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Snakes and Leaders
Hegemonic Masculinity in Ruling-Class Boys' Boarding Schools

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Recent events in a ruling-class boys' boarding school college in Sydney prompted public discussion about "bullying." Debate ranged between those seeing an endemic problem to be cured and those who saw minor, unfortunate, and atypical incidents in a system where bullying is under control. It is argued here that such practice is inherent in ruling-class boys' education. It is an important part of making ruling-class men. Using life-history methods with available biographical material, the article shows that ruling-class schooling of boys in boarding schools involves "sending away" and initial loneliness, bonding in groups demanding allegiance, attachment to tradition, subjection to hierarchy and progress upward through it, group ridiculing and punishment of sensitiveness and close relationships, severe sanctions against difference, brutal bodily discipline, and inculcating competitive individualism. Brutalization and "hardening" are essential to all these processes and are characteristic of ruling-class masculinity.

In October 2000, it emerged in the media that police and the Department of Community Services were investigating allegations of repeated group sexual assault of fourteen- and fifteen-year-old schoolboys by "a small band of fellow boarders" (*Daily Telegraph* 2000b) at Sydney's exclusive private boys' school, Trinity Grammar. Charges were laid, and eventually four Trinity students faced the children's courts. Despite the efforts of the ruling-class school's lawyers to suppress reportage of the trial (Overington 2001), the public learned that no less than seventy-five sexual assaults had been perpetrated in the school over a four-month period—fifty on one boy and twenty-five on another—"often during lunch hour and in front of 'spectators'" (Connolly 2000) who "stood by and cheered them on and laughed as the victims screamed" (Overington 2001).

These events and the responses of the expensive, Anglican, ruling-class school and its community tell a good deal about the character of ruling-class boys' schooling in general and are far from being the isolated, individual cases that Trinity's official spokesmen claim. The first half of this article provides some background detail about the school, then details about the events mentioned above and the school community's reaction to them. The second half of the article uses available biographical and media material as a form of "found life history" (Donaldson 1997). Thus, we apply life-history methods to autobiographies and biographies as a way of overcoming the practical impossibility of recording life-history interviews with the distant and unavailable men of the ruling class. From this "found" material, we attempt to create biography of both the events and of the social system and move back and forth between the two. By these means, we identify an overwhelming pattern of similar activity throughout English-speaking, ruling-class boys' boarding schools and argue that this is organic to the making of ruling-class men. We do not claim that "bullying" cannot be found in working-class schools but rather that the specific type of bullying identified in this article is endemic to the culture of, and practically institutionalized in, ruling-class boys' private schools. We argue, identifying well-entrenched patterns across several continents and spanning over a century, that these schools produce separation from the family and initial loneliness, bonding in groups that call for allegiance, attachment to a tradition, the experience of subjection to a hierarchy and progress upward through it, group ridiculing and punishment

of sensitiveness and close relationships, severe sanctions against difference, brutal bodily discipline, and inculcation of competitive individualism. We show how bullying, brutalization, and "hardening" are essential parts of all of these processes and characteristic of the production of ruling-class masculinity.

THE SCHOOL

Trinity Grammar School has been described in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as "one of Sydney's most exclusive private boys' boarding schools" (Walker 2001a). Its "vine-covered sandstone walls" stand in Sydney's established inner-western suburb of Summer Hill, which retains a liberal scattering of the mansions of the respectable and well-heeled, built during the nineteenth century following the railway west out of the city. The suburb is not entirely so salubrious and spacious these days, so the school has been engaged for a couple of years in a search for new premises, at one stage negotiating to lease a former university campus in Sydney's southern region for $19 million and later planning unsuccessfully to develop another southern site for $10 million (Noonan 2000a; *Daily Telegraph* 2000a). Some 1,850 boys attend the school, which has separate primary and bush campuses.

Trinity boasts of being "one of the finest schools in Australia" (Trinity Grammar School 1998). As well as its celebrated boarding house, with its "elegant portico of columns, arches, and sandstone bricks," it has a twenty five-metre swimming pool, basketball courts, a squash court, a weight room, a hydra gym, several ovals, language laboratories, an acoustically enhanced orchestra room, a theatre, a Greek amphitheatre, and a chapel with stained glass windows (Trinity Grammar School 1997; Overington 2001). Such excellence does not come cheaply. Enrollment, tuition, and boarding fees for year twelve for 2001 come to $26,510. Average earnings in Australia for November 2000 for all employees were $33,488 per year. But then, as Caroline Overington points out, Trinity "was never supposed to be a school for the sons of the typical worker." When the school first opened in 1913, boarding fees were £150 per annum at a time when the average wage was £102 (Overington 2001; Trinity Grammar School 2001a).

On Trinity's grounds, one finds, according to its Web site, "a sense of intimacy as well as of profound dignity" (Trinity Grammar School 1997). On the school's country property, "boys are allowed to reflect upon the wonder of Creation and, on the threshold of manhood, focus upon and begin to clarify their views of life" (Trinity Grammar School n.d.). The school's mission, according to the head master, is

> to provide a thoroughly Christian education for its boys, imparting knowledge and understanding of the world we live in, and recognising the importance of spiritual qualities in every sphere of learning. The School actively encourages its students to grow in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man, in order that they may become responsible, contributing members of society. (Cujes 1999)

THE EVENTS

Bidura Children's Court on December 20, 2000, heard a police statement in relation to charges of twenty-nine sex offenses against four Trinity students, then fifteen years old, who between April and September that year were alleged to have "subjected two fellow boarders to more than seventy five sexual assaults, including tying them to beds and raping them with wooden dildos and a saucepan handle" (Connolly 2000). The court was told of a collection of dildos made in the woodwork room and hidden under the mattress of one of the defendants. One such implement with which the victims were assaulted was called "the anaconda." "Victims had their arms and feet tied to bunks with school ties, belts or rope, as they pleaded to be released. One victim was wrapped in packing tape from his feet to his shoulders, then sexually assaulted. The bell for class rang and he was left to free

himself. . . . The victims could hear people laughing during the attacks, . . . [and] witnesses often heard screaming from the dormitory," recounted the police "statement of facts" (Connolly 2000).

Another "younger victim, aged 14, said he was the subject of regular "indecent and physical assaults" by numerous students. On one occasion he was dragged into the Year 10 dormitory at lunch time and the accused rubbed his torso up and down continuously against the victim's bottom. The second offender became involved and did likewise" (Connolly 2001b). There was no shortage of evidence. About 30 witnesses were to testify, with "up to a dozen . . . believed to be boys who were either victims or allegedly saw the attacks" (Overington 2001).

The Design and Technology Master told the police he had one night confiscated from students in the dorm phallic objects, which the police denoted as a wooden instrument and a steel instrument. He told police he threw them into a bin (Lawson 2001). Witnesses had reported that he "'simply threw them away' without asking where they came from or what was done with them." Police had confiscated one such "wooden implement" during a search of the dorm under search warrant (Lawson 2001). One of the victims had made a sketch of a boy wielding one of the dildos and had given it to the school counselor along with a six-page report that he wrote over an hour at her request (Lawson 2001; *Sun-Herald* 2001).

So these were not mere allegations. The "statement of facts" presented to the judge was agreed on between prosecution and defendants (Walker 2001c). The accusations became, as journalist Melissa Fyfe (2001) put it, "a matter of sordid fact after two boys pleaded guilty in a Children's Court to three indecent assaults, two involving a dildo made in the woodwork class." The *Sydney Morning Herald* (2001a) editorialized that this plea of guilty to three charges, each of "aggravated indecent assault," made "what could have been a long and painful trial . . . mercifully short" for Trinity.

This plea bargaining also spared the victim the humiliation of revisiting the events in giving evidence against his former fellow boarders. For this reason "the prosecution, in consultation with the victim and his family, agreed to accept the pleas and drop more serious charges" (Walker 2001c). "Twelve other charges were dropped in exchange for the guilty pleas" on the basis of this agreement. One other boy had already accepted the offer of a guilty plea in January when the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) offered a plea to the boys of aggravated indecent assault, whereas in December, back-up charges (made on the advice of the DPP) included aggravated sexual intercourse and sexual intercourse without consent. (If defendants admit to a form of penetration they are allowed to plea to a lesser charge.) One said yes, the others no. (Connolly 2001b)

The two sixteen-year-old boys who admitted the offenses with the dildo were given twelve-month good behavior bonds and had no conviction recorded (*Sydney Morning Herald* 2001a; Schoolboys escape conviction for bastardisation attacks 2001). The one boy who admitted using his school tie to bind one of two boys—the one who had been sexually assaulted more than seventy-five times over four months—was found guilty of intimidation and released on a good behavior bond of six months without a conviction recorded. A fourth boy, who rubbed himself up and down against the bottom of a fourteen-year-old boy who was being held down, was allowed to plead guilty to intimidation in return for the withdrawal of two charges of aggravated indecent assault and was placed on a good behavior bond of six months, with no conviction recorded (Australian Associated Press 2001). Each boy had his own team of lawyers. These were ruling-class boys.

THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO THE EVENTS

The institution itself in some ways responded like a blustering, bullying

schoolboy—but with adult ruling-class power and organization to back it up. It began by delaying, minimizing, and controlling the disclosure of the wrongdoing. It attempted to cover up the incidents and denied the existence of an established tradition that gave rise to them. Then members of the school community began to play down the nature of the misdeeds. This was accompanied by downplaying their extent. At the same time, and contradictorily, the school and its supporters attempted to share the blame and asserted that the others were doing the same things and that the problem was widespread. This, as we shall see below, is far closer to the truth.

We look now at each of these strategies in turn, demonstrating how ruling-class resources were marshaled for ruling-class purpose. We then investigate how the phenomena are indeed endemic to ruling-class boys' schooling and are part and parcel of the production of the masculinity of the hegemonic, the making of boys into men of wealth and power.

Silencing, Covering Up, and Playing Down

The routineness and matter-of-factness with which the spreading knowledge was concertedly dampened by all of the school's agents involved indicates years of practice and the embeddedness of the culture. So it is hard to stipulate where this particular covering up begins. The teacher who confiscated several dildos in the dorm "did nothing to find out the source or use of these implements and instead simply threw then away," according to the agreed statement of facts tendered in court (Connolly 2001b). Their provenance must have been pretty plain. They were made in the school's woodwork room, and the teacher was Trinity's design and technology master.

Their purpose was hardly disguised either; the phallic form of the implements was recognized by all, and they were confiscated in the boarding house dormitory. Why would one confiscate an object of sculpture or a mantelpiece decoration? No questions, it would appear, were asked. The answers were obvious. One does not talk about these things in these circles.
As well as seeing no evil, it would seem that the school's hierarchy was practiced at hearing no evil. The head master's quarters are "just a few steps" away from the boarding house (Wynhausen and Videnieks 2001), "diagonally across a courtyard, . . . which occupies the first floor of a single building." The boarding housemaster had his residence "directly opposite" the boarding house (Lawson 2001). The police statement of facts submitted to the Children's Court stated, "Witnesses often heard screaming from the dormitory and therewould be a discussion about one of the victims being 'raped' again" (Connolly 2000). Parents told investigators that noises might have been muffled because of the air conditioning (Lawson 2001). Journalist and lawyer Richard Ackland (2001) comments,

> It is the cover-up which seems to me almost as bad as the thuggery that goes on behind the gilded gates of these halls of learning. How can any headmaster or housemaster be unaware of the tone, climate and culture of the school? Howdo you not know in these small, tight, gossipy worlds that people are being rogered with wooden dildos on average three times a week?

The headmaster responded to such criticism with the retort, "We're not there with surveillance cameras. . . . We don't run a prison—we run a boarding house" (Wynhausen and Videnieks 2001).

The first disclosure by one of this particular cohort of victims to the school counselor was not reported to the principal for a month while "the boys were involved in exams" (Noonan and Lawson 2001). At the time, "The victim was interviewed, but [the counselor] decided not to interview the older boys because of forthcoming midyear exams" (Lawson 2001). This would seem to indicate no great urgency or priority in uncovering the facts of the matter or imparting them to the proper authorities, let alone the parents. The school is legally obliged to report sexual abuse to the Department of Community Services

(DOCS). While their obligations to parents are only moral ones, this morality is mediated by the market. The mother of one of the victims first heard of the assaults from an officer of DOCS, who contacted her on her mobile phone in a department store and advised her that he was in possession of her son's diary containing evidence of the indecent assaults. DOCS themselves had been notified a month after the school counselor had received complaints from two of the victims and had obtained written School Incident Reports from victims and perpetrators (Lawson 2001).

The father of this victim later complained in the newspaper, "The school is trying to close ranks and cover everything up. I believe the school is white-washing the whole affair. . . . I was angry that the school had not immediately suspended the boys and seemed content to keep it in-house with counselling" (*Sun-Herald* 2001). He recounted that his son was in fact suspended for a weekend for involvement in bullying of another victim:

> We had a meeting with the house master and he said the school has investigated it thoroughly as a claim of sodomy had occurred in the incident. But the school investigated that claim and dismissed it as confusion and exaggeration and said he was only being punished for the bullying. (*Sun-Herald* 2001)

The deafness and blindness of the school's hierarchy coexists with the culture of the boys, which makes "dobbing" taboo, in an environment where brutalizing, humiliation, and sexual violence are normalized. One of the victims explained that to dob, to report someone to the teachers, is the worst thing that anyone can do in a boarding school. It is seen as ratting on your mates even if they bully you.

> I was accused of being a dobber. The code of silence is really strong. The worst thing is to be seen as a dobber. I couldn't tell a teacher as I was too embarrassed to tell anyone. (Walker 2001c)

Ruling-class masculinity, then, has its form of solidarity, but it is one that tolerates and even admires bullies. The victim of the dildo attacks said that his tormenters were the "kings of my social group and I wanted to fit in with them" (Walker 2001c). This is not a solidarity that effects its own form of social control to sanction such behavior; rather, it is the social control to the hierarchy—that is, the older boys, the prefects, the head boy, the masters, and the head master. After all, the current headmaster was a boarder at Trinity; he cannot be unfamiliar with the culture of the boarding house.

When did it start? A university student who was a boarder at Trinity in the mid1990s told the *Herald* that "seniority ruled": "power-crazy individuals" among the senior students "asserted their supremacy" throughout the mid-nineties, victimizing junior students (Noonan 2000b). The father of a scholarship boy at Trinity for four terms from 1984 revealed in a letter to the *Australian*:

> He was beaten regularly and unmercifully by senior boarders, always on the back, upper arms and legs where the bruises would not show. Once he was tied between two ladders and beaten with a cricket bat. On another occasion he was tied in a laundry bag and left all night [in winter] on the school oval. He was subjected to systematic bullying to a level that could only be described as torture. The housemaster, himself an old boy, turned a blind eye to all this. (cited in Walker 2001b)

Said the headmaster at the time, Roderick West, "the boarding house staff and I were totally oblivious to what was happening. We were profoundly sorry that we had failed with such a splendid young man" (Walker 2001b). The school's lawyers, like those of each of the four defendants, argued unsuccessfully for a media ban on the Children's Court hearing, saying that "media coverage . . . would make it difficult for the defendants to find places at other private schools" (Overington 2001; Walker 2001a; Lawson 2001). The barrister of one of the defendants argued that "the matters would cast a shadow on all at the Trinity boarding house" (Connolly 2000).

Meanwhile, the headmaster told the school assembly not to have any contact with the media (Dennis and Noonan 2001). A former school captain at Trinity himself, he wrote to parents in an open letter, which stated, “As an old boy,” he understood the “mixed emotions” many people felt about the trial. Chief among them, he listed “embarrassment for the good name of the school.” He did say, “Of course we are all suffering, particularly the boys tragically caught up in this damaging situation” (Overington 2001). He protested that the school was being victimized by the publicity. “We have a situation where Trinity, in effect, is being bullied,” he complained to the media in the same interview in which he announced that no staff member at the school would face sanctions over any lack of diligence or cover-up (Noonan and Lawson 2001). He had “been besieged by parents and concerned old boys of the school demanding to know how he will address the damage to the school’s reputation” (Walker 2001b).

The media pronouncements were carefully and expensively managed. At about the time the matters became public, the school hired “a public relations consultant, Anthony McClennan, . . . who acted for radio station 2UE during the cash for comment scandal” (Overington 2001; Lawson 2001). From this time onwards, Trinity comments on the issues insistently contained the term “bullying,” and this tactic successfully changed the media discourse from one about sexual assault and rape to one of bullying.

For all the officially professed distaste for bullying,[1] it is systematically encouraged by the organization of ruling-class boys’ schools, as we argue below. It is indulged by their authorities. Bullies are often admired by rulingclass boys in boarding schools and ruling-class men in boardrooms. Any hint of homosexuality, however, is severely repressed. As Brian Millett, a “former resident teacher at Trinity for 25 years” told the *Sun-Herald*, “A culture of bullying with overtones of misogyny, homophobia, racism and all the associated nasties were certainly prevalent at the school” (Walker 2001b). The point was definitely not lost on the participants in Sydney’s Gay Mardi Gras, who mounted a float originally labeled “Trinity Grammar Woodwork Class,” which was changed to “St. Trinian’s Woodwork Class” after police urged respect for those “people out there still hurting from these experiences” (Hill 2001).

Parents of the offenders, and no doubt many others in the school community, were relieved after the plea bargain was accepted as it allowed them to downplay the nature of the offenses, notwithstanding that the statement of facts of group sexual assaults had been agreed to by the defense and the prosecution. “‘There were no sex charges. . . . It was just bullying,” the mother of one boy told the *Australian*. “It’s certainly not as bad as the media is making out.” (Wynhausen and Videnieks 2001). A parent of one of the offenders “dismissed the outrage expressed at the abuse as mere ‘political correctness’ ” (Barkham 2001). The mother of one of the perpetrators commented to a reporter that “she couldn’t understand why the case was in court at all—it was the sort of thing that just happened in boarding schools and rugby clubs” (Ackland 2001).

These starkly candid comments provide a powerful explanation for the school’s apparent condoning of the offenses; the hegemonic disposition among the paying customers is that this particular mode of “making a man of them” is what they are paying for. The second half of this article will show that the culture at issue is endemic in ruling-class boys’ boarding schools, that it is not merely a matter of a few “bad eggs” or one bad year. It is tacitly (and sometimes openly) condoned, indeed inculcated.

Some two-and-a-half months after the indecent assaults and bullying had been reported to the headmaster, the school had not officially suspended

those who had been interviewed and charged ("Trinity boys face sex counts" 2000). As the father of one of the boys who had been assaulted complained, "I was angry that the school had not immediately suspended the boys and seemed content to keep it in-house with counselling" (*Sun-Herald* 2001). By February 2001 and the time of the trial, "At least one of the offenders ha[d] been accepted at a prominent Sydney school" (Videnieks and Wynhausen 2001).

Isolated Incident or Others Doing It?

The school community insisted on portraying the acts as lapses by individuals and isolated cases. "This was definitely an isolated case," said one mother, slating the media for exaggerating (Wynhausen and Videnieks 2001). "In fact, said the headmaster as he posed for photographers, more parents had inquired about boarding their sons. They seemed to feel they had nothing to fear, now. 'Just like a crash on United Airlines,' said Kell Daniels, the head's assistant. 'That's when everyone wants to fly'" (Wynhausen and Videnieks 2001). Safety is not an issue if the customers keep coming. Disaffected victims' families aside, the majority of the school's clients, it seems, could be reassured provided the school's good name could be defended. This was possible if there was no sex involved and the problem was attributed to a few bad eggs.

The father of one of the victims said some days after the Children's Court hearing "that he was furious at the headmaster's continued claim that it was an isolated incident and that the victims had not even been able to tell their parents about it." He observed that "the headmaster seems incapable of acknowledging responsibility for what happened and the depth of the culture of bullying in the boarding house" (Walker 2001c). Before the court hearing, he had said, "All the school is doing is trying to uphold its reputation when the welfare of the boys should be paramount. There are more than just two victims at that school" (*Sun-Herald* 2001).

Indeed, in the statement of facts submitted to Burwood Children's Court, "the indecent assaults on two boarders were described as being part of an ongoing culture of bullying and bastardisation at the boarding school" ("Trinity denies bastardisation claim" 2001). "There were statements from a number of pupils 'as to matters of bullying and harassment [that] has been entrenched and an established code of conduct existing in the boarding house of the school'" (Connolly 2000). Police asserted that a "culture of violence" existed at the school's boarding house (Overington 2001). The barrister of one of the perpetrators said, in mitigation, that "there was 'regrettably a culture' of such assaults at the school. . . . [He] seems to have got caught up in a culture that was already ongoing before his involvement" (Connolly 2001a). Two of the attackers said that they had earlier been victims themselves, and, also "it was alleged by the Crown that the assault took place within 'the general culture of assaults and bullying that was taking place in the boarding school at the time, involving numerous students.'" The police statement of facts recorded that "The two accused had indeed been subjected to acts of abuse at the hands of fellow boarders at Trinity throughout their time there" (Connolly 2001b).

The headmaster, while characterizing the events as isolated exceptions in his school, asserted that he knew "at least four other elite Sydney schools are about to be investigated. . . . I know there are four other schools in a similar situation', he said (Bradley 2000). Indeed, some corroboration appeared in the following months, when the media reported that a final-year boarder at the King's School, one of Sydney's most expensive and oldest private boys' schools, was appearing before Lidcombe Children's Court, where evidence was given that he had "sexually assaulted a younger pupil after luring him to his room and coating him in cream." The defense solicitor said that the younger boy had been summoned for "badmouthing" his elder,who the 13-year-old named as a mentor (*Sydney Morning Herald* 2001b, 2).

As the executive officer of the NSW Parents' Council, which represents parents of students at private schools said of the Trinity events, "I'm disappointed but I'm not surprised. . . . It's been a matter of concern for a while by parents in all schools. It's not quarantined to any one school. It's a bit like drugs; . . . regrettably it's quite prevalent" (Contractor 2000).

THE CONSTRUCTION AND EFFECTS OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

What is observed and produced in Trinity Grammar and similar schools is a special masculinity that is inculcated in the schools of the rich. Defined against the otherness of femaleness, color, and homosexuality, it is a "competitive, physically aggressive, space-occupying" masculinity, which limits diversity and organizes other masculinities into a hierarchy of types, topped by a masculinity that motivates boys to compete, makes them "strong in the sense of their own abilities, able to dominate others and to face down opponents in situations of conflict" (Lewis 1991, 170; Connell et al. 1982, 73, 96).

This ruling-class style of masculinity is defined by the absence of women from all but helping and serving functions. The school not only ostracizes women from nearly all positions of authority while using their services but systematically maligns and deprecates "womanly" characteristics and attributes wherever they appear, defining them as manifestations of a vulnerability, passivity, softness, and incompetence thought by the boys to be typical also of homosexuals (Lewis 1991, 168-9; Jackson 1990, 202, 210).

The masculinity of success separates sexuality, emotion, and friendship from each other and assigns a low or even negative value to caring and nurturing (Lewis 1991, 182); manliness is about the qualities of might, strength, aggression, honor, daring, and cool indifference (Jackson 1990, 202, 210). "The policing of experience and the competitive dynamic of a hierarchical system fill the emotional vacuum . . . as a preparation for the world of work that was to follow" (Lewis 1991, 180). Tolerant and kind-hearted boys "trampled" each other to redefine themselves in opposition to women so they could gain admission to the real men's club whose members cohered "by isolating and victimising any boys who in their weakness, oddness or awkwardness they could connect to a despised culture of effeminacy" (Jackson 1990, 176). Acting hard and talking tough were the main ways boys proved their masculinity in school, largely at the expense of the marginal students who couldn't or didn't want to confirm their identity in that way. The line of conventional masculinity led straight from the brutalising behaviour of certain teachers . . . to the swaggering, bullying behaviour of the "cocks of the class." (Jackson 1990, 202)

A "language of masculine control" pervaded school life. Bossing, accusing, lecturing, admonishing, interrogating, and debating were some of the regular, everyday actions and institutional practices (Jackson 1990, 207, 149). Sport and games produced an obsessive single-mindedness in "being able to shut out all questions of the other person . . . in the drive for success and performance" (Jackson 1990, 209, 210).

Jackson learned to conceal his emotional life and survived by "playing up those aspects of my character that might gain me credibility in the suspicious eyes of the bully boys" (Jackson 1990, 204). But he was "terrorised" into publicly approving a masculinity that "effectively stole away my emotional self" (Jackson 1990, 205).

This bullying, normal to school life, was such that Jonathan Dimbleby (1994, 61) commented on

> the casual brutality that erupted once [Prince Charles's] housemaster had retired for the night: . . . a gang of thugs roamed the house beating up smaller boys, extorting food and money, pilfering, and creating an atmosphere of genuine

> terror.

Morrell (1996) affirms that this offhand terror seems to have been built into the schools from their inception. For the most part, bullying occurred without official intervention or censure (Morrell 1996, 60), for this tyranny of the big over the small and the many over the few had its counterpart in the formal systems of power and authority that were expressed in extremes of hierarchy and regulation.

The new boy bore the brunt of the prefect system. He could not walk on certain lawns or down particular corridors or past the studies of notable others. If he offended against these or other rules, he could be summoned to the prefects' room and caned (Hattersley in Morrell 1996, 57). Despite occasional rebellion, boys in groups tended to support rather than undermine this regime. "Hints of non-conformity were suppressed by the boys themselves, and their informal culture was at every point bound up with, and supportive of, the ethic of the school" (Tolson 1977, 35).

"Fagging," common in private schools, was where bullying became integral to the formal school system. It involved junior boys doing "house work" for older boys in a peculiar mimicry of domestic service in which thework of servants would be undertaken by young boys for older boys. Fagging connected bullying with formal school life and rules, forming part of a set of institutional practices that regulated school life outside the classroom and beyond the view of teachers. The fagging system established and reinforced hierarchy.

While its concern for hierarchy was obvious, both fagging and bullying extended surveillance, created and enforced sameness, and forbade difference. For those perceived as weak and dissimilar, a grim fate was in store because of the fierce intolerance of sexual, social, and morphological difference. This abhorrence of difference was called loyalty (Morrell 1996, 59), and being loyal became a means of survival:

> to survive I had to keep silent *within* the pack. . . . We all knew that if we didn't join in, it would be our turn next. . . . The pack hunts down any outsiders, and forces them to forget their own contradictory resistances, and teaches them to snarl, like the rest (Jackson 1990, 177, 178).

Even apart from these collective rituals, the enforcement of conformity was routine, "always there in the banter, the incessant jibes and the repetitively brutalising actions" (Jackson 1990, 178). Those who were in some way different were, indeed, treated cruelly. "The chaps who were given a bad time were the Jews" (Marr 1991, 71), and the boys at Scots College "chanted 'Abo' at [future career diplomat] Gordon Matthews until the chorus reverberated around the school quadrangle" because of his dark skin. (2)

Accepting their place within the institutional hierarchy, boys were loyal to each other and to the school, for to challenge it and its supporting conventions was to invite victimization. Bullying was experienced by "those boys who expected to be persecuted (knowing that they did not fit in), the bumptious and the timid" (Stiebel in Morrell 1996, 62), and to avoid continual mortification, the boys fitted in. "Difference was suppressed, uniformity championed" (Morrell 1996, 60), for at the end, the formation of ruling-class masculinity is all about "learning to . . . come to terms with public opinion and to know one's place, rising to be a house prefect, school prefect or games captain, and arriving at the end with that quality of self-confidence and poise which came to be the hallmark of the public school man" (Honey in Morrell 1996, 57).

TOUGHENING UP

The fact that the private elite schools were boarding schools increased their power and influence. Some time between the ages of seven and ten, the

boys are sent to boarding school, which they attend for about a decade during which they live with their peers and school masters for much of the year, broken only by their holidays and occasional long weekends (Fraser 1984, 147; Shawcross 1992, 56; Morrell 1996, 52). Even those whose parents live near the school experienced the same isolation from their families. Kerry Packer didn't see much of his parents during his period at boarding school, even though they lived quite close by (Davis 1982, 218). Ronald Fraser's school was only ten miles from home and Princes Andrew and Edward's only seven.

"Sending away" the children was very much "the thing to do." It was associated in parents' minds with the toughening process necessary to produce the ruthlessness and resilience required of ruling-class men. A friend suggested to the father of Howard Hughes that it was time to "make a man" of his son who was "altogether too over-refined, nervous, and sissified," and Hughes was sent off. The head of the institution shortly wrote to his mother, "I shall make every effort to rid [him] of his sensitiveness as soon as possible" and that Hughes was "much better off away from over-protective parenting."

This sending away produces a loneliness and miserableness that is instrumental in the collective construction of hegemonic masculine toughness. Kerry Packer, for example, "hated" school and seems to have been "a rather lonely child," like many sons of the very rich, according to Davis (1982, 218). Morrell (1996, 13) experienced his years at Hilton in South Africa as "lonely, traumatic and confused," and Prince Charles was "shipwrecked by loneliness" and "yearned for news from home" (Dimbleby 1994, 74). Indeed, the Duke of Edinburgh did write "bracing letters of admonition" in which he urged his son to be "strong and resourceful" (Dimbleby 1994, 66). The cure, according to Jackson (1990, 148), was to learn "how to 'master anxiety', anaesthetize pain through language, open a wide gap between mouth and heart." As they were meant to, the routines, daily business, and incessant competition helped to divert the boys from thinking of home. But in bed in the seclusion of the night, homesickness could hit. Everyone's self-respect was at stake: if one boy blubbed, the others would be poignantly reminded of their own unhappiness and brought dangerously close to blubbing themselves. He had therefore to be repressed at all costs. For most of us this was the beginning of that process by which our feelings were first numbed and then disconnected, giving us the distinctive quality of the boarding -school "man." (Lewis 1991, 177)

Nor was succor generally found amongst fellow pupils. Older boys "enjoyed the privilege of beating younger boys" (Marr 1991, 21). Prince Charles "dreaded" going to bed as he got hit "all night long" (Dimbleby 1994, 64, 66). Dimbleby recorded the tradition of greeting new starters

> by taking a pair of pliers to their arms and twisting until the flesh tore open. In all houses boys were regularly trussed up in one of the wicker laundry baskets and left under the cold shower, sometimes for hours. (Benson in Dimbleby 1994, 61-2)

Jackson (1990) complained that as a man, he was left with "self-hatred, and a destructive habit of despising the emotional, vulnerable aspects of myself" (p. 205).

CORPORAL DISCIPLINE

Competing and being "toughened into men" (Morrell 1996, 50) had a definite bodily aspect. The principal at Gordonstoun considered that physical hardship gave boys "genuine values" (James 1992, 45). Grueling physical activity and cold showers came to be a hallmark of the elite boys' schools. The windows at Gordonstoun were "kept open throughout the night, which meant that those closest to them were likely to wake up with rain-soaked blankets or, in winter, covered with a light sprinkling of snow." Every boy was required to wear shorts and to go for a run before breakfast, followed by a cold shower (Dimbleby 1994, 61). Prince Charles insists that his schooling at

Gordonstoun, which, at the time, he regarded as “a prison sentence,” was in fact “beneficial.” “We were made to do things you didn’t want to do, which we were told were jolly good for you.” These, he thought, instilled in him “self-discipline and a sense of responsibility” without which he might have “drifted” (Dimbleby 1994, 44, 57-8, 66).

Corporal punishment was until very recently a feature of private schooling. According to Conrad Black (1993), “as we aged and grew and became more physically resilient, the beatings became each year more severe.” Many, perhaps most, boys preferred physical to nonphysical punishment and some competed with one another even in this, measuring their capacities to suffer against their classmates” (p. 11).

There was also an “acceptance that it was ‘right.’” One former pupil of Ixopo High School in the mid-1960s explained, “I am sure we are all the better for it” (Morrell, 1996, 56). Prince Edward approves of corporal punishment in schools saying, “A beating or a thrashing, if used in the right context, is, I think, very valuable” (James 1992, 75-6).

FRIENDSHIP AND SEX

One-to-one friendships can threaten masculine heteronormativity because they may permit the development and investigation of the forbidden domains of emotional intimacy and homosexuality (which seem to the beneficiaries of hegemonic masculinity, always to be inextricably linked) (Morrell 1996, 63). Nonetheless, small, defensive, unstable groupings of young boys emerge who have little effect on the school or on their place in it. But by adolescence, no longer seeking or expecting comfort, boys exist alone or in another loose informal group, the gang. This larger group is accepting of ruling-class masculinity, easily accommodating and celebrating assertions of toughness and is frequently based on the well-known and accepted principles of male hierarchy. A senior boy, prefect, first-eleven, or top sporting team member and his mates might constitute the core, with younger boys who might be brothers, relatives. or sporting code aficionados forming a periphery. The gangs are generally defined in opposition to other gangs and to juniors and they “add to the regime of toughness, violence and intolerance which characterises the schools” (Morrell 1996, 63, 67).

But even within the group, there was “no recognised channel by which a boy can either communicate his feelings to others, or discover their possibilities within himself, . . . feelings of tenderness, and especially sexuality, remain beyond recognition” (Tolson 1977, xx). Teasing better exemplifies the relationship between these boys than affection.

> You push someone till they lose control, break down, cry or lash out in anger. Then *you* have won and *they* have lost. “If you can keep your head . . . split off your head from your heart and emotions, pretend you don’t care, you’re a good sport. You can take a joke . . . you’ll be a man, my son.“ (Lewis 1991, 181)

Boys who did talk about their feelings were under suspicion, for to be hegemonically masculine is to allow few emotions and to control them carefully. Power is implicated in this ability to “split head from heart” and ruling-class schools are crucially about learning its deployment. These schools, above all, produced the real men of their class because “in the end, a trigger had to be pulled, a button pressed and it took ‘men’ to do it because only men were capable of surrendering all compassion.” Establishing close friendships, then, was very difficult and concealing solicitude, empathy, and affection, if they did erupt, was important (Lewis 1991, 186, 187).

When a friendship did emerge and survive, however non-erotic it might be, homophobia was a factor in its establishment and maintenance. The homophobia of boys and teachers alike discouraged intimacy. “There was no one

you could turn to, not the staff and least of all one's fellows" (Lewis 1991, 177; Morrell 1996, 67). Thus, close friendship was not common in the schools of the rich (Lewis 1991, 180). It was forced underground or denied. Team sports and group bonding were the prescribed form of male companionship and close friendships are not an accepted form of male relationship. Boys attempting to form close friendships had to appear properly virile to avoid stigmatization. But most were not interested in establishing such bonds or in exploring their sexuality intimately with another. Public masturbation is common; within the gang, "circle jerks" and games involving measuring erections and displaying ejaculatory speed and skill (Morrell 1996, 66) are widespread and were sometimes the precursor of mutual masturbation sessions.

Victor Stiebel (1968), whose description of his time at Michaelhouse is described by Morrell (1996, 65) as "by far the fullest and most candid" account of private schoolboys' sexuality, refuses to believe that there was any "full-blooded homosexuality" at his school. Yet he recounts that "sex stimulation . . . was accepted and no one was shocked to see in broad daylight a big boy pressing urgently with his body against a wall or a tree a boy who was smaller," for this was "a natural part of school life," indeed "thematic." Some boys seem to have been coerced by those older and bigger, perhaps in return for "protection." Truman Capote, the "smallest and prettiest" boy in his class was sexual prey to several tough, manly adolescents, and after lights out, he was sometimes forced into the beds of those whom he was supposed to emulate. He recollects that none of what happened went "beyond adolescent sex play—kissing, fondling, and 'belly rubbing,' with him providing the belly and some bigger boy doing the rubbing." Still, the fear of violence turned these sexual games into something repulsive and upsetting (Clarke 1995, 45–6).

There was almost no chance of having close friendships with women beyond the family, although Stiebel was fortunate to develop a friendship with his music teacher. "Whilst I was at Michaelhouse a friendship developed between us which became so close that it lasted after I had left the school. It would be difficult to overstate her importance, but I can say that without her warming presence I do not know what would have become of me" (Stiebel 1968 cited in Morrell 1996). "The only chance" of meeting girls of their own age and class were "those days staged by other families for their daughters" (Lewis 1991, 179). For Sir Thomas Hardy, there were occasional parties at the yacht club, but the "right" girls weren't allowed to go to them; their parents

> certain[ly] they knew what happened in the sandhills behind the clubhouse. They were probably right. The only girls you'd find at the yacht club were from outside the district, but that was OK by us (Mundle 1993, 67, 68).

At boarding school, sexual derision for the "local" girls of the "vilest and coarsest sort" was widespread, accompanied by "a male lust at its most doglike and contemptuous." Sex between sixth formers and kitchen maids was "not unknown" (Dimbleby 1994, 67).

VARSITY

The rich, as Connell et al. (1982, 48) observe, do "go on" to university. Ninety-five per cent of the pupils at St Leonard's College in Melbourne do, and their families expect this to happen and prepare their sons for it. At university, a few of the sons of the very rich find a home away from home at residential university colleges. The students come, of course, mostly from all-male boarding schools and form a "coterie of ex-private school boys who have been through this sort of thing before and are therefore able to survive it, whereas those who [have not] do not come to such a college at all or else leave in disgust after two weeks" (Cameron 1997, 28-9, 127, 197). Seven out of the eight lay members of St. Andrew's College's governing council

had attended single-sex private schools (three of them the same one, two another), and two of the four clerical members were St Andrew's old boys. Many of their families had been represented at the college "for generations." Ten of the eleven-member Student House Committee, and all five of the senior students had attended, and three had been head boy at, elite private boys' schools (Cameron 1997, 20, 62, 79, 90, 92-3).

Cameron found that it is "axiomatic for the students that women are outsiders, at best a necessary evil, at worst a threat to their liberties and to their very identity." They regard women with fear, resentment, and insecurity, either bully them or being bullied by them, and they retreat from them to the college, which is simultaneously a "male fortress" and a "glorious pleasure dome." There is, he thought, "undoubtedly something sexual not only in the downgrading of women, but also in the male bonding and the mateship" they enjoy at university (Cameron 1997, x, 127, 197). The principal of the women's college of the University of Sydney, Quentin Bryce, finds this behavior "deeply disturbing" and "not confined to St. Andrew's." Not surprisingly, this misogyny was accompanied by an "exaggeratedly homophobic atmosphere" and by racism (Cameron 1997, 19, 69, 71, 201).

"Bastardisation" and "bullying," "traditional" in the college, according to Cameron (1997, 28-9, 81), are directed at the "weaker members of the College, those who don't seem to fit in with the stereotype of an Andrewsman." The college chef had complained to him the morning after one victory dinner ("not just another booze-up . . . a tribal ceremony, a ritual celebration of supremacy and belonging"), that the students had "spewed under all the tables and wee'd in the pepper and salt" (Cameron 1997, 49-50, 57). They were "in the habit of causing damage to College property of $20,000 every year" and their "usual behaviour" involved "vomiting in the corridors, relieving themselves out of upstairs windows, dropping glasses and old TV sets down the stairwells, and . . . all one night a female had been heard moaning incessantly . . . whether in agony or ecstasy wasn't made clear" (Cameron 1997, 6, 74). In 1986, the council minutes reported that "a city restaurant was trashed by 25 students, causing thousands of dollars of damage and involving the police; two students were suspended for 'blasphemy and sacrilege of the worst type' concerning St. Paul's College chapel; and a crowd of drunken Andrewsmen wearing nothing but academic gowns . . . had created a disturbance at the Women's College after a victory dinner and were alleged . . . to have run through the corridors masturbating." (Cameron 1997, 37-8)

Given the protections afforded by these colleges, old boys say, not unexpectedly, that these days were "the best of their lives," "overwhelmingly positive" and responsible for the formation of their "closest friendships" (Cameron 1997, 18; Garcia 1997, 38). These friendships remained after university, for when a student arrives at the college, he has "frequently been a prefect, or a member of the first eleven, or first fifteen, or of the crew" at his school and "the general feeling is that he must forget that when he begins his College career; he must be humble" (Cameron 1997, 18, 28). This humbling conditions the new student to seeing his humblers as "having authority over" him, and they are "conditioned to see [his] sole function in life as being humble." It is "difficult to resist and shake off . . . the controlling influence of someone who was [your] senior," thus the "bonding of the fresher year is a profound and almost mystical phenomenon which has lifelong effects" (Cameron 1997, 94).

When this deference to seniors is not forthcoming, violence can result, and on occasion, members of the college council "got drunk at College functions and were involved in fights with students" (Cameron 1997, 102). When Cameron sought to take action about such conduct, the Queen's Council he consulted suggested that a court might "conceivably take the view that the conduct I complained of was now the accepted norm in the Australian business

world and should simply be endured." This, Cameron claims, is "a reflection of the corporate ethos in the outside world, where one hears and reads daily of thuggish methods in the boardroom and not infrequently of actual coming-to-blows." (Cameron 1997, 102, 103)

The connections with the boardroom are close. Ex-Andrewsmen comprise innumerable establishment figures and international sportsmen. Members of the college council include the chairman of James Hardie, Ltd., and a director of Westpac. The council of the college entertains the elected representatives of the undergraduate student body in one of the oak-paneled private function rooms of the Australian Club to which six of its eight lay councilors belong. A seventh is a member of the Union Club (Cameron 1997, 18, 19, 24). Cameron has "dined at Government House and the Australian Club with millionaires, vice chancellors, politicians, and judges," and in his five years as its head, he invited five speakers to the college—the governor of NSW, the chancellor of the University of Sydney, a member of the House of Lords, a captain of industry, and Nick Farr-Jones, the former captain of the Wallabies and an ex-Andrewsman (Cameron 1997, 64, 191). For these men, the college is a "kind of epitome of everything they stand for, it sums up their values, it is the emblem of their social existence—in much the same way as the Australian Club," whose "atmosphere, . . . from the outsize painting in the foyer of the Battle of Waterloo to the kidneys and rice pudding in the members' dining room which 'always remind me of Nanny,' is redolent of privilege and class" (Cameron 1997, 97, 198).

CONCLUSION

From elite boarding schools to college to the boardroom, the masculinity of success separates emotion and friendship from each other and degrades caring and affection. Boys and men who speak of their feelings are mistrusted, for ruling-class masculinity is crucially about severing rationality and emotion. The expression of feelings other than anger, jubilation, scorn, and jocularity is considered feminine, and homosexual relationships are despised, even though same-sex acts are probably not uncommon in boarding schools. Those seeking close ties, whether sexual or not, are forced to make them invisible unless they can be made part of the activities of a larger group. Without the group, and deprived of anything other than furtive dyadic relationships, they become loners, pushed to the margins, always potential victims. The consequence for many, winners or losers, are misanthropy and self-contempt.

Far from being the individualized aberration portrayed by the school's public relations efforts, the activities and culture at Trinity Grammar School in Sydney in 1999, detailed in the first half of this article, have been shown to be endemic and entrenched in the schooling of ruling-class young men across generations and nations. They are, indeed, organic to their production of ruling-class masculinity. While "bullying" remains celebrated and demanded of the boardrooms of this class, its banishment from its boys' boarding schools is likely to remain a mere gesture.

NOTES

1. The Trinity Grammar School Bulletin II for the Lent Term, the year after the indecent assaults under discussion, contains the following statement: "The attitude and active response of the School Community will make the bully realise that his behaviour is anti-social and personally damaging. He will recognise the need to be guided towards more appropriate interpersonal skills" (Trinity Grammar School 2001b).
2. "Abo" is a disparaging slang expression for Australian Aborigine.

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