shrug it off saying that the students would adjust. With so many ways to get communication between parents and students, such methods would benefit the schools. If the parents found out that their children were being censored and were not allowed to be honest about their experiences at school, it would be all too easy to find another school that would be a little more honest. Since they can no longer truly censor students' communications, schools must adapt and begin to treat their students better and try make them happy with their conditions. On the other hand technology has caused many schools to tighten security as well. Regarding concerns for the increased security Brendon writes, "Yet, while schools have become more connected electronically to the outside world, their premises have become sealed off because of current fears for the health and safety of pupils. They are locked in with the latest security equipment, and outsiders find it increasingly difficult to gain access unless their criminal record has been checked. Gone is the freedom the children once had to roam the countryside, take long bicycle trips and rescue strange gentlemen from drowning" (Brendon 187). Technology has made the schools more open and more closed at the same time. Unfortunately for the students, some of the independence is sapped from by these changes. With the changes being made to boarding, the students are lacking in the area of independent thinking. Still by being closer to their parents, students are still able to develop.

The entire purpose of these boarding schools is to help prepare the students for the next step of their education. Even though the system has drastically changed, parents still rely heavily on the schools to provide the correct knowledge in order to ensure their children's' success. In regards to this, Brendon remarks that, "All these changes of the

last thirty years have meant that the traditional prep school characteristics of rustication and separation have become less highly prized. But preparation remains a prime function. It is often said that pupils who are going on to board at public schools need some experience of being away from home, albeit in more comfortable surroundings than were ever offered in the past . . . The [Common Entrance] exam has changed in recent years, with more emphasis on English and Science and less on Latin, which is no longer a compulsory component. But Common Entrance is still ‘a big thing,’ dominating the horizons of contemporary prep schools and looming large in the recollection of ex-pupils to whom academic work did not come easily or whose teachers prepared them for the wrong History syllabus. Many parents provide extra coaching to ensure that their offspring gain entrance to the public school that they – or their teachers – have chosen” (Brendon 188). This is the expected identity that the school should be promoting. If the students are having a difficult time learning at school due to bad teachers or a bad learning environment, the parents are able to help where they can. The Common Entrance Exam is perhaps one of the scariest elements of the boarding school system. This is the test that judges whether or not a student is at the level to advance their education to the next step. In Paul Watkins’ Stand Before Your God, the reader can feel the sadness when Nightingale does not score high enough in order to gain admittance to Eton (Watkins 101).

Society is hardly ever united into a single camp, and there are still families that prefer the older traditional methods of schooling. These families tend to be supportive of full time boarding and stand firm behind the idea that a “little roughin’ it” will do no harm to the children. It is not only the parents that one can see this idea reflected in.

Brendon mentions how in the last few decades, many students and teachers have stopped using surnames in the classroom. Instead they have switched over to Christian names and have created a less formal classroom environment. Full-time boarders do not behave in this way. They have been trained by their parents, and the portion of society that still believes in the old methods, that surnames are to be used when talking to other boys (Brendon 186). The students, the ones that have to be subjected to the life of “roughin’ it,” are the ones that are trying to hold on to these old traditions. The older system was very old and old families had the advantage in such a system. They knew how to be successful according to the old system but now as the school system shifted they lost some of the familiarity that they once had to the system. There will always be a group of people who hold on to tradition, only in this case, there are not enough of them to fully hold back change.

The British boarding school system has been a tool used by society in order to groom each new generation, but as society has shifted so too has the standards they hold their children to. Traditionalists are very slow to change and they still try to hold on as long as possible. Permanent boarders tend to keep with traditions as a way to distinguish themselves from the newer generations that are moving away from the old ways. The old way tries to make everyone conform to a paragon of virtue that can potentially crush a child’s inner self. If the transformation is successful the individual becomes a part of the club for life. Being a part of this “club” gives the students lifelong connections in the world. If a student fails to come out fully transformed in the right image, he is marked a failure and will not have the same opportunities in life. Today this is not true to the same extent. It is still very important that all students study hard and passes their tests, but the

environment that molds them has shifted. Instead of being raised in isolation, children are raised in proximity to their parents and are able to develop their unique individual inner identities. Students today are more likely to be happy with their school experience than those that experienced the same schools three decades ago.

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