

“Our World? Our World!”

Social identities in an English boarding school



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Summary

This thesis discusses formation of identities among the pupils of Dalesview House, a boarding school in a rural setting in England. My main focus lies on interaction among the boarders of this school.

I explore boarders understanding of “home” by listening to their stories. I turn my attention towards processes of emplacement as I focus on members of staff’s efforts to make the boarders “feel at home”.

Relations between the pupils of Dalesview House and members of staff are another topic in this thesis. I explore this in relation to a “problem” of managing “closeness” and “distance” related to a fear of paedophilia as perceived by members of staff.

Socialisation of gender roles is another focus within the thesis. I explore informal feedback children receive in their daily lives, on sport arenas and in the classroom. A focus lies on behavioural boundaries between girls and boys and reactions received by children who challenge these boundaries.

Another focus lies on social organisation among the children. I explore how groups are more or less stable as they are turned towards different forms of values. I explore fluctuations of members between groups of children and reciprocity based relationships between children associated with different groups.

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1 Introduction

Spring has arrived at Dalesview House boarding school. There are just a few patches of snow left on the fields. The daffodils are fighting their way through the soil surrounding the old boarding house. It is break time and a few girls are leaning against the stone wall soaking up the spring's first warm sunrays, a group of boys are playing football on the field. Pete comes cycling past the girls, there is a big smile on his face as it is the first day he has been allowed to take the bike out after winter. Morton swirls past Pete, he smiles and shouts to Pete "I'll race you! The loser's a 'bitch'". Pete laughs and says "You'll be the bitch" and the two boys disappear rapidly down the brick lane.

The focus of the thesis

This thesis builds on a field work carried out during the six first months of 2006 at Dalesview House an English preparatory boarding school. The main focus lies on the pupils who live in the school, i.e. the "boarders", of this school. The boys and girls of Dalesview House were in the age span between seven and fourteen years old. I study children as competent members of society rather than as 'adults-in-training'. I agree with Elizabeth Chin when she claims that "Children are no more fundamentally adults-in-training than women in their 20's can be understood to be, fundamentally, old-ladies-in training" (Chin 2001: 134).

Boarding schools are small, relatively closed off communities centred on education of children and adolescents. Children's stays at boarding schools have been described as rites de passages, in which they are separated from community before they return with new statuses (Cookson and Persell 1985, Gathorne-Hardy 1977, Okely 1993). Rites de passage involves a liminal phase (Van Gennep 1999), and boarders' existence at school seen as a rite de passage draws attention to their separation from their families and home communities and to the fact that their being in a community

features few of the characteristics of both their previous states and of their coming lives (Turner 2002). The youngest boarders of Dalesview House were eight years old. Before they left for boarding their parents or nannies would usually provide for all the child's needs and the children would have little responsibility. When the children have reached eighteen and undergone their whole boarder education, they are ready to return to society with new statuses as adults and with more responsibility. It is the period between these two phases pupils spend at boarding school, the period described as "betwixt and between" (Turner 2002:359). It is during this period the children are taught "the mores" of a society, its customs, values and accumulated knowledge (Gathorne-Hardy 1977: 27). Education also serves to shape people's identities by situating them on a "social map", by explaining a person "where he takes his place in society and performs the various tasks suitable to his position in its hierarchy" (Gathorne-Hardy 1977: 432).

Parts of the anthropological research on boarding schools have been autobiographical (Okely 1993, Beyer Broch 1995). These anthropologists have used their own memory of their stays at boarding schools as a point of departure for their analysis. Both of the above mentioned authors focus on how the socialization processes at the schools forms the individual child or adolescent in certain ways. Okely's contribution concerns a girls' boarding school in the 1950's. She claims that this boarding school presented girls with models of achievement which were normally associated with men, while it undervalues models of achievements associated with women, and thus provides grounds for male domination. She argues that the girls at this school were "prepared mainly for economic and political dependence within marriage" (Okely 1993:119).

Harald Beyer Broch turns his attention towards Eckboskolen, a Norwegian boarding school for boy's where Beyer Broch himself was a pupil from 1959 to 1961. He focuses on institutionalized socialisation processes within the school and on how the development of individuality was encouraged within a school setting with pupils of different backgrounds (Beyer Broch 1995).

Lomawaima (1993) has given a historical account of boarding schools for Native American girls. She claims that Native American children in boarding school settings were “trained to adopt the work discipline of the protestant ethic and to accept their proper place in society as a marginal class” (Lomawaima 1993: 9). She claims that life at the boarding schools was strictly homogenous in terms of dress, appearance and educational opportunities. She sees the schools as a tool employed by governments in order to dissimilate tribes and to turn the children’s loyalties from the community of the tribe towards individuality. She sees socialization processes within the schools as moving the girls away from the tribal identities in that girls were forced to reconstruct “her very body, appearance, manners and habits” (Lomawaima 1993: 9).

These studies are in one way or another focused on identity formation among boarding school pupils. My study fits within this terrain as I focus on identities related to place, relations, gender, and group formations.

Children residing at boarding schools have been described as being educated into internalizing the values of the upper class and thereby strengthen their association with it (Bourdieu 1990, Cookson and Hodges 1985, Gathorne-Hardy 1977). These descriptions focus mainly on the transfer of cultural values from adults to children. I will keep a main focus on peer culture, interaction between the children, in order to bring forth the complexity of children’s understandings.

The development of boarding schools

The first boarding schools in the U.K. sprung out of Christianity’s entry to Britain around year 500 AD (Gathorne-Hardy 1977). Cathedrals and churches that were built were most often accompanied by a school. The early services were held in Latin, a foreign language, and they were sung. The schools which were related to these churches taught their choirists to sing, and they taught Latin for their services. Another important aim of these schools was to make people convert to Christianity

and follow their church. These early schools were associated with poor people. Rich people during this period were usually taught in their own homes, or in their peers' houses before the church grew powerful. Poor people therefore provided the biggest recruitment base for the church as the church would provide food and shelter. Young boys were taken into the church schools in the 19th century. This was related to the church's need for choirists with light voices, so they recruited boys whose voices had yet to be broken.

Christianity in Britain grew larger and more powerful during the early middle ages. With this development more churches and schools were established. In the 16th century King Henry VIII initiated the break of Rome and established the Church of England. The break of Rome and dissolution of monasteries meant that a new foundation for the schools had to be found. This implied that education would disappear unless a new basis was found. The schools found a new foundation for financing the schools by bringing in a fee which was supposed to cover the schools running and the payment of teacher's salaries in addition to endowments from the founders of the schools. This meant that the wealthier a school's pupils were, the wealthier the school would be. The economic growth during the industrial revolution with the expansion of trade in the early 19th century brought forth a lot of newly rich merchandisers. These people with newly accumulated wealth usually wanted to join the company of the upper class. Gathorne-Hardy claims that these newly rich people often had the habits of the lower classes, they spoke with an "inappropriate" accent and had other negatively considered habits such as "bad" table manners. One of the most effective ways the newly rich could help their children get rid of these habits was to send them away to boarding school. At the school they would be taught habits of the upper classes, as the children learnt the codes of the upper classes, the more they were set apart from their old associates and they became increasingly related to the upper classes (Gathorne-Hardy 1977).

Separate ladies academies which were boarding establishments were established around 1720. These schools were separated from the boys' schools until the 1960's

when certain schools turned into co-education to compensate for drop in the numbers of pupils. A lot of people showed hesitation with the development of mixed schools, and they thought of it as being too boy orientated and that girls would be subjected to too much 'male dominated influences'. The surroundings were also thought of as being insufficient, staffs were both worried that they would not have sufficient numbers of hair dryers and that the bathroom facilities would not be good enough (Gathorne-Hardy 1977).

Organisation of the thesis and theoretical approaches

As I have mentioned earlier I will explore identities. Identity highlights "the individual's social and cultural surroundings, and the mechanisms of socialization and cultural acquisition." (Byron 2001:292). Byron claims that identities are classificatory as "the social and cultural world is held to be composed of segments, membership in terms of which individuals must define themselves, or be defined by others." (Byron 2001:292). I will explore how topics such as emplacement, relations between members of staff and boarders, gender and alliances between children influence identities.

In chapter two I introduce the place of Dalesview House. I outline routines in the pupils' everyday lives in this chapter. I also describe my positions in the field by showing which arenas I had access to and which arenas I did not have access to. I will elaborate my status as a young woman doing field work among children and adolescents. I will also elaborate on the strategies I employed in order to acquire data.

In chapter three, the first thematic chapter of the thesis, I focus on strategies employed by staff and boarders aimed at creating connections to the school as a place of living. I explore these strategies as aspects of emplacement processes (Feld and Basso 1996). I start off this chapter by exploring boarders' understanding of what makes a home. It sprung forth from conversations with some of the boarders that one of the most important aspects of what made a home was the relations one had towards

people within a specific place, rather than time spent within this place, or the place in itself. A home was the place(s) where children's family lived, and where they thrived. In the last part of this chapter I go on to describe emplacement processes by using Feld and Basso's (1996) perspective on how people bestow meanings to places by living in them and by employing them as settings for situations (1996). I shall focus on how members of staff and pupils give meaning to their surroundings as they strive to make the children "feel at home".

In chapter four I discuss relations between children and different members of staff. School staff experienced a dilemma considering how 'close' they should get to the children as they usually lacked previous relations with the children or the children's parents before they arrived at the school. This dilemma got exaggerated as members of staff at schools in the surrounding had lost their jobs as a consequence of allegations of paedophilia. I explore these topics by employing Goffman's perspective on how individuals play a role adjusted other roles carried out on the stage by different performers (1990). I to explore how the dilemma of giving children the 'closeness' they were understood as needing and at the same time keeping distance in order to avoid accusations of paedophilia was attempted to be solved by distributing different kind of roles to members of staff. I will also illustrate how a 'distance' between certain members of staff and pupils was established in order to make the pupils respect adults and to create a pleasant teaching environment.

Chapter five explores aspects of socializations of gender roles at the school. Boys and girls at the school often spent their time away from each other. I will investigate how girls were encouraged to develop 'feminine qualities' and boys were encouraged to develop 'masculine qualities'. I explore gender in a relational perspective and on constriction by viewing meaning in relation to cultural definitions of manhood and womanhood (Melhuus 1993). I follow girls and boys in their games lessons¹ and explore how sports helped defining boundaries (MacClancy 1996) between the

¹ Girls and boys were separated in their sport lessons and they performed different types of sports.

genders and on how the spatial separation of boys and girls helped with socialization of respectively ‘masculine-’ and ‘feminine qualities’.

In chapter six I wish to illustrate how diverse objects, actions and behaviours seen as encompassing value differ among the pupils. I will explore this by taking use of Bourdieu’s descriptions of economic-, cultural-, social- and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1985:724 as in Çağlar 1999). I will describe fluctuations between different group as related to the attainability of desired objects or qualities. I will illustrate how conversion of different forms of capital can move children “up” or “down” in the social space (Bourdieu 1995). I will explore how children who possess resources desired by others can make a foundation for relation based on reciprocity. I will view these relationships in the view of patron-client theory (Paine 1971).

In the last chapter I summarise the different topics of the thesis. I elaborate on identity as an important topic throughout the thesis.

2 Dalesview House: routines and positioning.

We find ourselves at Dalesview House a boarding school located in the countryside of north England. It is 7.45 in the morning forty-one tired looking boys dressed in suits and seventeen tired looking girls dressed in red knee length skirts and black blazers are waiting patiently to be allowed inside the dining room. It is the boarders of Dalesview House who waits to be served breakfast. The children are let in and they have all finished their breakfast when it is time to go to assembly. Two yellow school busses turn up by the entrance before the boarders have reached the entrance of the great hall where the assembly was being held. Shouting and laughter can be heard as the doors of the bus opens and sixty-two boys and girls are pushing each other trying to get out of the buss first, the day pupils of Dalesview House have arrived.

The children are handed a red hymn book as they enter the great hall. The youngest children who are six years old sit on the floor in front of the stage, the seven year olds sat behind them. The older the children were, the further back they were placed in the room. The pupils of year eight, the thirteen and fourteen year olds were the oldest pupils at the school, they were also the only ones who were allowed to sit on chairs. The resident teacher² was already in the room, he sat down on a bench next to the matron³ who had come to watch the assembly. The headmaster came out of the part of the building where he was residing together with his family, his wife who was also the head matron was already in the hall. The headmaster went up on the stage, smiled and said “good morning all”. A large poster covers the wall behind the headmaster, it displays politicians, football players, pop stars and model. Someone had written on the poster with a red pen, it said “Our world? Our world!” The headmaster turns to look at the poster, he smiles and says “that will be you one day” he turned back to the

² The resident teacher was a twenty six year old man who lived in the boys’ boarding hall.

³ A matron has the responsibility of doing the boarder’s laundry as well as handing out medicines or plasters to the children if they are ill.

assembly and told us that we were going to sing a hymn. All the people in the hall stood up as they sang, and during the prayer afterwards everyone bowed their heads and folded their hands. The head master held a speech about current events which had been mentioned in the news the previous week. When he had finished talking he smiled and told everybody to have a good day before he left the room and the children were free to go to their lessons which lasted until lunch time.

When the children had finished lunch they usually had two more lessons before they ran excitedly up towards the changing rooms and got changed into their games kit. The boys looked excitedly at each other and puffed in each others shoulders as they walked up to the cricket field. The girls walked quietly up towards the netball courts by the school chapel where they were going for a try out for a game which was going to be played against another school.

The girls and boys were sweaty after three hours of sport and they were looking forward to relax for half an hour while they were having dinner once they had changed back into the school uniform. After dinner it was time for the pupils to do their homework. The pupils would go back to their classroom where they would meet with a teacher who would help the children if they were stuck.

At seven o'clock the school day was finished. The school busses arrived back at the school to pick up the day pupils, and the boarders were left alone. From seven to eight the boarders were left to do activities of their own choosing. A group of boys would often sit in front of the TV, while a few others preferred to sit in front of the computers and some of the boarders would go outside or retreat to their dormitories. At eight o'clock the sound of a loud bell filled the air, this signalized that supper was ready and the boarders had to gather by the kitchen in the boarding house.

Conversations would flow freely during this time, and Barbra, the head matron and the wife of the headmaster usually had to tell the children repeatedly to calm down. Once supper was over, Barbra rushed the children upstairs towards their dormitories to get into their pyjamas and go to bed so that they would feel refreshed for the next day.

Positioning within the field

The headmaster of Dalesview House employed two Australian gap students every year. The gap students arrive at Dalesview House just after they have graduated from senior school. The gap students follow the children around in their everyday lives. They are responsible for waking the boarders up in the morning, they assist pupils during lessons in the classroom and during sport activities. It is their chore to spend time with the boarders during the evening and when the boarders have the day off on Sundays and to ensure the well being of the children.

The children looked upon me as a gap student, this was probably because I had a lot of the same statuses as the Australian gap students, and just like them I am young and foreign. The children probably looked upon me as a gap student also because I followed them around in their everyday lives, usually on the same arenas as the gap students, but without clearly defined tasks. I explained to the boarders that I was spending time with them to get information as I was doing research for my master degree, none the less they usually reoffered to me as a 'gappie'. My young informants thereby placed me in a category which was meaningful for them as most of the children neither had heard of field work or social anthropology.

The role I was ascribed as a gap student made it possible for me to follow my informants through a range of different arenas. I participated at mealtimes, during assemblies, I followed them during lessons, at sport practices as well as during matches with other schools, both home and away, during break times and after school hours. I spent the evenings with the boarders as well as Sundays when the school was closed, both at the school and on excursions.

Even though the gappie role served as a door opener in many respects, it was still information I found it hard to get access to, and arenas I was excluded from. This was probably mostly due to my gender status. As a woman I was refused access to the boy's dormitory halls. My gender also made it problematic at times to get access to the boy's sports lessons. During the games lessons at the school the children were

divided after gender and abilities. The boys were performing ‘boys’ sports’ while the girls were performing ‘girl sports’. The boys had male sport teachers, while the girls had female sport teachers. A consequence of this was that the teachers wanted me mainly to follow the girls during their games lessons, and I thereby got limited insight in the games lessons of the boys.

As I followed the pupils in the arenas I had access to I collected data through conversations, participating observation and pure observation. The conversations took place as I spent time with the boarders during mealtimes, on the sideline during sport matches, during break times, after the end of the school day and so on. When the possibility has been there, I have participated actively, among other things, during sport practices, at excursions and in the spare time. Other times it came more natural to employ pure observation, as in lessons in the class room and during sport matches, when my participation would have been disturbing for the activities of the children.

Influences on the field, an ethical dilemma

A social anthropologist will always influence the field by his or hers mere presence, but within anthropology it prevails an ideal which states that the social anthropologist should affect the field in as little degree possible. I have attempted to make a conscious effort to avoid interrupting interaction in between the children, especially in the incidences where members of staff have been present. Yet I have observed episodes where I have not found it justifiable not to interrupt, these episodes have often evolved around bullying. Several of the teachers I spoke to about the topic of bullying were of the understanding that Dalesview House was a very ‘soft’ school with a small amount of bullying compared to most of the other schools in England. They claimed that when bullying appeared it was only minor incidents where the children could settle the differences in between them and where it was unnecessary to disrupt the interaction. I found this very problematic as I became closely connected with several of the pupils who at times were subjected for bullying. These children opened them self to me, and they let me know how much the bullying upset them and

effected them in several ways. They also let me know that they found it problematic that teachers did not get involved to stop the bullying in instances like this. This is the reason why I often chose to get involved when I witnessed incidences of bullying, even though I was aware of the risk that the bullies would most likely hide several of their deeds towards me, which again might lead to less insight on certain topics on my side.

3 A feeling of home; belonging and emplacement

New boarders usually arrive at Dalesview House without any previously existing relations towards the place or the people there. In the first part of this chapter I will explore the boarders' views and understandings of notions of home. Home has been defined as "... the place where people live, to which they return, or where they dream of returning if they are obliged to leave. It is assumed to be a place to which people have a relationship that is unchanging" (Hammond 2004:10). In this definition home is tied to place. I wish to elaborate on how other aspects as well are involved in conceptions of home. I will explore whether the notion of home evolves around place, social relationships or both.

Further on I wish to explore aspects of emplacement processes, by focusing on the ways boarders develops relations to place and people. I will attempt to elaborate on how social organisation and identities are shaped by such emplacement processes. I will do this by focusing on the staff's endeavours to help the boarders feel at home. Home and homely were often brought up as values among children and staff. I will explore how these are constituted as meaningful in relation to emplacement processes. In the last part of the chapter I will direct my attention towards the children and towards how actions among children serve to enhance their belonging to place and people.

The complexity of home

The boarders at the school often spoke about their "homes" and they contested this with the school environment. Even so, it emerged through conversations that the children had complex ideas about what constitutes a home. It appeared that one's place of residence does not necessarily fit the description of home. The multifaceted understandings of what made a home were illuminated in a conversation I had with Linda, a thirteen year old girl.

One evening Linda told me that she lives both in Dubai and in USA as her parents are divorced. She said that she does not get to see her father much since he recently moved to USA to work in the oil business. Linda told me that she would normally go home to her mum in Dubai during the holidays. Linda had lived in Dubai a year before she went to Dalesview House. She told me that Dubai was the place where her best friend lived and that it was her favourite home. Before Linda moved to Dubai she had lived together with her mum and dad in Nigeria, but she told me:

“That was never really home, I didn’t have any friends there, it was just me, my mum and my dad. They were constantly working so I was on my own most of the time. Nigeria was just a place I lived because my parents were there. It was never really a real home.”

When I asked Linda what it was like in USA, she told me that she had never been there before but that she was looking forward to go home to USA since she had a new half sister there which she had never met before. It surprised me to hear Linda referring to a place she had never been before as a home. I asked Linda why she thought of the place in USA where her father lived as a home, and not Nigeria where she used to reside with her parents. Linda replied that:

“America is home because I have a family there. I mean, I have my sister, my dad and my step mum. Because there’s so many there I will always have stuff to do and people to be with. And I have a sister there so it would always be two of us. I mean ... I don’t know ... It’s just cosy, we would be a whole family there, and that’s why it’s home. Nigeria was never home cause I didn’t like it there. I didn’t have any friends, my parents were always working so it just didn’t feel like a home.”

We kept on talking about homes and I asked Linda if she thought of Dalesview House as a home.. Linda started laughing and said:

“Don’t be daft. As if school would ever be my home. This is just a place I live because I have to. I go to school here, so I’ve got to live here. It’s kind of like when

people have to live in a certain place because of work. It can't be a home cause my family don't live here"

It has been pointed out that "home is not necessarily on spot, or even one stretch of land" (James, 2003:223). A lot of children in my study claimed that they had more than one home, and that not all places where they had lived qualified for being described as a home. Linda said that she had two homes, one in Dubai, her favourite, and one in USA. Home certainly had to do with place, but for these children a home did not have to be the place where they spend the majority of their time. When I asked Linda whether she considered Dalesview House as her home, she told me that Dalesview House was a place she stayed to get her education and to work. It was a place in which the children knew that they only were spending a limited period of their lives and that the relations they had to most of the adults and most likely to a lot of the children would cease once they left the school. It was not a place to which they would return after they had left school, in Linda's words, "It's a place we stay to get a good education and that's it."

Dalesview House was the place where the boarders spent most of their time, but a home for these children was not the place where they spent their everyday lives, it was not the place in itself, it was rather their relations to people within a place which made a home, and to a certain degree whether they thrived there or not. Several children like Linda who had divorced parents told me that they had two homes, one where their mum lived and one with their dad lived. They would often refer to one of these places as their favourite or real home; this would be where they had most of their friends. To sum up; the boarders I discussed this subject with did not solely define home in geographical terms but also in relational terms. The home place in itself was a location which the children held certain loyalties to, but it was not the place in its own right, or times spent within a specific place, which was seen as the main essence of a home. Relations with people residing within a place, most importantly with family and friends, the amount of time spent with these people, as well their thriving within this place, were values the children associated with a home.

The stronger connections children had to people within a place, the more homely it was perceived as being. Place was a fundamental aspect of a home, but a place where one was residing would generally not be seen as a home unless the features mentioned above were present.

Hammond claims that “home is a variable term, one that can be transformed, newly invented, and developed in relation to the circumstances in which people find themselves or choose to place themselves”(Hammond, 2004:10). The case above illustrates that the place where one lives does not necessarily have to correspond with the place considered as home. The boarders of the school find themselves spending their everyday lives away from their parents but the majority of the children still consider the place where their mother and/or father lives as a home. The children I spoke to regarding this subject had a strict distinction between the place where they lived, which was at the school, and what they considered to be their home[s]. As already pointed out the main aspect which made a home for these children was their relations to people residing within a place, a home was the place where the children’s family and friends lived and spent time with the children. A home was a place to which they returned and would keep on returning after they had finished school, whereas the school was a place where resided and which they would leave and not return to once they had completed their education there.

The shaping of belonging

Several anthropologists have described how places are constructed in such a way that they help define social organization and identities within local communities (Ardener 1979, Lovell 1998, Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, Okely 1993). The staff at Dalesview House strived to create “a homely atmosphere” to help the boarders settle in and increase their well being during their stay at the school. Dalesview House was decorated in a certain way in order to enhance the boarders’ relations to the school and to each other.

Most of the walls in the common areas of the boarding house were covered with photographs. The wall was displayed with old group photos of pupils and staff; these were pictures of children and teachers on school trips, in sport competitions and participating in special events. Not just in the common rooms were pictures of the children displayed, but also in the house of the headmaster and his family. The kitchen wall was literally papered with pictures and postcards of and from the pupils. The children could often be found in front of these photos where they would discuss which picture looked the best, making a point out of which person appeared on the most photographs, and smiling proudly when seeing a picture of themselves, saying “Look that’s me.”

According to Barbra these pictures were put up because “It makes the children feel good when they see pictures of themselves on the wall.” She said that

“If the children feel lonely they can come down here and look at pictures of themselves and their friends during good times and they will feel better.[...] We decorate with artwork they’ve made and with pictures of them to make it look more like a home. We want to have a homely atmosphere here, which is why we’ve got their pictures on the walls. We decorated our kitchen wall with their pictures and postcards to make it feel even more like a home, that way the children know that they’re always welcome.”

Barbra smiled and said,

“Well, that was one reason for the picture wall; another reason is that the wall used to be hideous, but the bursars⁴ won’t let us change it. Anyway, the children like to sit for hours in front of this wall to look at the pictures and postcards. It makes it a lot more like a home for them when they see their pictures, not only in the common areas, but also in our⁵ house.”

⁴ The bursar was responsible for the finances of the entire school.

⁵ The head master couple’s house.

The display of pictures, artwork and postcards of and from the children also helped creating a sense of belonging to the place. Wendy James claims that “we tend to mould land into our own vision of how it should be” (James, 2003:216). The staff saw home as an important value and they strived to create “a homely atmosphere” in order to increase the boarders’ well-being. This can be looked upon as emplacement, which is “the act of forging a relationship between person (individual or collective) and place” (Hammond, 2004:80). The pictures in the common areas downstairs and in the headmaster’s kitchen also helped creating a common identity and a sense of belonging towards the school. Most of the children did not have any established relations with people or place once they arrived at Dalesview House so this had to be created at their arrival. Barbra presented pictures of the boarders at the kitchen wall in order to portray them as a group and to establish a group identity which helped forging a connection between children and place.

School uniform as a marker of belonging and common identity

The way an individual or group dress indicates aspects related to their identity. Image and clothing can be used as a device for identifying a community, in short: “Dress speaks” (Scott 1986:4). The school uniform helped setting the pupils of Dalesview House apart from pupils of other schools, and it was perceived as a tool which served to establish a group identity. Once a child had undergone his or hers “tasterday” and made the decision to attend the school they would receive Daleview House’s school uniform. Old pupils usually showed a lot of enthusiasm when a new pupil received his or her school uniform.

Twelve year old Tessie had just arrived from Spain, coming to spend a term at Dalesview House in order to improve her English. She was sitting at her bed in the dormitory she was going to share with Sammy, Iris and Yolanda. A heap of red skirts, white blouses and blue blazers was lying on the floor. Barbra suddenly came rushing through the door, carrying several more blouses, skirts and blazers. She smiled at

Tessie and said “Let’s see if we can get you into one of these.” Sammy, Iris and Yolanda clapped their hands, laughed and shouted repeatedly “Go Tessie, Go! Get your kit.” The noise in the room got louder and louder, until Barbra nicely told the girls to calm down. Barbra closed the door and Tessie picked up a red skirt to try on. Barbra went up to Tessie who was now wearing the Skirt. Barbra grabbed a hold of the hem of the skirt and pulled, she shook her head and said “This won’t do, it needs to go below your knees”. Yolanda shouted excitedly “You can’t go around looking like that, it’s not good enough”. Tessie smiled and tried on another skirt, and this time Barbra nodded approvingly when the skirt was on. She checked that it was sitting correctly by pulling the hem of the skirt, making sure that the skirt covered Tessie’s knees. Barbra smiled and said “That’s it Tessie, we’ve found your skirt”. Sammy, Iris and Yolanda smiled excitedly, clapped their hands and shouted “yey”. Tessie continued searching through the clothes until she had found a blouse and blazer which fitted her and was approved by Barbra. Tessie had a big smile on her face when they had found the uniform which fitted her, Lucy ran up to Tessie, she gave her a big hug and said “You’re in our gang now.” The other girls lined up after Lucy and they all gave Tessie a hug. Barbra turned to Tessie and said “Welcome Tessie, you’re one of us now” before she picked up the clothing on the floor and left the room.

Clothes can be seen as having a symbolic function in that certain types of clothing come to represent particular groups, professions and functions (Scott 1986:31). The school uniform can be seen as having a symbolic function the way it represented pupils residing at Daleview House. In handing out similar school uniforms staff communicated to the children that they were one group. As a teacher told me:

“School uniforms are good ‘cause they reduce differences between the kids. No one really feels left out when they all have to wear the same clothes. I guess you can say that the uniform makes all the kids the same.”

The School Uniform is also associated with the place Dalesview House. The uniform can be seen as a symbol which stands for the group of pupils within Dalesview

House. When new pupils are handed their uniform it is a symbol which indicates their new sense of belonging towards the place and the people of Dalesview House. This way a school uniform helped forge a relationship between children and place and can therefore be understood as assisting in the emplacement process.

The boarding house and group formation

Barbra talked about how the display of pictures and artwork would make the children feel at home, and she remarked how a new pupil became one of them once she had received the school uniform. These were actions from “above”, in that it was actions employed by staff which influenced the boarders’ emplacement process. It was not only staff that influenced the boarders’ sense of belonging to the school and people there, the boarders themselves also employed strategies which helped create common identities and a relation to the school.

There were six doors in the girls’ dormitory hallway. The five first doors had colourful posters with drawings or pictures and the names of the girls who lived in the dorm pinned up on them. The dormitories were organised by age; the first dormitory when you reached the hall belonged to the youngest girls. This was also the smallest of the rooms. Dorm five which was located in the end of the hallway belonged to the oldest girls. This was the biggest dormitory. The walls in most of the girl dorms were covered with posters within a certain theme. Dorm four belonged to Ronda, Alexa, Alison and Sheryl who were all thirteen year old pupils in year eight. The walls in their dormitory were covered with posters of dogs. There were four single beds standing next to the wall, one in each corner. There was a bedside table standing next to each of the beds. All of the four girls had three framed pictures on the top of their bedside table. They all had the same picture of the four of them that was taken in front of the main school building. They had one picture of their parents, and they all had a picture of a dog. On Alexa’s bedside table there was a picture of a brown English Setter, Sheryl had a picture of a white and brown Cocker Spaniel and Ronda and Alison both had a picture of a black Labrador. Ronda told me that only Alexa and

herself had their own dog. She told me that they all needed a picture of a dog because they were the dog dorm. Sheryl and Alison did not have their own dog, so they had to get a picture from somewhere else. Ronda told me that Sheryl had a picture of the art teacher's dog, while she herself had given Alison a picture of her own dog.

Basso looks at the relation between people and place, how people constitute their landscapes and feel connected to them, by examining people's sense of place, i.e. "the relation of sensation to emplacement" (1996:54). Basso employs Heidegger's term "dwelling" as a point of departure in his description of place (1996). "Dwelling is not just living in place, but also encompasses ways of fusing setting to situation, locality to life world" (Feld and Basso 1996:8). Basso asserts that "Dwelling is said to consist in the multiple lived relationships that people maintain with places, for it is solely by virtue of these relationships that space acquires meaning." (1996:54). Groups of boarders of the same age and gender are placed in the same dormitory. The boarders decorated their dormitories within a specific theme. This theme could for instance be dogs; dogs would then be a symbol representing the children residing in the dormitory. Dogs symbolized the girl's belonging to the same dormitory group and it was a symbol which helped creating a common identity. The forming of a sense of belonging is tied to identity and to differentiation between "us" and "them" (Lovell 1998:53). The dog symbol which the girls in dormitory five employed signified a sense of belonging towards the dormitory and the children who lived there. In addition to giving the children a sense of belonging towards the dormitory and the children within it, the dog symbol was a sign which separated the girls in dormitory five from the other dormitories. As Ronda told me, "If you are going to be in dorm five, you have to have a picture of a dog, if not you're out." Dogs are a symbol which the girls have chosen to identify with. Other dorms have other symbols, such as the girls in dorm three who have chosen to identify themselves with pop and movie stars and call themselves "the celebs". When new boarders arrive at the school they are placed together with children they had no previous relations with. The children within a dormitory chooses an object which will symbolize the group, and in doing this they forge a connection between themselves and the place. The dormitory as a place

acquires meaning as it provides the children with a “setting” which they manipulate in such a way to show that they constitute a group which belongs to the dormitory, and they thereby create a “sense of place” (Feld and Basso 1996) in relation to emplacement.

Emplacement formed the basis for social organization and different forms of community identity in the refugee camps studied by Hammond (2004). This was in line with what took place at Dalesview House, and was illuminated by what Barbra told me: “We put children of the same age and sex in the same dorms because it is more likely that they will get along. It is important that the children who share dormitories are friends because we can’t supervise the children at all times when they’re in their dorms.” Most of the children who were sharing dormitories were also good friends; they would spend a lot of time together and stand up for each other in conflicts. The staff shapes relations between children by organizing them into dormitories by sex and age. The children who were sharing a dorm would frequently develop a profound connection to each other; they would identify each other as belonging to the same dorm as opposed to other children who belonged to different dorms, thus defining the group formation amongst the children. In this way emplacement forms a basis for social organization and different forms of identity among the children at Dalesview House. The placing of children into different dormitories, the shaping of the dorm mates’ common identity, and the way the dorm mates decorated their dorm with an object chosen to symbolize their common identity helped “to generate a relationship of belonging between persons and place.” (Hammond, 2004:81).

Conclusion

The boarders did not look upon Dalesview House as a home even though it was the place they lived and spent most of their time. This means that the place where one lives does not necessarily have to correspond with the place[s] one consider as being one’s home[s], but other aspects might have to be taken into consideration if one is to

call a place a home. Several aspects were seen as important for the children if a place were to be considered as a home, e.g. relations towards people who lived within this place and the children's well being there. Home then does not only have to do with place but also, and maybe most significantly, with relations and thriving.

Cohen claims that locality is created in the borderlands as people recognize that they are different from other people (Cohen 1982). At Dalesview House they had an opposite point of departure. When new pupils arrive at Dalesview house it is acknowledged that they are different and that they need to develop relations both towards the people within Dalesview house and towards the place in itself. Symbols were important in this emplacement process. By displaying pictures of the children in the common areas of the school and in the headmaster's family kitchen, Barbra wanted to show that they were all "one big group" and to create a "homely atmosphere". One of the ideals of having a school uniform was that it portrayed the pupils as one group; it identified the pupils as belonging to Dalesview House as opposed to other schools. Children who were sharing dormitories also employed symbols in order to represent themselves as a group belonging to one dormitory as opposed to members of other dormitories. In employing the three symbols mentioned above staff and pupils "transformed an unfamiliar physical place [for the children], into a personalized physical place" (Hammond 2004:3) and thereby took part in the pupils' emplacement processes. The emplacement processes formed a basis for social organization and forming of identities. Members of staff made efforts to define the pupils as one group and connect them to place by providing them with similar clothes and displaying their pictures. At the same time boarders were differentiated as staff placed in different dormitories after sex and age. In choosing symbols representing the members of a dormitory, children strengthened the sense of belonging with their fellow roommates and forged a relationship between themselves and the place, but simultaneously they enhanced the differentiation between themselves and children within other dormitories. When children were grouped together and differentiated from each other by the emplacement process they would develop a common identity in opposition to the others.

Relations will also be the focus in the next chapter where I will explore relationships between pupils and members of staff in by focusing on issues of emotional and physical proximity.

4 Managing Closeness and Distance: Staff–boarder relations

During the 1970's and 1980's there was a strong focus on teaching children to have a positive relationship with their own sexuality, sexual liberation being given much attention in western societies. Out of this openness a lot of people emerged and revealed stories concerning sexual abuse of children, and a powerful discourse about sexual abuse sprang out of this (Davies 2003).

According to Rubin the appeal to protect children is the scheme that most easily causes erotic hysteria. She asserts that “the law is especially ferocious in maintaining the boundary between childhood innocence and adult sexuality”, and that laws “are the primary mechanism for insuring the separation of sexual generations” (Rubin 1999:146). Teachers are closely inspected for signs of sexual misconduct and risk losing their jobs if they are fall under suspicion of sex offences or if they have an “unconventional lifestyle.” Rubin claims that “the more influence one has over the next generation, the less attitude is permitted in behaviour and opinion” (Rubin 1999:159).

I was told by several teachers at Dalesview House that staff at schools in the surrounding area had been accused of “suspicious behaviour towards the children” and that staff members had lost their jobs as a consequence of these accusations. The fear of getting accused for sexual misconduct often increases when one takes care of other people's children. This fear determines how members of staff relates to the children.

The headmaster of Dalesview House asked me to follow him into the kitchen so he could talk to me in privacy on my first day at the school. He told me that there were certain things I needed to know before I got to meet the pupils. He told me that as “adults we have to be very conscious about how we act around the children as it is very easy to be labelled as a paedophile. We have to take certain precautions to

prevent this from happening.” The headmaster continued by telling me that the most important precautions we have to take was to keep a certain distance to the children. He told me that “Rumours often start going around if you’re alone in a room with one of the kids, so it’s best to avoid that completely.” Outside the window we spotted Mitch, the male “gappie”, playing with some of the youngest boys. Mitch was chasing the boys and when he caught them he would grab them, hold them upside down and shake them. The boys were all laughing and screaming, it was easy to see that they were having a good time. The headmaster turned his attention towards me again, he smiled and said that “Of course children need some physical contact, but it’s important to keep it at a minimum to avoid accusations.” He further told me that it was best for me to stay away from the boys’ dormitories as some of the boys are teenagers and fall very easily in love. The headmaster said that they try to avoid this from happening by not letting female staff members into the boys’ dorms.

This fear of paedophilia and accusations about paedophilia placed the staff in a dilemma; on one hand it was believed that the children needed physical and emotional contact with adults; on the other hand they were scared that physical and emotional contact or one on one contact with a child would lead to accusations about paedophilia. Bronwyn Davies points out that “in terms of the child sexual abuse discourse it is essential to know where the boundary lies between acceptable sensuality and unacceptable sexuality” (Davies, 2003:145). In an attempt to solve this dilemma the staff were given different roles involving different expectations concerning what kind of contact it was appropriate and desirable for them to have with the children. Factors such as age, sex and job description would determine what sort of contact was seen as suitable between staff and children.

People’s performances can according to Goffman (1990) be viewed as a dramaturgy, peoples lives are dramatized by cultural norms, where individuals play a role adjusted to roles played by other performers on the stage. Goffman claims that we play different roles in different contexts in line with what we want to achieve (1990).

This chapter explores the ways in which the staff sought to resolve the dilemma of managing closeness and distance in their relations to the pupils in order to avoid accusations of paedophilia. I will also look into how non-resident teachers sought to distance themselves from the children, not only in order to avoid accusations of child abuse, but also to sustain the respect of pupils. I will explore these topics by focusing on the roles performed by different members of staff in their interaction with pupils.

Non-resident teachers and boarders

The teachers at the school were spending time with the children both in educational and non-educational settings. The teachers were obliged to have a certain number of evening and weekend duties during which they were responsible for the supervision of the children, for the arranging and bringing of boarders to different activities.

Teachers would normally spend their evening duties watching TV in the common area. One evening a teacher in his mid thirties and I were doing just that. Casey, a nine year old boy, came and sat down next to the teacher. Casey placed his head in the teacher's lap and put his arms around his waist. He smiled at the teacher and told him that he had been tidying the locker room all on his own. The teacher smiled, patted Casey on his shoulder and said "You're a star." Afterwards the teacher asked Casey to move. The teacher got up and asked me to come with him. We went outside. The teacher shrugged his shoulders and said:

"I hate it when the kids do that, it feels so uncomfortable. I'm just expecting the headmaster to come in and give me the whole inappropriateness speech again. I'd never have my kids at this school. Kids need affection; they need someone to be close to; do you know what I mean? There's nothing wrong with letting a kid sit on your lap."

Out side of the classroom the majority of teachers would not talk to the children unless they were spoken to first except for when they were reprimanding them. The

teachers would usually not approach the children, but rather wait until the children approached them. As in the case above teachers would avoid physical contact with the children. When a child came too close the teacher would most often get up and leave. Rather than telling children explicitly that they should not have bodily contact with members of staff, the teachers would remove themselves from the situation, excusing themselves that they had work to do. In this way teachers would create a physical distance between themselves and the children and in doing this they would avoid suspicions regarding sexual abuse of children being pointed towards them.

I sat by a table together with another of the teachers during one lunch hour. The teacher gave me a strange look when I was about to sit down, so I asked if I was interrupting something. He said that I was not, so I sat down and began eating. After a while Casey entered the dining hall. He was late since he had been at the matron's office to get a clean sports uniform before a walk. Casey stepped over to get a glass for the cordial. When he noticed that there were no more glasses he took a cup and filled it up instead. He put the cup on his tray and started walking towards the table where his friends were sitting. The teacher grabbed Casey in his arm when he passed our table. The teacher raised his voice and said "What have you done wrong now Casey?" Casey looked confused, he looked at his sports uniform and then on his tray before he met the teacher's eyes. Casey said "I don't know Sir, nothing Sir". The teacher stood up, looked down at Casey and said:

"You have done nothing wrong? I've been telling you this a million times, and you say you've done nothing wrong? What have you done wrong Casey?"

Casey raised his shoulders and said "I really don't know, Sir." The teacher looked at me, then back at Casey and then he said:

"You're missing a side plate for your cup. I've been telling you so many times to put your cup on a side plate, you never do it. And when I ask you what you've done wrong, you say nothing!"

Casey looked at the teacher with a serious face expression and said “But it’s just cordial in my cup Sir, not tea.” The teacher took the tray from Casey and placed it on a empty table behind us. He told Casey that he had to use a side plate for his cup no matter what the content of the cup was. He told Casey that he had to sit at an empty table alone during all meals for the rest of the term because he was not doing as he was told. Casey sat down at the table and the teacher came to sit down together with us. I looked at the teacher, smiled and said that I guessed I was in trouble now as well because I did not have a side plate for my cup. The teacher smiled and said “You ‘Noggies’ can get away with it, but not if I ever see you doing it again.”

Teachers often initiated discussions with pupils to correct them outside of the classroom. The relation between non-resident teachers and pupils was mostly an educational one also outside of the classroom. The teachers let the children know how to behave, and they would reprimand the children if they did not act in a desired way.

Ways in which to relate to children were described in terms of closeness and distance. Barbra, the headmistress, told me that the issue of how close a teacher should be with the children was a difficult one, but that as a general rule teachers should serve as children’s educators both in academics and in conduct. Barbra said that it is preferred for the teachers not to get too close to the children both “because we want to avoid suspicions⁶ and we want the children to sustain their respect for the teachers.” She continued by telling me that the children need someone to be close to, they need both affection and confinement from adults and she told me that affection was something the resident teacher and the gap students provide.

The teachers are dependent of each others dramaturgical cooperation in order to foster a definition of a given situation (Goffman 1990). The teachers are expected to “keep their distance” from the children in order to avoid suspicions about paedophilia and in order to sustain the respect from the pupils. It was not all the teachers who

⁶ About paedophilia towards the teacher and school

agreed with the definition of the roles they were expected to carry out in front of the children, but they sustained it none the less as they hold loyalties to other members of staff as they are expected to sustain the definition of the team.

Resident teachers

When the boys wanted to talk to someone about non-academic issues they would usually approach Fred. Fred was a 26 year old science teacher; he was the form teacher for the children in year five, who are between ten and eleven years old. Fred was a resident teacher at Dalesview House, his flat was located at the end of the boys' dormitory hall, and he spent a lot of time with the male boarders. The younger boys in particular enjoyed spending their time with Fred. The boys would often come up to him and sit on his lap. Fred would often place his arm around their shoulder or cuddle with their hair. He also engaged in many conversations with the boys, and the younger boys would often confide in him.

One rainy evening Barbra asked the boarders whether they wanted to watch a DVD instead of going outside because of the bad weather. The children got excited by Barbra's suggestion, and Barbra decided to show Shrek. The older children sat on the chairs by the window, while the younger ones were lying on the red and green beanbags on the floor. The common room was cold, so a lot of the children covered themselves with blankets. Fred came into the room. He was not on duty, but he said that he wanted to watch the film with us because he was bored and needed something to do. Fred sat down in the chair next to the bookshelves. Mark, a nine year old boy, was sitting on the floor, and his face lit up when he saw Fred. Mark moved over to Fred and sat next to him on the floor. Mark placed his arms around Fred's legs and leant towards them. Fred looked down at Mark while he started cuddling with his hair. They sat like this for approximately half an hour until Mark's roommate, Casey, decided that he wanted to sit next to Fred. Casey got off his bean bag and crawled over to where Mark was sitting, and elbowed Mark in the stomach. Mark looked at Casey with a grumpy face, he stood up and sat back down on Fred's lap. Fred put his

arm around Mark's shoulder. Casey sat down in the same place as Mark used to sit whilst he was caressing Fred's legs. They sat like this until the film finished, when Fred got up, he gave Mark a pat on the back and nodded at Casey before he left the room.

Fred was the only teacher who was this physically close with the young boys, and the intimacy of these relationships was most profoundly expressed by the amount of physical contact between Fred and the boys. As a resident teacher Fred had a caring role for the boys in addition to an educator role. Because of his job description Fred had to live at the school, his apartment being located at the end of the boys' dormitory hall. Several among the staff told me that the boys needed a male role model they could be close to; it was Fred's task to occupy this role as a resident teacher. At twenty-six James was younger than most of the staff members and it was more expected and accepted for him to have a closer physical relationship with the children. The other teachers and matrons encouraged the relationship between Fred and the young boys and he got a lot of praise from the staff as they considered him as being very good with children.

One evening I was having a few drinks at the headmaster's family's house, and our conversation turned towards Fred and his relationship with the male boarders. Barbra told me that "We all appreciate Fred's relationship with the boys." When I asked if it would be alright if the other teachers treated the boys in the same way as Fred, Barbra told me that it would have been inappropriate if other teachers, especially if it was a man, had let children sit on their lap. She claimed that Fred got away with having "a close relationship with the boys even though he is a male teacher" because of his young age and his position as a resident teacher. Barbra smiled and said "We need someone like Fred here to keep the boys happy." Barbra gave me a strange look when I asked if she could elaborate before she continued with saying that children need close contact with adults and that it is less suspicious when young teachers like Fred are close to the boys because he lives with them and spends a lot of time with them. She said that "A young single man like Fred is less likely to meet accusations

concerning inappropriate behaviour towards the children.” Barbra continued by telling that it might have been seen as suspicious if a middle aged man wanted to live with the boys. She said that people might question why he was not married and why he did not have any children of his own. Barbra continued by saying that it was natural for Fred to want to live at the school as he is young and hadn’t had time to establish a family on his own and also because he saved a lot of money by not having to rent an apartment in the village. Sue smiled and said that “It’s good with Fred because both the children and the parents trust him. The children trust him because he’s always around, and the parents know and trust him as he always participates in parent conferences and in special arrangements.”

It was a relevant matter that a man was living together with the boys. Barbra pointed out that it normally was seen more inappropriate for a man to get physical close to the children than what the case was for women. This is most likely related to the fact that the task of taking care of children has usually belonged to women in western societies. Young (2005) claims that women live under “a set of normatively disciplined expectations imposed on female bodies by male-dominated society.” She goes on by arguing that these expectations defines caretaking as a female occupation, and their associations with caretaking make them indisposed for several other activities “(Young, 2005:5). This works the other way around as well, as it is women who have been associated with the caretaking of children; men are often seen as ill-fitted towards childcare as it has been an activity associated with women. This again makes men more associable towards suspicions and accusations to inappropriate behaviour towards children.

The fear of paedophilia and the understanding that a close relationship with a teacher might lead to children losing respect for teachers’ educator role, were combined with a belief that children need adult contact, both in a physical and a personal way. Having a young male resident teacher was an attempt to solve this opposition as it was seen as less likely that he would carry out or be suspected of child molestation than what the case would have been with an older man. The resident teacher’s young

age was thought of as a factor that would help to solve the concern that the children might lose respect towards a teacher if he gets too close to them. Barbra told me that:

“Young teachers are more like the children than the older teachers. It is easier for them to understand each other. The children look up to Fred because he is young.[...] It’s more problematic when men are close to the children, but we could never let a woman live with them [...] Well, at our house it’s always been me who’s been taking care of our children, but it’s different when you’re looking after other people’s kids. If a woman was living in the boys’ hallway the older boys might fall in love with her, or she would risk seeing them undressed. That would have been very unfortunate.”

Several of the teachers and matrons told me that it is important for the boys to have a male role model, someone to look up to. It was three main factors that lead to Fred’s relationship with the young boys being seen as appropriate. One was that he was of the same sex as the boys, another was his age, and a third was his position as a resident teacher. Even though Fred had a close relationship with the boys, both in a physical and in a trustful manner, he was still not able to give everything it was thought the children needed because of his position as a teacher. I was often told that the children need to have some fun, joke around and even challenge some rules. A teacher told me “It wouldn’t have been suitable for Fred to act in such a way since he is supposed to teach them, that’s why it’s good to have the Aussies⁷ here.” By “Aussies” the teacher was referring to the “gap students” at the school.

Gappies

The school employs two Australian “gap year students”, or “gappies”, every year. The gap year students have just finished senior school, and are taking a gap year abroad before they start university. Mary, a seventeen year old girl, and Mitch, a seventeen year old boy, were Dalesview House’s gappies during my stay. Their

⁷ By “Aussies” the teacher referred to the “*Gap students*” at the school.

working assignments mainly consisted of spending time with the children, both in and out of the classroom. Mary had the main responsibility for the girls and Mitch had the main responsibility for the boys. They were spending a lot of time with the children, normally from quarter past seven in the morning until eight o'clock in the evening, six days a week. Mary was very outgoing, she shared a lot about her own life with the children and she asked them about their life. This was in contrast to the rest of the staff who preferred keeping details about their private life to themselves and who chose to avoid questions about the children's lives. Mary liked to be filled in with what was happening between the children and she often asked the children about rumours that were travelling around.

One evening I found Mary and Connie sitting outside on a bench, Mary was holding her arm around Connie's shoulder. I sat down together with them, and we watched a cricket game playing out on the fields in front of us for a bit. After a while Mary asked Connie "What's the latest goss?" Connie told Mary that Elaine and Carl, two of the kids in Connie's form, had broken up. She said that they had ended it because Carl had admitted not being in love with Elaine anymore. Connie keeps on telling about the other boarders who have either started seeing each other or ended things. When she has finished telling Mary about the latest gossip, Connie usually asks her if anything is new with her. Mary then told Connie about Carey, an eighteen year old student at senior school which she was seeing. Mary said that Carey had been seeing another girl behind her back and that she was very upset about it. Mary told Connie that she herself had been warned not to socialize with the students as member of staff, even though many of them were older than her. She said that some of the previous gappies had been caught seeing the students at senior school and that they had lost their jobs straight away.

Mary's openness with the children about her private life combined with her interest in listening to the boarders telling about their own lives led to the development of a close relationship between Mary and the boarders. A lot of the girls became closely attached to her and they shared a lot of their own experiences and problems with her,

problems they did not dare to share with anyone else as well, as they knew it would get them into trouble.

Mitch was a bit more reserved about sharing his personal life with the children than Mary was. He used to do a lot of play fighting, strength testing and sports practice with the boys, especially with the younger ones. One evening I found Mitch lying on the floor in the blue lagoon with Mark, Casey and Taylor sitting on top of him. Mitch was twitching on the floor, struggling to get away from the boy's grip. Mitch was smiling while he tried to fight the boys off him. Mark, Casey and Taylor were all laughing. Taylor stood up on Mitch's stomach, he raised his arms and said "Yeah, we're stronger than you Mr. You are so weak, I'm the man." Mitch's smile faded away. He pushed the palms of his hands and feet towards the floor, he took a deep breath and jumped to his feet. Mark, Casey and Taylor fell off him. Mitch looked at the boys and said "Hah, so you think you're stronger than me." The boys looked at each other. Casey raised his eyebrows and said "Yeah we do." His eyes travelled from Mitch to Mark and over to Taylor. Casey smiled and said "Let's get him guys." The boys stood up and took a few steps back. Mitch bent down and placed both his hands in front of his stomach for protection. Mark, Casey and Taylor bent over, running against Mitch head first. They rugby tackled him grabbing him around his waist. They pushed Mitch as hard as they could trying to make him fall. Mitch put all his weight forward as he struggled to stand on his feet. He lost his balance after a while and fell on his back. Mark, Casey and Taylor started jumping and smiling. Mark shouted "yeah!" Taylor looked at Mark and said "high five" the three boys raised their right hand and clasped each other in the palms of their hands.

Both Mary herself and teachers often described "gap students" as taking over the role and tasks an older sibling usually would have towards younger siblings. One of the teachers told me that they have gap students at the school "to get some life into the place." He said that the rest of the staff often turned a blind eye to the gap students' relationships with the children. He told me that they knew that they often would smuggle sweets or food into the children's dormitories and that they would let the

children swear and misbehave. He told me that he often had heard the gap students swearing around the children and they even let them get away with that, something he told me would be completely out of order if any other members of staff did. When I asked him why the gap students did not have to follow the school rules as strictly as the rest of the staff, he told me that they get away with it because of their young age. He said that it was exactly because the children did not think of the gap students as adults that they were able to fill the older sibling role.

The expectations towards “the gappie” role were different from the expectations towards the other staff roles. There was an understanding that the children needed someone to be close to, look up to, confine in and play with, and it was “the gappies” task to fill these roles. “The gappies” were seen as even more fit to fill these roles than the resident teacher as they did not have a formal educator role. The staff did not consider it necessary or desirable for “the gappies” to maintain the same social distance towards the children as the rest of the teachers. An understanding was present among the staff that children would easily disrespect adults which they were emotionally close to. It was feared that a pupil who disrespected his or her teacher would not pay attention in the classroom, something which might disturb both their own and their co-pupils’ teaching process. This was illuminated by what a teacher told me: “You’ve seen how difficult it is for Mary and Mitch to keep the kids under control when they’re in a classroom without a teacher. That’s because the kids don’t respect them.” I asked why he thought the children did not respect “the gappies”, and the teacher told me that it was because:

“they’re too close to the kids. They’re always playing with the kids, and the kids know everything about them. The kids look at Mary and Mitch as one of them, that’s why they [the children] won’t listen to them [“the gappies”].

It was not only wanted for “the gappies” to be within an emotional proximity in their relations towards the children, but also to be physically close to them. Mary was often requested by teachers and matrons to read for the girls in bed. While Mary was reading for the girls she would take it in turns to sit by the girls’ beds and tickle their

back. This was something it would have been seen as inappropriate for the other members of staff to do. Barbra told me that:

“the children need comfort. We’re lucky to have Mary and Mitch here [...]. Of course we can’t let all the teachers sit by the children’s beds and cuddle with them. We always let the gap students or Fred take care of the children when they need comforting.”

“The gappies” were seen as fit for having a physically close relationship with the children because of their young age. They were seen as being less threatening since they were regarded as “more like the children” and they were therefore less exposed for suspicions of child abuse.

Conclusion

The “problem” of managing physical and emotional proximity in relation to children arises when children spend time with other adults than their parents. Children who live with other people than their parents are often seen as being more vulnerable towards sexual assaults. Donna Goldstein points towards this in her description of sexual abuse amongst people in a Brazilian shantytown. She portrays how the relation between stepfather and child often is a problematic one. A stepfather is seen as a likely child molester as he is not biologically related to the child, and it was preferred for a child to keep a distance towards the stepfather in order to prevent molestation (Goldstein 2003). The relation between pupils and staff in my case could be seen as being problematic for similar reasons. An uncertainty regarding how the relations should be defined occurred as the boarders of Dalesview House lived away from their parents where non-relatives were being connected to the home sphere. To avoid accusations a lot of staff preferred to keep an emotional and physical distance towards the children, but there was also an understanding among the staff that children need to be “close” to adults in a physical and emotional way. This dilemma was attempted resolved by distributing different tasks to different members of staff, and by defining

members of staff as more professional (indicating distance from the children) or familiar (indicating closeness towards the children). Non-resident teachers were the members of staff with the most professional relation towards the children, attempting to keep a distance from the children in order to avoid accusations of paedophilia and also to maintain the children's respect towards them and thereby aiming to establish a well functioning learning environment.

In order to try and provide the boarders with the "closeness" with adults they were conceived as needing, statuses which were considered as more "familiar" had been established. Fred, the resident teacher, was one of the more "familiar" members of staff. Fred had a great deal of physical contact with the small boys, and the boys came to him if they wanted comfort. Fred was seen as suitable for the position as a resident teacher as he was among the youngest members of staff, and because of his age he was not expected to have established a family on his own. Accordingly, it was seen as less "suspicious" for him to live with the children as he simply was not expected to have to much of a life outside of the school. Fred was regarded as more suitable for being within a physical proximity of the children than the older members of staff as they were expected to have established families and they were expected to wanting to spend more time with them rather than with the boarders.

Fred taught the youngest pupils at the school, since the "closeness" of Fred's relationship with the boarders was viewed as incompatible with a professional teaching role. It was believed that children often would "disrespect" people they were close to by not doing what they were told and challenging the teachers' authority. This placed Fred in a dilemma as he was it was desired for him to be "close" to the children, but not so close that the children would lose respect for him. In an attempt to resolve this dilemma Fred was in a close physical proximity with the children, but kept his distance towards them by not letting the children know a lot about his personal life and by not engaging in their plays.

"The gappies" were the youngest members of staff, and they did not have any independent teaching roles. "The gappies" could be said to have the most "familiar"

role towards the children, as they were employed to take care of the children's thriving and not their academic education. Because of this it was not considered necessary that the children had the same respect towards "the gappies" as towards the teachers, and "the gappies" could relatively unproblematic be within both physical and emotional proximity with the children. As with Fred "the gappies" were young, and it was not seen as problematic for them to be physically close to the children as they did not have families on their own and fewer obligations outside of the school.

People occupy different roles in different contexts in line with what they are trying to achieve. Members of staff tried to resolve issues of "closeness" and "distance" by distributing different kinds of roles in relation to job description and personal characteristics such as age and gender. In the next chapter I will focus my attention away from members of staff and towards peer groups in order to explore aspects of the children's gendered identities.

5 Gendered identities; Hard boys, soft girls, gaybos and lesbians

Melhuus claims that “gender is first and foremost a relation, not a category.”(1993:240). She argues that we should focus on “how men and women make meaning together with respect to the cultural definitions of manhood and womanhood” and then with a special attention towards “areas of the culture where aspects of this relation are articulated or negotiated, focusing on ‘how it works’ and eliciting the meanings it conveys” (1993:241). What was seen as being related to femininity or masculinity was often articulated amongst the children in their everyday practice. In this chapter I explore how children’s gender performance is influenced by peers and staff. I will illustrate reactions towards children that take on activities associated with the opposite gender, and towards children who do not live up to expectations in relation to their own gender, and how this influences social organization among the children. I will explore these topics by focusing on informal feedback in everyday life, in the classroom and on the sport arena.

Hard masculinity and soft femininity

When I asked Jason, a thirteen year old boy, what boys should be like, he told me that “Boys have to be hard, strong and fast. They have to be good at fighting and never take any stick if they’re gonna get respect. And they also have to be good at piss taking”.

I asked Laura who was sitting next to Jason what girls should be like. She replied “girls are softer than boys and they have to be good looking, a girl needs cool clothes and has to be nice.”

Different expectations towards boys and girls exist at Dalesview House. Boys are supposed to be outgoing, aggressive and enduring, girls are supposed to be more withdrawn and greater emphasis is placed on their appearance. I witnessed several

incidents where the boys were rewarded when they showed aggressiveness and where girls were rewarded when they were sitting quietly, or when they were wearing nice clothes. They got praise both from their peers and their teachers.

One evening I was lying on the grass during night time boarding together with some of twelve and thirteen year old boys and girls. Amanda was sitting next to Payton who was her boyfriend. Payton was wearing a short sleeved T-shirt which revealed his upper arms. Amanda looked smilingly at Payton while she placed both her hands around his biceps and said "Your muscles are so big, you're so strong." Payton looked at Amanda as he flexed his muscles. He grinned and said "Yeah, I know. I'm the man! I can take on anyone in the whole school." Pete, who was sitting opposite from Payton, stood up and started walking towards him. Pete stopped straight in front of Payton and said "You're not the strongest, you'd never be able to get me. I'd beat the living daylight out of you any day." Amanda turned to Payton and said "Get him, don't let him give you any shit." Payton stood up, pushing Pete in the chest and Pete pushed him back. Both the boys were smiling. Payton put his arms around Pete's waist, leaning forward and pushing his weight towards Pete. Jason, Elaine and Laura were all paying close attention to the fight. Jason shouted "Come on Payton, get him down," Amanda smiled and said "Yeah Payton, get him!" Pete fell over and Payton landed on top of him. Payton managed to grab a hold of Pete, turning around so that Pete was lying under him, and they were lying like that for a short while until it was clear that Pete was unable to escape. Payton stood up, he had a big grin on his face, he did thumbs up and said "See I told you so, I'm way stronger than you!" Pete reached his hand out to Payton, smiled and said "You're right, you're the strongest." Payton took Pete's hand, and when he had grabbed it Pete ran towards Payton. Pete pushed Payton and took a hold around his waist. Jason was laughing as he was watching them. He faced Payton and said "I can't believe you fell for that Payton, you're such a git!" Amanda jumped to her feet, asking Elaine if she could help her, then she ran over to Pete and jumped at him. Elaine shook her head and said

“Amanda, calm down! I’m not helping you. I’m not a retard. And by the way I’m wearing my new Rock Republic jeans. I had to pay £350 for them and I’m not getting them dirty!”

Paul was sitting next to Elaine, smiling at her while he stroked her thigh and said “And don’t you look sexy”. Amanda did not listen to Elaine, she jumped off Pete, but ran back towards him and started pushing him. The fight got interrupted when the teacher on evening duty approached us. He looked at Amanda and said “Amanda, what are you doing?” Pete, Payton and Amanda stopped the playfight. The teacher patted Pete on his back, smiled and said “Don’t worry mate, you’ll get him next time.”

People define gender in socially and culturally specific ways through their understanding of bodies (Shaw 2005). Payton was admired because of his big muscles, and was challenged when he declared that he was the strongest pupil in the school. Pete wanted to prove that it was he who was strongest. Payton was encouraged both by Amanda and Jason to take on the challenge to measure his strength with Pete. When Pete lost the first fight, he attacked Payton again as he was not willing to be the loser. Pete was also encouraged to keep on fighting by the teacher who patted him on the back and told him that he would get Payton the next time. Strength was a value associated with masculinity; the stronger a boy was, the more masculine he was understood to be.

The case above exemplifies how significant others - peers and teachers - encourage boys to reproduce behaviour and activities which are considered to be appropriate for males. During their fight the boys challenge each other, they show aggressiveness, unwillingness to lose and endurance, their peers encourage this behaviour through smiles and comments. The teachers also encourage this behaviour by patting Tom on the back and telling him that he will win next time. The response from the significant others confirm to the boys that their behaviour is acceptable and desired and the boys understand that their action can be repeated so that they can achieve the same positive outcomes; smiles, encouraging comments and laughter. The significant others indicate

that aggressiveness, endurance, and strength are qualities a boy should strive to achieve.

The response Amanda receives when she tries to get involved in the fight indicates the opposite. Elaine tells her to calm down, she does not want to get involved as she is not a retard. The teacher also asks Amanda what she is doing when she participates in the fight. The boys got no such comment, on the contrary, Pete was encouraged to participate in more fights. The significant others imply that this is inappropriate behaviour on Amanda's part; as a girl she should not show aggressive behaviour and participate in fights. As Amanda is not acting in accord with what is seen as appropriate for her gender, she is considered as less feminine.

Eder et al. has noted that boys often evaluate girls based on their attractiveness, and that this reminds the girls that their looks and appearance is evaluated on a daily basis (1995). Elaine was being evaluated on the basis of her appearance, Paul implied that Elaine was acting appropriately when she decided not to participate in the play fight by stroking her leg, smiling and telling her that she looked sexy. Elaine was indeed concerned with her own appearance, if she participated in the fight she was scared of getting dirty. By stating the price of her new trousers she drew attention to her looks with a breath of exclusiveness indicating that she had invested a lot of resources into her appearance and she got rewarded for it by Paul's positive feedback. The significant others indicate that attractiveness and withdrawnness are qualities a girl should strive for.

Gender in the classroom

Class 8b sat quietly inside their classroom during a lesson of religious studies. The class was being taught about Judaism. The class consisted of 11 pupils, the girls being seated in the back of the class room while the boys sat in the front closest to the blackboard. The teacher was standing next to the blackboard looking at the pupils. Pete and Morton were lying over their desks looking out of the window. The teacher

asked the class if they could name any festivals. Mick raised his hand so high that he almost fell off his chair. The teacher smiled at Mick and asked him to answer. Mick looked cheekily at the teacher and replied “birthdays”. The teacher tilted her head and said that she did not believe that birthday was an occasion which fitted the description of a festival. She told the class that a festival is something the whole society takes part in the celebration of. She let the class know that birthdays are a bit more private because it is normally just one’s closest family and friends that take part in birthday celebrations. She looked at Mick and said the whole neighbourhood has to be involved if it is going to be a festival. The teacher let her glance slide across the room and asked the children if anyone else had a suggestion. All the children in the class raised their hands apart from Pete, Morton and Mick. The teacher asked Paul to answer, and Paul replied “Christmas”. The teacher nodded and said that was the correct answer. She took a piece of chalk and wrote Christmas on the blackboard. She asked the class if anyone could mention other festivals. Dylan raised his hand, and the teacher let him answer. Dylan replied “Chinese New Year”. The teacher nodded and wrote Chinese New Year below Christmas. Shirley who was sitting behind Mick raised her hand, and replied “Thai New Year”. The teacher smiled and said “That’s right Shirley, that is also a festival”. Morton sat up, straightened his back and raised his hand, with a cheeky grin on his face. The teacher looked over at Morton, smiled and said “Well, look who’s awake. What do you have to share with us today Morton?” Morton arrogantly tipped his head back and said “English New Year”. The teacher sighed and said “We could go on and on with all the different New Year celebrations, but is there anyone who knows about any other festivals?” Pete looked at Morton and laughed before he raised his arm. The teacher looked at Pete and said “Yes Pete”. Pete hit himself in the stomach and shouted “The football world cup”. The teacher raised her shoulders and said “Yes, I guess you can say that that is a kind of festival.” She walked over to the blackboard and wrote down “football world cup”. The teacher turned to the boys and asked if anybody knew which championship was about to start on Monday. Pete raised his hand and replied “The commonwealth games.” The teacher let Pete know that he had answered correctly. She walked over

to the blackboard and wrote “commonwealth games” above “football world cup”. Then she sighed and said “I guess we’ll just write down sport festivals, cause we could just go on and on.” She wrote “sport festivals” on the blackboard and put “commonwealth games” and “football world cup” in brackets. Celia had raised her hand every time the teacher asked a question, she had let a sigh every time she was not allowed to answer. The teacher finally looked over at Celia and asked her if she could name a festival. Celia smiled proudly and replied “lent”. The teacher pursed her lips and waited a while before she told Celia that lent is not a festival in its own right, it is more like a private ritual leading up to another festival, Easter. The teacher walked up to the blackboard and wrote “Easter” below “thai new year”. Shannon, who was sitting behind Celia, raised her hand and said “Ramadan”. The teacher told Shannon that Ramadan is the same as lent as it is a private ritual which leads up to a festival. She then asked if anyone could let her know the name of the festival which the Ramadan leads up to. Celia raised her hand, she smiled and said “Id”. The teacher nodded approvingly.

Boys and girls separated themselves from each other in the class room. The children had defined the front of the room as belonging to the boys, and the back of the room as belonging to the girls. This was clearly illustrated for me one time I did the mistake to go and sit in front of the room next to the blackboard. Celia who was sitting in the girls’ section of the room was quick to point out to me that I had to sit in the back of the room, otherwise I might catch “the lurgee⁸”. In other words I might get contaminated with “masculine qualities” if I stayed within the part of the room viewed as belonging to the boys.

Values related to masculinity and femininity appeared in the classroom as well as in most other arenas. Skills at sports were highly valued among the boys and a lot of the boys turned to the subject of sports when they had the opportunity. Pete mentions

⁸ Children would often point out that one was in the risk of getting “*lurgee*” if one was sitting next to a member of the opposite sex. “*Lurgee*” was described as a bug that lived on the opposite sex and could “*make you like*” a member of the opposite sex.

“the football world cup” when the teacher asks to mention festivals. It was a lot of cheering among the boys as Pete mentioned the two sports tournaments, the girls who were sitting in the back of the room did not participate in the cheering. The teacher turned her attention towards the boys as she questions them about sport festivals and she ignored Celia who had been reaching her hand in the air far longer than any of the boys. It is not until she leaves the subject of sports she turns to Celia and let her answer. The teacher and the other boys underlines the importance of sports by focusing their attention towards Pete as he talks about the subject, the teacher also differentiate girls from sport as she ignores Celia until they have left the subject of sport.

Socialization through games lessons in the scope of peer culture

Men and women have often been associated with different spheres (Rosaldo 1974) or spaces (Ardener 1981). Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga claim that “the cultural construction of gender incorporates behaviour patterns and symbolic representations that distinguish the sexes, and include differences in power, authority, and value attributed to sexual asymmetries” (2003: 129). This definition implies that there is an executive boundary between the sexes which identify the behaviours seen as appropriate for both sexes. The British boarding schools are renowned for its separations (Okely 1993), and the games lessons were the one arena where this was most apparent. MacClancy claims that sports may be used “to define more sharply the already established boundaries of moral and political communities; to assist in the creation of new social identities; to give physical expression to certain social values and to act as a means of reflecting those values; to serve as potentially contested space by opposed groups” (MacClancy 1996:7). At Dalesview House sports served as a vehicle to create gendered identities and to separate girls from boys.

Different sports were assigned to the boys and girls of Dalesview House. Football, rugby and cricket were considered as boys’ sports, and Rounders and netball were

seen as girls' sports. The children were separated during their games lessons according to sex, and they were coached by a teacher of the same sex as themselves.

I sat on the sideline together with some of the boys watching the boys' rugby game one afternoon. The players were all on the field wearing their red and white rugby uniforms, their faces red after running, tackling, trying to catch the ball and score. Two of the boys on the field, thirteen year old Steve, and twelve year old Keegan ran towards each other. The boys belonged to opposite teams. Steve leaned forward, he grabbed Keegan's waist and started pushing. Keegan lost his balance and fell towards the ground. Steve also lost his balance and landed on top of Keegan. Keegan shrugged and shouted "Get off!" Steve did not respond. Keegan raised his voice and repeated "Get off!" Steve still did not respond. The coach observed what was going on and started walking towards the two boys. The coach blew his whistle and raised his right arm. Steve groaned and stood back up. Keegan was still not moving, he was lying on the ground with his arm bent behind his back. The coach leaned down towards Keegan, took a hold of his arm and helped him up. The coach said something to Keegan and felt his arm before he shouted to one of the gap students that he had to take Keegan to the matron's office.

The boys who were watching the game from the sideline had been laughing and pointing at Keegan when he was lying injured at the ground. Pete who were sitting next to me shouted "Go, Steve, go!" when Steve was tackling Keegan and when Keegan lost his balance and fell, the boys were shouting "loser" to him. All the boys were laughing during this incident. Pete started shouting "gaybo" when Keegan walked off the pitch, the other boys soon joined in, all laughing and pointing at Keegan shouting "gaybo, gaybo, gaybo." When the shouting died off, Tom turned towards me and asked "He's a gaybo, do you not agree Miss?" I said that I did not know what a gaybo is. Pete laughed and said "A gaybo is a homosexual. Keegan is a homosexual because he always makes the team lose, he can never take a tackle. He is

weak and slow just like the homosexuals. He's completely useless and that's why he's a gaybo."

Strength and endurance are important qualities if one is to become a talented performer in the boys' sports. These skills are valued talents associated with masculinity (Hargreaves 1986). The boys of Dalesview House were encouraged to develop these qualities through their sports. The boys who show aggressiveness, strength and stamina through their sports such as Steve, often get egered on both by children and staff. Children learn how they are expected to live out their gender role through reinforcement, and positive responses following one's actions increase the likelihood that the particular conduct will be repeated (Archer 1992). Steve received positive responses after he had tackled Keegan and Keegan fell towards the ground. This action required aggressiveness and strength, and through the boys' encouragement by shouting "go" at Steve, he perceives his own behaviour as desirable and he is more likely to carry out these actions in other instances as well.

Through their schooling boys are encouraged to consider sports as a "natural pursuit" where sports skills equal manliness (Hargreaves 1986). When the boys did not perform well in a sport, if they lost games or let somebody see that they were not as strong and fast as the other boys, they often got ridiculed by their peers. The peers would often make comments indicating that the boy who did not perform well was not a real male. The boys associated masculinity with strong performances. Boys who lacked the desired skills and did not fill these expectations were seen as less masculine, and they often got called names such as "gaybo."

On the borderland of femininity

Kate, Martha, Moreen and I were sitting in a group during the girls' rounders game one afternoon. We were watching the other girls playing because all of us had already been beaten out of the game. The girls were all wearing their rounders uniform consisting of a white T-shirt and a red mini-skirt. Kate, Martha and Moreen had tied a

big knot on their T-shirt revealing their bare bellies. We were all lying down on the green grass, enjoying the warm sun. Moreen looked over at me and asked why I got beaten out of the game so early. I told Moreen that it was one of my first times playing rounders so I was not very experienced. Martha laughed and asked which girls' games I used to play at school. I told her that we used to play the same games as the boys and that we used to them play together with them. Kate wrinkled her nose and said "You're taking the piss, you can't have games together with the boys". I told her that we do, and I asked why she found it so weird. Kate replied that it sounded "very strange because boys are stronger and faster than girls, and there is no way the girls can beat them. The boys ...". Moreen interrupted Kate in the middle of her sentence saying "girls can't play boys' games because we're not strong enough, we're not fast enough. Girls just get injured and break their legs when they play rugby. Boys are harder than us, they can take more stick." I knew that some of the girls at senior school were playing rugby and I asked the girls what they thought of that. Moreen started giggling and said: "Have you seen the girls on that team? They all look like men, they're all lesbians." Moreen shook her head and continued "They all look like guys, and they're all gay. When girls are doing boys' sports it means that they are lesbians".

The divide between gender, nature and culture appears clearly when it comes to sports. Sports have become increasingly liberated from the traditional view of what is considered as possible for women and men as women take part in new sport disciplines, a discipline where the activity in itself as well as the performances it involves, are usually perceived as manly (Rudie 1991). As discussed above, aggressiveness, strength and endurance were important values associated with masculinity, while good looks, kindness and patience were values associated with femininity. The rugby playing girls in the case above challenge the dominating definition of femininity, they confront the structures and conditions that delimit their typical situation in society (Young 2005). These girls confronted these structures not only by practicing sports which encouraged expansion of "masculine" qualities, but also by taking on sports which until recently had been reserved for males. Both peers

and teachers frequently made negative comments about girls participating in boys' sports. The girls who are took part in these sports were seen as being less female. They had entered "a male space" where they were striving to obtain "masculine qualities" which again were seen as making them less feminine. A lot of girls chose to avoid these sports because of negative remarks from peers and teachers. Girls who played boys' sports "look like men and are all lesbians." Comments like this indicated that the activities were not seen as appropriate for girls. Girls who participated in boys' sports were seen as being less female because they dealt with activities associated with the opposite sex.

It was a general understanding that girls who engaged in "male activities" would struggle to cope with them as they lacked the masculine attributes which the boys possessed. Sport education is based on an understanding that gender divisions are rooted in biological differences (Hargreaves 1986). At Dalesview House, boys were perceived as being "stronger, faster, harder and taking more stick". Females were literally thought of as the weaker sex, as the female body was understood to be weaker than the males'. Moreen claimed that girls cannot play boys' sports because they are not strong enough, girls will break their legs if they attempt to play rugby. This quote illustrates how girls and women were thought of as fragile, reflecting the understanding of women as the weaker sex. Since the girls who were playing rugby were conceived as having less of the male qualities than the boys, they would struggle to handle male-labeled activities.

The senior school girls have been allowed entrance into the male-labeled sports in parallel with changes in the society. Changes have occurred in the sexual division of labor, in the relation between the sexes, and girls have entered into spaces which were formerly seen as belonging to boys (Hargreaves 1998, Frønes 1995). It might be claimed that the boys' sports have opened up for girls so that the girls can evolve qualities associated with masculinity in order to cope within the male spaces. But on the other hand, girls who crossed the gender divides by participating in boys' sports received negative labels and comments from peers and staff alike. These labels and

comments discouraged the girls from entering into the aggressive boys' sports, and they ended up staying with the traditional girls' sports. The sports who are viewed as fit for girls demand different qualities from the participants than from boys' sports. The girls' movements on the playing fields are limited as the size of the fields is considerably smaller than the boys' fields, their movements are restricted as they are obliged to hold a stick, or the amount of steps one is allowed to take is limited (Okely 1993). These restricted physical movements are seen as being appropriate for the girls, and they promote qualities associated with femaleness such as patience and restrictedness. This in opposition to the boys' sports which promote strength and aggressiveness. By keeping boys and girls in different spaces and providing them with different sports which encouraged qualities related respectively to masculinity and femininity boys were socialized according to the masculine ideals, and the girls were socialized in correspondence to the feminine ideals. The children who participated in sports associated with the opposite sex, crossed the accepted gender boundary. The children also perceived the ones who were deviant in the aspect of the dominating gender performance as being deviant also in relation to the dominating heterosexuality. The children labelled as "gaybos" or "lesbians" were normally unpopular, and other children often sought to distance themselves from them. None of the children who had received homosexual labels had girlfriends or boyfriends, members of the opposite sex often portrayed these children as "wimps" or "cowards" (in the case of gaybos) and girls labelled as "lesbians" often received comments such as "She's such a man" distancing them from the "ideal qualities" related to their gender.

Conclusion

The relation between boys and girls, and the cultural definitions of what constituted meaning related to femininity and masculinity was articulated and negotiated on several arenas (Melhuus 1993). An evidently defined boundary between accepted "masculine behaviour" and "feminine behaviour" was apparent amongst the children

at Dalesview House. Boys should ideally live up towards the “masculine ideals” including values such as physical strength, endurance and aggressiveness. Girls ought to live up to the “feminine ideals” including good looks and patience. The boys and girls are being kept in separate places during their sports lessons in order to make it possible to promote development of “masculine” and “feminine” qualities.

Wendy James sees sports as a tool which trains bodies, form and contest identities, and she claims that both elites and proletariats have a direct political concern involving the control of sports (James 2003:234). At Dalesview House, sports were employed as a socialization tool aiming to shape the children’s gendered identities. Rugby and football were labelled as boys’ sports, and the performer of this sport needed to be strong, fast and enduring to succeed. The boys were taught through sports that these were qualities to strive for. Rounders and netball were sports reserved for the girls; these sports were calmer, more restricted, and they demanded patience. The girls learned to strive towards these qualities.

The children who acted in accord with the qualities associated with their gender received “respect” from other children. Strong, aggressive boys would receive praise from their peers, and they would often get a lot of attention from girls. Girls who were slim, who were wearing “the right clothes” and who did not demand “always being the centre of the attention” also received praise from peers, and a lot of attention of boys.

It has been argued that it is usually unproblematic for a girl to be labelled as a “tomboy”. A girl receiving this label is distanced from her association with “femininity” and strengthens her association with “masculinity” (Thorne 1995). This does not correspond with my observations. My findings indicated that qualities related to femininity were highly valued among the girls. One of the biggest compliments a girl could receive was that she was being “lady-like”. This was also mirrored in peers and staff giving rapid feedback if girls were conceived as not living up to stereotypical femininity. This was also true for boys who were envisioned as not living up to the stereotypical masculinity. Children who crossed boundaries

between “masculine activities” and “feminine activities” usually received labels related with homosexuality. Children dreaded these labels since those who had received labels like this usually were unpopular, and members of both sexes would often distance themselves from them.

Most of the children would follow the dominating gender patterns to avoid the threat of receiving a label indicating deviant sexuality and risking social exclusion. This labelling of children serves as a form of social control which works as a conservative aspect in relation to the “traditional” gender roles (Thorne 1995). The social organization in relation to gender differentiates girls spatially and behaviourally from boys. Girls or boys who challenge this boundary are often associated with deviant sexuality, and other children often distance themselves from them, and the girls or boys are excluded. In this way labelling does not only serve a conservative aspect through social control, it is also a tool employed for social differentiation and stratification among the children, which is what I will explore in the next chapter.

6 Attending alliances

I touched slightly on the subject on how deviating performance of one's gender roles can lead to social exclusion and serve as a basis for stratifications in the previous chapter. In this chapter I wish to explore social organization among the pupils in year eight¹⁰. Bourdieu distinguishes four different types of capital. Economic capital is related to goods which can be directly transformed into money (Bourdieu 1986:243 as in Çaglar 1999: 278). Cultural capital is “the ensemble of embodied dispositions such as learnable skills” (Bourdieu 1986: 243 as in Çaglar 1999: 279). Social capital is based on relations, it is related to group membership and the resources people gain access to because of this membership (Bourdieu 1987: 4 as in Çaglar 1999: 279). Symbolic capital is the “form which is assumed by different forms of capital when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate” (Bourdieu 1990: 128 as in Çaglar 1999: 278). I will describe how valued objects, qualities and skills are related to at least one of these kinds of capital. I will illustrate how the amount of different forms of capital one holds influence on ones position in the social space (Bourdieu 1995). I also focus on formation of alliances between children possessing different combinations of capital in the light of patronage theory (Paine 1971) in order to illuminate fluctuation of members between the different groups.

Being cool; boys and popularity

Popularity was a topic which was often brought up in conversations among the children. I will employ the popularity term as an emic category as I try to grasp the meaning children present this term. One group of children in particular was often referred to as “popular”. This was the group of children often described as “the cool kids.” Popularity was not a term that was usually associated with well-likeness; on

¹⁰ The pupils in year eight are between thirteen and fourteen years old.

the contrary, children seen as popular were often disliked, and their names were often brought up in conversations behind their backs by children who were not seen as popular. Nevertheless, children often sought popularity in order to be able to tell other children what to do, and to avoid bullying. Eder et al. (1995) relate popularity to visibility; they claim that popular children were among the most visible in the school setting. This corresponded with what I observed at Dalesview House. The children referred to as popular were often loud and they were often seen as misbehaving in the eyes of the teachers where as children who were not considered as popular were often more withdrawn. I will argue that the “cool kids” strived for being visible in order to maintain their status as popular. “The cool kids” would often ridicule children not considered as “popular” in order to place them selves above the “less popular” children. A lot of children strived to be accepted into “the cool gang” in order to avoid this ridiculing. In this way, the popular children can be said to exploit other children’s fear. The “popular” boys employ fear as a principle to rule by, and distanced themselves from the other children in order to solidify their position as above them in the social space (Bourdieu 1995). A group of six boys who used to spend time together were conceived by most of the children, themselves included, to be the most popular boys at the school. This group of boys were often referred to the cool group. A conversation with Pete, one of the leadership figures among the popular boys, highlights mechanisms within this group.

Mary, the gappie, and I were having lunch when Pete approached us. He had a key ring shaped as a yellow man attached to the inside of his blazer. Mary asked Pete ““Why do so many of the year eight boys wear key rings on the inside of their jackets?”” Pete smiled at Mary and replied ”Cause that’s what cool people do!” He sat down next to us. I asked him if it is impossible to be cool unless you have a key ring attached to the inside of the school uniform. He told me that “Everybody that’s going to be in the cool gang has to wear matching key rings.” Pete told me that Payton, Paul, Morton, Jason and himself was in the cool gang. All the boys were not able to get a hold of the same key ring, but they all had to have matching yellow ones. I asked Pete how you became a member in the “the cool gang” and he replied “You just

have to be cool. You have to be one of the coolest kids at school, and you have to be in year eight.” I asked how one became cool, and he told me that “You have to be hard if you want to be cool. If you let anyone give you shit you’re not cool. You have to be the one who gives people shit and not the one who gets it, and you also have to have a lot of friends.” Pete told me that “It’s good to be cool cause then you can decide who’s out and who’s in.” He said that it is also good because you get respected by the other kids and you can decide more. He also told me that the cool kids can chill out more because they have other children sucking up to them. He said that “Cool kids can get away with everything. We can tell people to get us what ever we want ‘cause they respect us. They know that they will get shit if they don’t listen to us.”

Pete was in “the cool gang.” The yellow key ring he had attached to his uniform served as a symbol for this belonging. This symbol was used to confirm that the members of this group were popular, they were in, it also made visible which children who were not so popular and defined as out.

“Coolness” is a status most of the children strive to achieve, and they often employ conscious strategies in hope to receive this status, a point to which I will return. The children in “the cool gang” defined themselves as in, a definition that was accepted among most of the other children. “The cool boys” did not allow others bullying them, they were rather the bullies. The members of this group defined themselves as cool in addition to being described as “cool” by the other pupils. It was the members of this group who often sat the standard for labelling other children.

“Popular” girls and class

Stacey was most visible girl in a group of girls often referred to as “Cool” or “Popular”, followed by her best friend Kate. Stacey was the most visible in the sense that she was normally the one to make decisions in the group. She would often tell other children what to do, make decisions regarding which activities the clique should

be involved in during recess, and she was the one who would watch the group's boundaries either by accepting members into the group, or by rejecting people who wanted to or used to be associated with them. Kate would usually take on Stacey's leadership role if Stacey was absent, carrying out the same tasks as Stacey. Kate would usually be more withdrawn when Stacey was present. A girl named Kristy also used to be together with the "popular" girls but she had a more peripheral position in the group. She was not the one to make commands or decisions, but rather the one to follow Stacey's and Kate's commands. There was a larger degree of fluctuation within this group than what occurred among the boys within "the cool group". I will return to how girls were accepted and rejected in different girl groups. Stacey was often described as the most beautiful girl at school, she was tall, slim, with blue eyes and long blond hair which she usually had tied in a braid during school hours and which she kept loose after school hours. The rest of the girls in the popular clique were also considered as being very good looking, and all of them got a lot of attention from boys who wanted to go out with them, and from girls who wanted to spend time together with them.

During one lunch hour some of "the popular girls" were lying on the grass enjoying the hot sun. All the girls were in their school uniforms as it was still school hours. Stacey was lying on her back stretching her arms in the air. Kate who was lying next to Stacey pushed her in her side and said "See what I've got". Kate put her hand in her blazer pocket and brought a mascara out of it. She smiled and said that her mother had mailed it to her and that it was Dior. Stacey sat up, she smiled at Kate and said "Cool, let's have a look." Kate gave the mascara to Stacey while she told her "Put some on. No one will notice 'cause it's brown¹¹". Stacey pulled the brush out of the mascara container and applied some of it on her eye lashes. She glanced at the other girls, Kristy smiled at Kate and said "It looks great, you can't tell that you're wearing

¹¹ The girls put great attention to conceal make up they were wearing during the day as it was against the school rules. This was contradictory to what the case was after school hours when they often would apply bright coloured eye shadows, black eye liner and mascara and dark foundation.

it at all.” Stacey smiled while she loosened her braided hair. She took off her blazer and shirt and revealed a short, black singlet with a big golden Versace logo on the front. Stacey shook her head making her hair blow in the wind while she pouted her lips and said “Do I look like a supermodel now?” Kristy nodded and the rest of the girls in the circle smiled and looked admiringly at Stacey.

Goodwin asserts that girls can negotiate what constitutes value by making assessments or evaluative commentaries about objects or experience, and the popular girls in her study differentiated “themselves in terms of access to activities and privileges of the upper middle class (2006:174). The case above illustrates how expensive makeup and designer label clothes are important for the children as it can make them look “beautiful” something that was valued by “the popular girls”. The price of clothes and valued objects were essential for these girls, as the costliness made them inaccessible to a lot of the other children. This was highlighted by something Shirley said, who was the same age as the popular girls, but who was not seen as popular herself:

“I’m not allowed to be with the cool kids, ‘cause I don’t have as nice clothes as them. My mum refuses to buy me cool clothes, she says it’s too expensive and a waste of money [...] I’d like expensive clothes, but I don’t really care about not being friends with Stacey’s crowd. They can be really mean, and I have my own friends.”

“The popular girls” converts economic capital (Bourdieu 1986:123 as in Çaglar 1999: 278) in the form different objects into symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1990: 128 as in Çaglar 1999: 279) as they define what is “in” and what is “out” and thereby comprise the value of the object. What was defined as “in” and what was defined as “out” changed quickly. An item of clothing viewed as desirable one week could be defined as being “totally out” the following week. One had access to a considerable amount of money if one were to “keep up with the fashion”. Expensive designer clothes and cosmetics differentiate the popular girls from the less popular. Children who do not have access to these artefacts are denied association with the popular girls, and the boundaries between the popular and the less popular children endure. The children

who have parents with less money and who are lacking possibilities to provide them with clothing defined as fashionable are kept out of the popular girls group. In this way popularity among the girls is related to their parents' class status.

Girls and boys; values and popularity

Girls and boys had different evaluations related to what was viewed as constituting value. All the boys who were associated with "the popular crowd" were considered to be among the best athletes at the school and several of the boys who got appointed as captain of sports were associated with this group. It was easy to spot the children who were good at sports even when they were off the playing pitches. The children who were appointed as sport captains received a badge which was sewed on the blazer of their school uniform. A poster was also displayed which included all the children who made the teams playing school matches. The list including the names of the children who made the team was put on display for everyone to see, and the names of the children who did not make the team were often given a lot of attention. The children would usually make large efforts to enter the teams, and the ones who did not make it were often left upset and embarrassed, while the ones who did make the teams would shout excitedly while they gave each other "high-fives". This list was important for the boys; it illuminated social divisions among the boys at the school as talents in sports were related to popularity. Morton, who was the rugby captain and a member of the popular group, illuminated this at an occasion when he observed the list.

One of the games teachers came out of the staff room with a white sheet of paper in his hand. The oldest boys at the school were going to play a cricket match against another school a day later, and the sheet listed all the names of the boys who had made the team which was going to compete the following day. All the year eight boys were gathered in the common room, whispering excitedly when they noticed that the teacher was carrying the list. The boys sat down and waited until the teacher had left the room. All the boys rushed off their seats and ran towards the list on the wall once the teacher was out of sight. Morton had been sitting in the far end of the room so he

ended up in the back of the crowd of boys who were shoving each other in order to see if they had made the team. Morton looked at the other boys, he smirked and said “Come on, move, I’ve got to have a look.” Some of the boys turned to look at Morton, but no one moved. Morton looked angry, he started elbowing the boys in front of him in the back and pushing his way to the front of the queue. Morton read through the names on the list. He jumped back while he was repeatedly hitting himself on the shoulders and reaching his hands in the air when he spotted his own name. He shouted excitedly “Yeah, I’m the man! I’m rock hard.” He left the crowd of boys and approached Shawn who was standing in the back. Morton poked Shawn on the shoulder. Shawn turned around, looked at Morton and smiled. Morton smirked and said “I’m a winner, and you’re just a fuckin’ loser! Ha! You didn’t make the team. You never make the team! You’re such a loser!” Morton departed from the room looking happy and satisfied, leaving a sad looking Shawn behind.

Morton differentiated himself from Shawn by pointing out that he himself was “hard” and a “winner”, he was successful, while Shawn was unsuccessful, he was a “loser”. Morton related himself towards the group of popular boys by pointing out that he was in possession of the values which were so important if one were to be associated with the popular boys’ group. By pointing out that he was in possession of strengths which Shawn lacked, Morton protected the boundary between the popular boys, the ones who were “in” and the outsiders. Eder et al. have pointed out that boys often differentiate themselves in respect of possession of certain strengths. They further point out that resentment towards the popular boys was limited as they were conceived as having strengths which others lacked (1995). The instance described above illuminates just that point, a point which was highlighted further by what by what Greg, a thirteen year old boy, told me:

“I’m not that popular ‘cause to be honest, I’m quite crap at sports. I never make the team, so the cool kids don’t want anything to do with me [...] I guess I’d be friends with them if I was a captain, but I really can’t see that happening.”

My observations also support Eder et al's (1995) findings concerning the greater resentment towards "popular girls". "The popular girls" group held different values than the group of "popular boys". Talents in sports were important if one was to be a part of the "popular boys" group. Beauty and access to expensive clothing viewed as fashionable were important for "the popular girls". I have mentioned earlier how qualities and objects valued by these girls were related to economic capital converted to symbolic capital. Most of the pupils at the school came from wealthy families who had considerable economic resources, and these objects of value could be quite easily obtainable for most of the children. Talents at sports on the other hand, which was such a valued quality among "the popular boys" was something one had to achieve. Talents like these are related to cultural capital as they involve ensembles of embodied dispositions which one has to learn (Bourdieu 1986: 243 as in Çağlar 1999: 278). Sports talents were seen as something a boy had or did not have. The girls at Dalesview House often approached the popular girls hoping to get access to their group. Girls considered as "popular" that did not act accordingly to the "leaders" of "the popular girls" values, could be punished by social exclusion. "The popular boys" would often approach boys not considered as popular in order to get help. But boys who did not have considerable talents in sports usually did not approach this group hoping to get access to it. This group of boys were more egalitarian than the group of "popular girls". It was a greater degree of fluctuation among the group of "popular girls" as the values of this group which sprung out of economic capital which could be quite easily achieved. The qualities valued by "the popular boys" fits with Bourdieu's description of cultural capital. It prevailed a smaller degree of fluctuation of members related to the group of "popular boys" as the qualities valued by this group stood as a requirement for membership. The qualities valued by these boys were related to skills and not with objects enclosing symbolic capital, these skills were more difficult to obtain which made it difficult for outsiders to achieve relatedness with this group unless they were in position of these qualities.

“The goody two shoes”

A large group of children were often referred to as “the good kids” by teachers as well as other children. These children were usually well behaved, they were getting good grades and they were normally doing as they were told. The teachers preferred to distribute the roles as prefects, house heads, librarians and head of school to children in this group. Another term often employed by other children as they classified children who achieved good grades, and voluntarily took on different types of chores was “The goody two shoes” or “the goodies”.

One Sunday, all the boarders were going for a walk to see the caves by Schoolboys’ tower before they were allowed to go shopping in the local village. The walk normally takes about thirty minutes. A teacher had brought a rucksack filled with a blanket, some water and his wallet. Dylan, twelve year old boy went up to the teacher and asked if he could carry the backpack. The teacher smiled and said “Of course you can”, then he looked smilingly at me and said “See Ms, we still have a few good kids here.”

Dylan walked up the steep hill leading to School Boys Tower together with his friends Shawn and Mick. It looked like Dylan was struggling to walk because the backpack he was carrying for the teacher looked far too big for him. Shawn and Mick were also carrying backpacks; they were the only three children who had brought something with them. I asked the boys what they were carrying, Mick told me that they had all brought jackets, water and PSPs¹² in case they got bored. Shawn turned to Mick, smiled and said “It’s so easy for you! My backpack is heavier than everybody else’s. I’m carrying all of Dylan’s stuff cause he has to carry the teacher’s backpack.”

¹² PSP is a video game

Morton and Alison, a boy and a girl at thirteen years old, came running up from behind. Morton had been standing next to the teacher when Dylan asked if he could carry his rucksack. Morton poked Dylan in his side and said:

“You’re such a keeno Dylan. Carrying a teacher’s bag. A teacher’s pet you are, you’re all nobodies. I can’t believe you can be bothered to bring bags when we’re just off to the caves.” Alison gave Morton a smile before she turned to Mick and said “Yeah, you’re all Goody two shoes!”

Alison and Morton started running faster. When they were out of hearing range Dylan turned to me and said “Everybody says that we are keenos, but we don’t mind.” I had never heard the term “keeno” before, so I asked the boys what it meant. They told me that a “keeno” is someone who always want to be best, they always want to be first, and they suck up to the teachers. Dylan shrugged his shoulders, smiled and said “People call us keenos, but who cares what the cool kids think anyway”.

This episode illustrates how the labels children receive do not solely originate from their interaction with the other children, but also from their interaction with members of staff. Morton is associated with group of “cool boys” members related to this group are often fast to label other children. Morton understands Dylan as underlining his belonging to the “good kids” as Dylan offers to carry a teacher’s rucksack. Helping teachers was not conceived as “cool” by the “popular kids”. Morton distances himself from Dylan by labelling him as a “keeno” thereby underlining the boundary between the “popular boys” and “the goodies”. Relatedness to the group described as “Goodies” was viewed negatively by “popular kids” but positively by members of staff. Actions regarded as positive by the teachers are regarded as negative by the children. The goodies are drawn between the desires to please their teachers and to please other children; those two desires do not always match. Actions seen as desirable from the members of staff’s point of view might be seen as uncool by other children, while actions seen as cool by children might be undesired by members of staff. The children are drawn between two incompatible spheres of concepts of what constitutes appropriate behaviour. If children strive to get accepted

by “the cool group” they will often behave in a way evaluated negatively by members of staff, and if they strive to help members of staff other children might label them as “keenos” or “Goody two shoes”.

Children labelled as “goodies” do not share the same set of values as the “popular” children. Whereas sports skills, strength, endurance and aggressiveness are highly valued qualities among “the popular boys”, beauty and exclusive clothing are valued amongst “the popular girls”. The girls and boys labelled as “goodies” appreciated good grades, they strived to achieve awards¹³ and to please their parents and teachers. The goodies were differentiated from the popular children as they related to these qualities rather than to the qualities valued by the popular girls and boys.

A lot of children make conscious efforts in order to get accepted by “the popular” girls and boys. However relatedness with popularity do not necessarily imply well-likeness. On the contrary, the children viewed as “popular” are often disliked and feared by the children who were not linked to “the popular groups”. “The popular” children establish boundaries between their group and other children by teasing and excluding them. A way to escape teasing and bullying is to be accepted by “the cool groups”. Thirteen year old Sophie has been teased a lot by “the popular girls”. “The popular girls” conceive Sophie’s grades as being too good, they view her as putting too much of an effort into her school work, and they evaluate Sophie’s efforts during lessons by raising her hand and asking and replying to questions negatively. When I asked Sophie if she would have liked to be friends with Stacey who is a prominent member in the group of “cool girls” she told me:

“I guess I would. I mean, Stacey’s a bitch. I don’t really like her ... But she sort of rules this place. If I was friends with Stacey, people would leave me alone and I could

¹³ At the end of term an awards day was arranged where the children’s parents were present Here trophies were handed out to the children the teachers regarded as most helpful, to the children with the tidiest dorm, to the boy and girl who achieved the best grades, the most talented sports player, etc.

have done what ever I wanted to. But I'll never make friends with her even if I wanted to. She just slags me off if I try talking to her, so I stay away."

This quote suggests that "the cool group" is associated with power, not with being well-liked. The popular children bully other children in order to guard the boundaries of their group. If children not associated with "the popular group" came too close to them, they would often be harassed, but if they kept their distance they would be left alone.

Dinner for one; the low end

I arrive a bit late for one night. The staff and the children alike had got their food and were all sitting down when I entered the hall. I notice straight away that Denise is sitting alone by the first table in front of where the teachers on duty are sitting. Denise is one of the oldest children at the school, she is fourteen years old and attends year eight. Denise look really upset so I decide to sit next to her. Denise's face expression is serious, she looks quietly down at the table. I ask Denise if she is ok and if we should go and sit together with the other kids. Denise replies "I'm fine, I just want to sit here cause I don't like the others."

Pete, Carl, Jason, Paul, Morton, Randy and Harvey approach our table and sit down together with us. These boys are in the same year as Denise, and they are considered to be "cool". Harvey smirks at Denise and asks why she is sitting alone. Denise shrugs her shoulders and tells Harvey that she is sitting alone because she does not like any of the other girls. Harvey looks at Denise, snarls his nose and says "Billy". Denise does not reply, she is looking quietly down at the table. Jason laughs as Harvey calls Denise "Billy". He looks at Morton and asks "Do you remember when Billy bit me?" Morton reply that he remembers, he laughs and says that "Billy is crazy. She always walks up to people and scratch them even though they haven't done anything to her". All the boys laugh loudly. Jason asks me if I know who Billy is. I tell him that I do not. Jason smiles, points at Denise and says "that's Billy". The

boys laugh loudly, Denise is still keeping her head bowed. I ask Jason why they have given Denise the nickname “Billy”. He tells me that they call her that because she does not have any friends. Paul laughs and asks “Who’s ‘Billy’?” He points his index finger at everyone who are sitting around the table saying “beep, beep, beep...” slowly at first and then faster and faster the closer he gets to Denise. Jason watches Paul laughingly, and after a while he starts to imitate him. I feel that this was a very uncomfortable situation for Denise, so I ask the boys to stop what they are doing. I ask the boys why they are calling her Billy just because she is eating alone. I said that sometimes I too think that it can be nice to eat alone in peace and quiet. Jason shakes his head and says

“No, it’s not. It’s just the way it is, if you’re sitting alone, you’re Billy. Leanne’s sitting alone, so she is Billy-no friends”. [0]

The most popular and the most un-popular children alike become very visible in the school setting. Whereas this visibility usually is valued among the popular children, it is a source of unwanted attention for the unpopular children which often can be experienced as painful and embarrassing (Eder et al. 1995). Denise was made very visible in the school setting as her actions were not socially accepted among the children at the school and she was conceived as being un-popular. The boys in Denise’s year quickly remarked that Denise was sitting alone. They let her know that her actions were inappropriate by labelling her as “Billy No Friends”. After this incident other children usually referred to Denise as “Billy”, and this classification followed her for the rest of the school year. The ridiculing of Denise can be described as a “ritual insult” which “provides a way in which readings of the social status of persons are mobilized in interaction to differentiate people in the group” (Goodwin, 2006:232). The label “Billy No Friends” reflects Denise’s position in the social space. Bourdieu (1995) views class as positioned within social space. People who are high up in the social space possess large quantities of the different forms of capital¹⁴

whereas people possessing small amounts of these forms of capital find themselves far down (Bourdieu 1995). Denise possessed little of the different forms of capital described by Bourdieu, she lacked social capital as was she suffered social exclusion from other children, she did not achieve good grades in academics or sport giving her little cultural capital and she did not hold objects infested with symbolic capital by “the popular girls.” Denise found herself in far down in social space as she possessed a small degree of the different forms of capital.

Values and patronage

“The cool kids” are usually the group who dominates the other groups when they are in non-educational arenas. This was not the case within the classroom. The group described as “goodies” were often dominating “the cool kids” in educational settings. Whereas “the cool kids” would often avoid “the goodies” outside of academic settings, they might approach them inside the classroom to get help with assignments or homework.

The pupils of 8c are in their religious studies lessons where they are being taught about festivals. The teacher asks the pupils to name different festivals, most of the pupils were eager to reply. Payton was lying half asleep over his desk. The teacher looks Payton, she shakes her head as she walks over to him and pokes him on his shoulder. She told Payton “Wake up, and pay attention. Now Payton, can you please name a festival?” Payton replies “English new-year”. The teacher frowns and says “If you had paid more attention you would have known that we already have had a lot of examples on New Year, and that English New Year was one of them.” Payton covers his mouth with his hand and giggles quietly. The teacher turns angrily towards him and says “Payton, stop that!” The boys sitting in the front of the classroom turns smilingly towards Payton. The teacher had started walking towards the blackboard, but she turns to face Payton again when she hears the giggling. She raises her voice and says “I will give you detention if you don’t stop that right now!” Payton looks at the teacher and says “Sorry Mrs.” Payton starts waving his arms in the air as the

teacher turns towards the blackboard. Pete and Morton look at Payton as they laugh quietly. Mick and Shawn sit at by the back of the classroom. They glance shortly at Payton before Shawn turns to look at Mick who is raising his eyebrows disapprovingly, until both of them turns their attention towards the teacher. Payton quickly sits straight up with his arms in his lap as the teacher shows a sign of turning around. The teacher looks at the children and smiles before she turns back to face the blackboard and starts writing on it. Every time the teacher turns her back towards Payton, Payton starts waving his arms. Pete and Morton were constantly focused on Payton. They smiles, laughs and points their fingers at him. The teacher turns around and asks the class if anyone can mention anything which the festivals have in common. She turns to the blackboard and writes “in common.” Payton climbs to stand on his chair as the teacher turns around, he waves his arms around and makes silly faces behind her back. Pete, Morton and a few of the other boys and girls laughs quietly. Mick and Shawn ignores Payton completely. Mick raises his hand as he waits for the teacher to face the class again. The teacher did not notice what Payton was doing behind her back. She smiles at Mick and let him answer her question. Mick replies “food”. The teacher tells Mick that it was a good answer and she turns around and writes “foodstuffs” on the blackboard. Payton sits quietly at his desk again, he rests his head in his hand as looks indifferently at the blackboard while other pupils answers the questions of the teacher. After a while the teacher tells the pupils that they have enough examples and she lets the children watch a film about the Jewish festival “Passover”.

The teacher turns the TV off. She faces the class and tells them that their prep for the next lesson is to write about some of the festivals they had mentioned during the lesson. She tells the pupils to “be good” before she leaves the classroom. Payton walks up and sit down next to Mick. He pats Mick on the shoulder, smiles and says “How’re you doing mate?” Mick looks down at his desk while he mumbles “I’m alright.” Payton smiles and says “That’s good mate, cause I kinda need you to help me”. Mick raises his shoulders and asks quietly “What now?” Payton tells Mick “I didn’t catch everything about these festivals, so I need you to help me with my

homework". Mick nods and says "Fine, I'll do it". Payton stands up with a big grin on his face, did an approving "thumbs up" to Mick and said "cheers" before he left the class room.

I felt annoyed that Payton made Mick do his homework, so I ask Mick why he did not tell Payton to "sod off". Mick tells me that if he had told Payton that he would not do his homework, then Payton would not have left him alone. I ask Mick what exactly Payton would do to him, and Mick told me "You know what Payton's like. He would just 'take the piss' out of me in front of everyone." I then told him that it might be a good idea to talk to one of the teachers about it, but Mick told me that "That's a bad idea, cause then everybody would just call me a 'blabbermouth'".

Payton was associated with the group of "cool kids" and Mick was often referred to as "a goodie". Barth (1994) points out that every social relation involves a flow of valued goods and services. I have described above how "cool kids" and "goodies" often have different evaluations of things. Whereas "the popular kids" were concerned about being visible and aggressive in order to be able to control other children, "the goodies" were concerned about learning in order to achieve good grades. Even though the "cool kids" often were referred to as being popular among the "goodies" and "the billies" they did not necessarily look up to or approve of the "cool kids" actions. This was illuminated by the way Shawn and Mick ignored it and gave each other looks of disapproval as Payton misbehaved, rather than smiling and laughing encouragingly as a lot of the other children did. Certain members of the "goodie" group desired qualities which "the cool kids" possessed, sometimes as in the example described above it was also members of "the cool group" who wanted to acquire qualities which "the goodies" possessed. "The cool kids" would often approach "the goodies" in order to get access to some of these qualities, as Payton approached Mick in order to make Mick do his homework in the instance above. The interaction between Payton and Mick in the incident described above involved a flow of values. Payton gets access to values Mick possess in the form of knowledge, and Mick gets Payton protection in the sense that he is less likely to be subjected towards

ridiculing. The relationship between Payton and Mick fits into the description of a Patron-Client relationship as described by Paine (1971). A patron controls access to political, economic or cultural resources which the client wants or needs. It was Payton who appears in the patron role on the occasion described above. He possessed resources in his social capital through which he had the ability to protect Mick from bullying, both from him and from others related to “the cool group”. In order to achieve the protection he desired Mick who occupied the role as a client, entered into a relation of reciprocity. It is the patron who chooses the values circulating in the relationship between himself and his client (Paine 1971:15). In the incident above Payton decides that Mick has to help him with his homework. One might suspect that Payton decided to approach Mick and not his other classmates as Mick was one of the pupils with the best grades. Good grades presupposed knowledge which constitutes cultural capital. In this way cultural capital can be viewed as being a prerequisite for the establishment of this patron-client relationship.

Highs and lows in social space

Children at Dalesview House were associated with different levels of social ranking depending on which values were important for them. “The popular children” referred to themselves and were being referred to by others as “the cool gang”, children who were good at school and who did as the teachers told them to do were labelled as “goody two shoes” by the popular children, and children regarded as stupid and highly unpopular were referred to as “Billy No Friends”. I have also claimed that the “cool kids” were considered as having the most power among these groups, and that some children who were considered as being less popular wished to achieve acceptance and association with the popular children in order to avoid harassment. These groups were not stable, some children got excluded from the group they were associated with as they were regarded as being disloyal, and other children, like Becky, got included in “higher” groups.

Elaine, a thirteen year old girl, was considered as a “goody two shoe” and used to be friends with “the good kids” when I first arrived at Dalesview House. Her hair used to be long and brown, she did not use to wear designer clothes and she used to be slightly withdrawn. Elaine had changed her image when she returned from the Easter holiday. She had bleached and cut her hair, she had started tying her school uniform tie short, and she had got a new wardrobe consisting of labels like Dolce and Gabbana, Versace and Rock & Republic which were viewed as the “it labels” that spring. Elaine became an item with Morton, one of the most popular boys at school a few weeks after Easter. Morton had told me that he had started liking Elaine because she had suddenly turned “hot” and because she had started doing more “cool” things. Elaine started approaching the “cool group” more after she and Morton got together, when she spoke to members of the “cool group” she did not get ignored anymore, they would answer her questions and let her participate in their conversations, but in the beginning they would not initiate contact with her, that was up to Elaine. Until the cool children would allow Elaine to become a full member of their group they would test her to see whether she was willing to make sacrifices for them and they would test her loyalty as in the case described below.

After nine o’clock one Saturday night when the younger children had gone for supper, the year eights decided to play a game of “truth or dare”. It was no adults in the room apart from myself and one of the “gap students”. Stacey, one of the girls in “the cool group”, took the initiative to play the game. She walks to the corner of the room furthest away from the door so that the staff members who were sitting in the blue lagoon did not have direct view of them. All the children who were in the room apart from Randy walked over and sat in a circle. Randy who was seen as one of the “good kids” came and sat next to me. He tells me that he does not want to participate because he thinks it is a gross game and that the other children just plays it because they want to be “cool”. The children participating in the game are whispering to each other so I struggle to hear what they say. Stacey leans over to Elaine and whispers something in her ear. Elaine sits up, she holds her hand in front of her mouth and stamps her feet. The other children who are sitting in the circle start laughing. Elaine

looks around at everyone in the circle as she makes silly faces. After a while she leans forward with closed eyes and kisses Cole on his lips. Cole has a huge grin on his face at the time the kiss was over but Elaine sits back on her chair whilst she screws her face up and wipes her mouth. All the children in the circle laughed hard during the kiss. The game kept going for a while before Randy elbowed me in my arm and said “Look, now it’s getting good! Elaine has to kiss Carl for a whole minute.” In the other end of the room Elaine leans back in her chair, blushes and covers her face with her hands before she leans over towards Carl and kisses him on the lips as she keeps her eyes closed. Stacey was paying close attention during the kiss, she continuously kept an eye on her watch as she wanted to make sure that the minute has passed before Elaine and Carl stops kissing.

Cole suddenly straightens his back and starts telling a joke with a very loud voice. Elaine and Carl stops kissing straight away and sit back upon their chairs. Everyone in the circle starts laughing. As I turn around I notice a teacher standing in the doorway, he looks around the room before he leaves. Randy smiles at me and said “They’re good, aren’t they?” Stacey starts laughing as the teacher leaves the room. She smiles at Elaine and says that they have to start the kiss from the beginning. Elaine and Carl kisses once again as Stacey was times them.

Elaine dares Stacey to tell a teacher that his glasses are ugly as she had finishes kissing Carl. Stacey completes the dare and sends the go straight back to Elaine. Stacy tells Elaine to go and ask a teacher for a blowjob¹⁵. Elaine’s face turns red, she stands up and leaves the room as she is looking for the teacher. Stacey disappears together with Elaine to make sure that Elaine completes the challenge. They enter back into the room where the rest of the participants in the game are waiting excitedly. Stacey and Elaine are holding each other around the shoulders, bending forwards and laughing hard as they approach the other children. Stacey tells the children in the circle that Elaine has completed the challenge and that the teacher had

¹⁵ “*Blowjob*” is an expression for a woman performing oral sex on man.

ignored her as he pretended like nothing. The following day I ask the teacher if Elaine really had come up to him asking to give him a blowjob, he confirmed it and said:

“It’s a shame with Elaine, she used to be such a nice girl. Now she’s trying to get in with the wrong crowd so she does all these stupid things. This is the last time I let her get away with something like this, she needs to understand that this behaviour won’t get her anywhere.”

Elaine got more accepted in the popular crowd after this occasion. She stopped sitting with her old friends at mealtimes and started sitting at the end of the table with the popular girls. Stacey, who is seen as the leader in the popular group, told me that:

“Elaine’s not such a goodie anymore ... Morton likes her, so she must be ok. She’s stopped being so boring cause she does what we tell her to do, and she knows how to dress now. She’s not that bad.”

Bourdieu claims that “Objectively and subjectively aesthetic stances adopted in matters such as cosmetics, clothing or home decoration are opportunities to experience or assert one’s position in social space, as a rank to be upheld or a distance to be kept” (Bourdieu as in Goodwin 2006: 161). I have already described how the “popular” children use clothes as a way of distancing themselves from children seen as being less “popular”. In the case above Elaine adopts values from the popular girls. She starts dressing in similar ways as the popular girls, wearing the latest fashion and expensive labels. Doing this sets her apart from the less “popular” girls who were not so interested in brands, and it gave her a closer association with “the popular girls” who were very interested in having “the right clothes”. Getting a popular boyfriend also helped Elaine achieve approval from the popular girls. The girls admired Morton, and they thought Elaine had to be cool when Morton wanted her as his girlfriend.

However Elaine did not get entrance to the popular crowd without being tested. Stacey employed the game Truth or dare in order to test Elaine to see how far she was willing to go to become an accepted member of the popular group. By completing the

challenges she got presented, Elaine showed that she was willing to go far to achieve the popular group's recognition both by kissing the boys in front of her boyfriend and by completing the challenge of asking a teacher to perform oral sex on him. This was something the girls was well aware of could get her into serious trouble.

Elaine succeeded in achieving upwards mobility by converting economic capital into symbolic capital. She did this by wearing certain clothes which were seen as a symbol of prestige. Other reasons why Elaine achieved relatedness to the group of "popular girls" might have her relationship with a "popular boy", and by passing the tests where she had to prove that she was willing to take risks for "the cool group" and prove that she was not "a goodie" anymore. As Elaine got accepted into the group of "cool girls" she acquired social capital as she got access to resources within this group, she moved "higher up" in the social space as she collected more of the different types of capital.

Failed attempts at upwards mobility

Jane is a thirteen year old red haired girl. She was tall, skinny and wearing glasses. During the winter term she was best friends with April, Maggie and Mandy. The four girls used to spend their breaks together, and they would sit at the same table in the dining hall. If one of them were late for mealtime the other girls would wait until that person arrived. In the spring Jane suddenly changed her attitude towards the other three girls. One time Mandy was absent, Jane complained about what a "goody two shoe" Mandy was. April and Maggie showed their loyalty to Mandy by ignoring April's comments and not getting involved. Jane also started approaching the cool group more and more. She would often go up to their table trying to get involved in their conversation or trying to sit down with them.

Jane approached the table where Elaine, Stacey, Kate and Kristy were sitting during a lunch break. There was an empty chair next to Elaine where Jane sat down. Elaine turned her back to Jane and faced the other girls when Jane sat down next her. Jane

leaned across the table so she could see all the girls' faces. Jane smiled at the girls, yawned and said "I'm so bored of sitting with those nerds. Especially Mandy, she's such a goody two shoes. They're so boring!" "The popular" girls ignored Jane and continued their conversation. Jane pushed Elaine in the side and said

"Do you know what? I have some great goss. April told me that she fancies Pete! Can you believe it, she fancies Pete! As if she would ever stand a chance with him!" Elaine turned towards Jane and rolled her eyes. None of the other girls paid her any attention. Jane tapped Stacey on her shoulder in an attempt to get her attention. Stacey turned and looked angrily at Jane saying "Do you want to leave me alone when I'm eating? I hate people that disturb me when I eat. It drives me crazy!" Jane looked upset, she said sorry to Stacey and left the dining hall. Kate rolled her eyes as she watched Jane leaving. She turned to Stacey and said "Who the hell does she [Jane] think she is? She's such a "minger" that "four eyes"¹⁶!" Stacey laughed and said "I know, she's a fucking ginger pubes¹⁷! She freaks me out, she's so disgusting!"

Jane's old best friends started avoiding her after they heard that Jane had talked about them behind their back. I looked after Frankie, the art teacher's dog one day when April asked me if we could take it for a walk. I said that it was fine and April, Maggie and Mandy and I went to get the dog. Jane approached us when we were outside the art room and asked us what we were doing, Maggie told her that we were going to walk the dog. She said that she wanted to come but that she had to go and put away her math books. She told us to wait and ran away. April grabbed the dog lead and told us to hurry. I asked if we should not wait for Jane, the three girls shouted "nooo". April said "Hurry, we're taking Frankie to the gilles¹⁸." I told the girls that I could go and get Jane while they started walking. They all shook their heads and told me not to go. I asked "Why not?" April looked at me with a serious face expression and

¹⁶ *Four eyes* is a slang expression for someone who is wearing glasses

¹⁷ *Ginger pubes* is a slang expression for someone who has ginger coloured hair

¹⁸ *The Gilles* was the name of one of the local playing fields.

said”She’s mean, that’s why we’re being mean back. We’re just treating her like this because she deserves it. Excuse me, but she deserves it.” I asked why they thought Jane deserved such treatment and Maggie replied “cause she’s trying to be “cool”. She’s trying to be something she’s not. She tried to dump us to be with Stacey’s gang. We just don’t want to be friends with her anymore after that.”

Jane is trying to gain higher social rank and to achieve association with the popular girls. She attempts to distance herself from her former friends. She does this by badmouthing them to “the popular girls”. She attempts to show “the popular girl”s that she is different from her old friends by telling them that they are “nerds”, “goodie two shoes” and that they bore her. Jane tries to get the popular girls’ attention by gossiping about her old friends when her first strategy fails. The boundaries between “the goodies” and “the cool crowd” are illuminated when Jane is telling the girls about April’s crush on Pete. She is making fun of April by saying “as if she would ever stand a chance on him.” A relationship between Pete and April would be seen as inappropriate as Pete was “higher up” in the social space than April. Pete is cool and April is a goodie, and socializing and relationships were only seen as appropriate if it happened within one’s own social category or with a member from a higher ranking category. Jane was not considered as good looking, she did not have any established relations within members of “the cool group”, she was not among the students achieving the top grades, and she did not have clothes seen as fashionable, in other words she did not possess considerable combinations of the different forms of capital to achieve upwards mobility.

Goodwin argues that girls form coalitions against targeted parties and outline local social organization by talking to others. She further claims that this “can work to maintain good social relations within a group, increase group cohesion, and establish normative boundaries”, and gossip¹⁹ can “provide ways of sanctioning inappropriate

¹⁹ “When talk is about another person who is physically or physically or symbolically non-present or absent, it is considered a form of gossip” (Goodwin 2006: 190).

behaviour, creating differentiation and intra group conflict” (Goodwin, 2006:190). The incidence illustrated above includes all these traits described by Goodwin. Jane differentiates herself from her old friends as she gossips about them in her attempt to get access to the group of “popular girls”. Her old friends considered Jane to have crossed a boundary of acceptable behaviour as she talks behind their back. The gossiping creates an intra group conflict as Jane’s old friends exclude Jane from their group. As Jane’s old friends exclude her and gossips about her they underline the normative boundary which they see Jane as having trespassed. Jane moves downwards in the social space as she loses social capital, not only by being rejected by the “cool girls” but also as she was excluded by her old friends.

Breaking a deal; downwards mobility

Peggy used to be friends with “the popular girls”. She used to sit next to Stacey, the leader of this group, in the dining hall. Peggy used to be a marginal member of the group and Stacey and Kate would often boss her around until Peggy started opposing Stacey’s authority by not doing everything Stacey told her to do.

During mealtimes when Stacey and Kate had finished their cordials they would order Peggy to refill their glasses. One time Stacey took both the empty glasses and placed them in front of Peggy and said “Get orange and lemon mixture for me and Kate.” Peggy raised her eyebrows and replied “no bitch”. Stacey said “Come on Chloe, that’s why you’re here, to give us drinks.” Peggy shook her head saying “No, I can’t be bothered. Get Elaine to do it. I can’t be bothered getting your fuckin’ drinks anymore.” Elaine turned to Stacey and said “I’ll do it” and she got up to refill the glasses. From then on Elaine considered it as her task to get Stacey and Kate drinks.

Stacey and Kate were also used to having Peggy tidying away their empty dinner trays. One day Kate and Stacey left the table leaving their lunch trays behind. Peggy shouted after them “I’m not taking your trays anymore. You can take mine now. You can be my bitches for a change.” Stacey rolled her eyes at Peggy and said “No.

You're our friend so it's your job to tidy after us!" Peggy raised her voice as she replied "Yeah, but you're my friends as well. You can take my lunch away!" Stacey and Kate did not show any signs of willingness to tidy up after themselves, but at this point the matron approached them. She asked "What's the matter girls?" Peggy replied "They always make me take their trays and I don't want to do it." The matron shook her head and said "Come on girls, tidy up now." Stacey and Kate walked unwillingly towards the table. Stacey sent Peggy an angry look and said sarcastically "Cheers for paying us out bitch!"

After this instance Peggy would often talk behind Stacey's back when Stacey was absent. She would tell the other girls that Stacey was "a bitch", she would call her a "slut" and she gave her the nickname "bossy boots". The other girls ignored Peggy when she was talking badly about Stacey, they would not participate in the back stabbing, and they told Stacey that Peggy was talking behind her back. The conflicts between Peggy and Stacey got more and more frequent, normally evolving from Peggy's refusal to do as she was told. The other girls would take Stacey's side in the quarrels.

The conflict between Stacey and Peggy reached its peak when Peggy arrived at the dining hall before the other girls and attempted to take Stacey's seat. Peggy told me happily that it was her "seat from now on." She smiled triumphantly and sat down at the middle of the cool table where Stacey used to sit. Stacey looked grumpily at Peggy when she arrived and said "What the hell are you doing there? Shift!" Peggy did not move and told Stacey that because she was first she could decide where she wanted to sit. Stacey said "Fine, but then we'll sit at another table". Stacey, Kate and Elaine went to sit at another table leaving Peggy behind.

I described earlier how the decision to welcome Elaine into the "cool group" was ultimately up to Stacey. Stacey had a leader position within the group of "popular girls" and it is unlikely that Elaine would have been permitted access had it not been for Stacey's approval. Stacey was the member of the popular group who had the biggest say in things. She was usually the one who decided which clothes labels were

the most desirable, and usually the one who took the initiative to include or exclude people into their group. Stacey was the one who chose the values related to the group, while other members of the group affirmed these values, she was “high up” in the social space. Stacey can be seen as a patron within the group as it was her who defines the values related to the group. Other children in the group can be seen as clients who are in a reciprocal relationship with the patron (Paine 1971). By relatedness with Stacey and “the popular girls” children would get access to the resources of the group and move up in the social space as they gain social capital. Stacy and the other girls were often demanding favours in return if they let children get access to the group. It was established a reciprocal relationship, as these children did favours for Stacy and Stacy accepted the children members of the group. This fits with the portrayal of patron-client relationship as they are established in order to gain access and control over resources that would have been unavailable unless this relation existed (Schwed 1966:93 as in Paine 1971:10). Without relations like these, Stacy who occupies the patron role would not have any one who would offer their services and the other children in the role of clients would not have gained the social capital. Paine claims that at any given time the client can be held accountable for any effort the patron has defined as correct (1971:16). He asserts that the values the clients return to the patron compose an accept for the values chosen by the patron, and that it is this that constitutes the clients loyalty towards the patron (1971:17). Peggy stopped carrying out tasks Stacy told her to do, she did not return the values Stacey had decided that would flow in their relationship. Peggy brings to an end to the reciprocity of the relation as she chooses not to act accordingly to Stacy’s desires. Stacy chooses to exclude Peggy from the group as she did not act accordingly to the principles of reciprocity and the patron seized to be. As Peggy was excluded from this group she lost social capital and moved “downwards” in the social space.

Conclusion

Different groups of children valued different objects, skills and qualities. “The popular girls” were occupying a “high” position in the social space. They appreciated clothes defined as “in”. These clothes could be quite easily accessible through economic capital. Girls who had access to economic capital could convert it into symbolic and social capital and move “up” in the social space if they played their cards correctly. Fluctuation was rather high within the group of “popular girls” as a lot of children could gain access to the valued objects. Stacy who was viewed as the leader of “the popular girls” knew how to use this to her advantage as she knew that a lot of children strived to get related to their group. As Stacy accepted new members into the group she usually made them carry out different task. The girls who gain acceptance achieves social capital and upwards mobility within the social space, Stacey receives the services of the new member. The relationship is based on reciprocity and it fits the description of a patron-client relationship.

The group of “cool boys” valuated sports skills highly, and all the boys related to this group were seen as being very good sports performers. Skills at sport constitute cultural capital as it evolves around learnable skills. Skills at sports were more difficult to obtain than the “It” clothes desired by the “popular girls”. The boys did not let anyone full access to the group unless they were talented performers in sports. It was few boys who had these talents and fluctuation in and out of the group was little. Patron-client relations were also formed in this group. Mick was seen as a “goodie” he was very good at sports, but he was among the best students in the academic disciplines. This knowledge constitutes cultural capital. Payton who was related with “the popular boys” desired access to Mick’s help as he was better in academics than what he was himself. Mick wanted access to Payton’s ability to protect him from bullying. A relationship between the two boys evolved which was based on a flow of values between them.

7 Concluding remarks

Identities have been an important topic in this thesis. In chapter three it appears that boarders' identities are influenced by emplacement processes. Efforts by staff and by children selves help creating a common identity. One of the ideals of the school uniform was to serve as a marker of belonging to the place of Daleview House.

Chapter four explored distribution of roles among members of staff. Identities among members of staff related to gender and age influenced on the kind of relationship it was desired for them to have with the children. It was preferred that older teachers, especially males held an emotional and physical distance from the children in order to avoid accusations of paedophilia. Younger members of staff, especially resident teacher and gappies were desired as having close relationships with the children. They were understood to be more like the children as it was less of an age difference between them and as they were so young that it was not seen as "natural" for them to have established families on their own, which lessened the fear of paedophilia.

Chapter six explored gendered identities among the children. It was a strong pressure to stick to traditional gender roles. Children who took on activities related to the opposite gender were quickly received homosexual labels, as they took on activities related to the opposite gender, they were seen as possessing less of their own gender.

Chapter seven brought us to identities related to association with different groups. Children made differentiation between each other in many ways. One way of make differentiation from each other was to manipulate the school uniform in different ways. The school uniform was also related to belonging to the school, and an aim with the school uniform was to eliminate differences between the children. School uniforms have been described as washing out previous identities and promote conformity (Lomawaima 1993, Okely 1993). At Dalesview House the school uniform helped creating a sense of belonging, but it did not necessarily abolish differences. Children make use of creative strategies in order to differentiate themselves from

other children. Members of staff were fast to correct a child if he or she did not wear the uniform in the correct way. They would tell children to get a hair cut if they looked 'Scruffy' and girls who were caught wearing make-up during school hours were told to wash their faces. These corrections can be seen as promoting conformity. The boarders were silently rejecting this conformity: they tied their ties short, some of the children attached objects on the inside of their blazers and girls often rolled their socks down when members of staff were distant. Members of staff were partaking in differentiation between the children related to the school uniform by sewing on badges on the uniforms of children who had been appointed with statuses as sport captains, prefects, head of schools and librarians. As such the school uniform does not only promote conformity but also differentiation, and in the latter sense, constitutes a symbol of children's statuses.

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