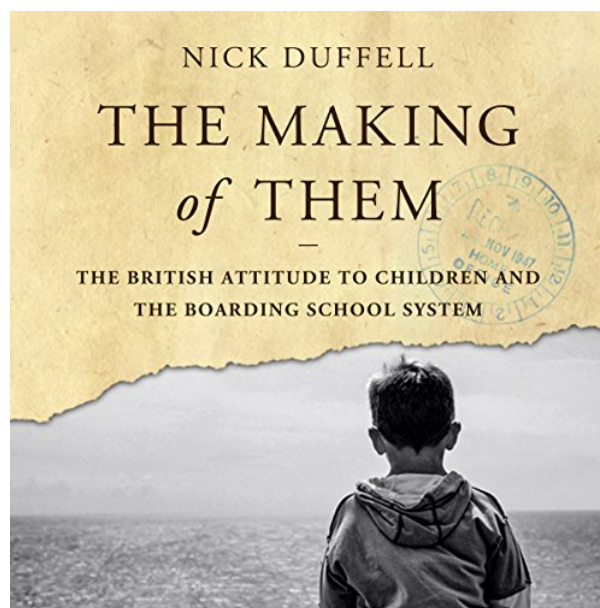
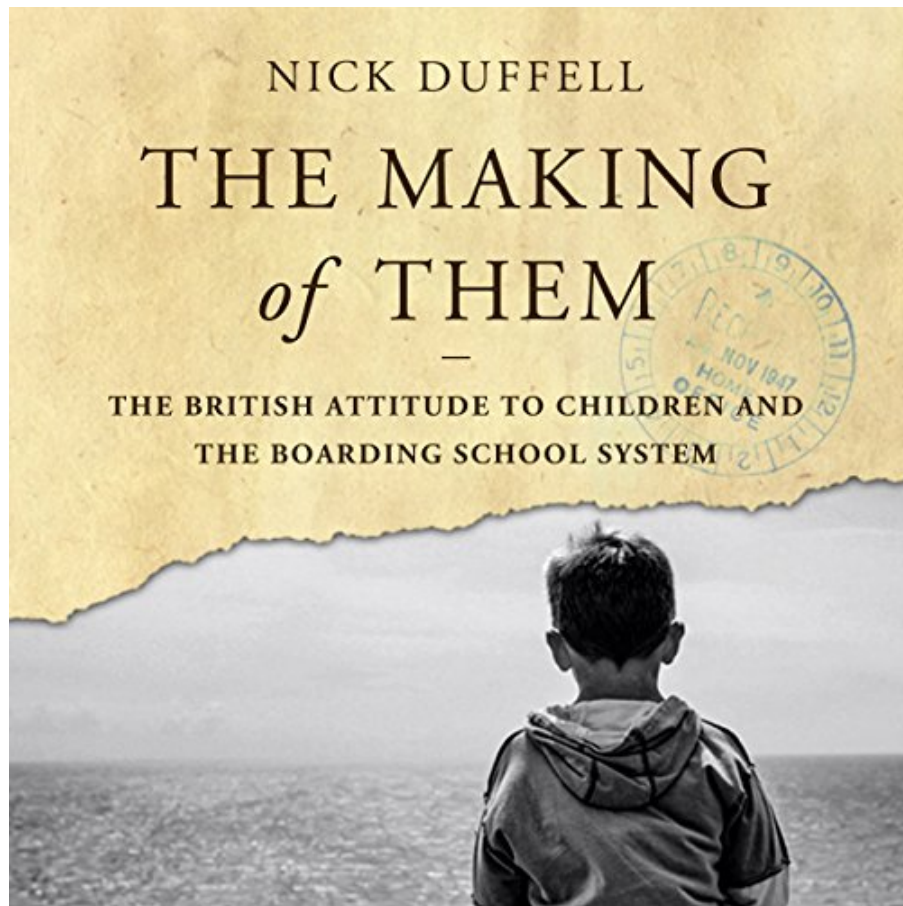


**THE MAKING OF THEM: THE BRITISH
ATTITUDE TO CHILDREN AND THE
BOARDING SCHOOL SYSTEM BY NICK
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THE MAKING OF THEM: THE BRITISH ATTITUDE TO CHILDREN AND THE BOARDING SCHOOL SYSTEM BY NICK DUFFELL PDF

At the dawn of the 21st century, British society is still shaped by a private education system devised to gentry the Victorian middle classes and produce gentlemen to run the Empire. Yet it is not on the political agenda. It is rarely the subject of public debate, and we remain blind to its psychological implications. Can we afford to go on ignoring this issue? Will we continue to sacrifice the welfare of our children to satisfy our antiquated social aspirations?

Why do the British still send their children away to boarding school? What are the attitudes underpinning this practice which mystifies foreigners? What does it mean for a child to be sent away from home and immediately have to survive in an unfamiliar custom-ridden world, without love, family life, or privacy? Will it be "the making of him", or will it be a trauma from which he may never recover?

No theory of child development supports the British habit of boarding. Unsurprisingly, it consequently turns out products marked by their ability to function confidently in outer social contexts, as well as their extreme fear of intimacy - in fact, any circumstance that would excite the vulnerability that had to be disowned in childhood along with their parental attachments. Ex-boarders therefore find family life, intimate relationships quite a challenge. Equally, those ex-boarders in positions of power struggle to comprehend those who are economically vulnerable and have a pathological fear of belonging.

This groundbreaking and widely acclaimed book outlines the history of the boarding project and explains "Boarding School Syndrome" and the building of the "Strategic Survival Personality". It is as useful for survivors of the system as for parents, partners, therapists, and educators, and ought to be required for legislators and those interested in the particular character of British society.

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- Format: Unabridged
- Original language: English
- Running time: 807 minutes

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21 of 21 people found the following review helpful.

A ground-breaking work

By James Foucar

Duffell's excellent book is a seminal examination of the British boarding school system.

Other reviewers seem to have missed this point. Duffell writes about the BRITISH system, where children are sent away from their homes from the ages of 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 and then stay send away until 13 through 18.

There are around 25,000 British children aged 13 and under in boarding schools today.

In the USA and other countries, teens elect to board, a choice younger children are unable to make.

Duffell's comprehensive work not only examines what goes on in these schools but what sort of person the ex-boarder becomes. Within a short time of arriving at boarding school, the walls of the psychic armour swiftly appear. This armour can be hard to shift later in life when it no longer serves its purpose.

Overall, a detailed book with many examples. Likely to prompt much "denial" from ex-boarders as this book hits their psychic armour!

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful.

Profound insight stunningly illuminated

By P. J. Fray

This book provides startling insight into the origin and nature of the British approach to private education. Why are boarding schools, developed to serve the needs of the largest empire in history, still widely used in the post-imperial age?

Duffell takes his own experience as a boarder, "sent away" to school at a tender age, as a starting-point for a journey deep into the psyche of the individual and the nation. Drawing on a wealth of experience from his work as a psychotherapist, he carefully peels back the layers of the constructed personality developed in the very young at boarding-school. He expounds sophisticated psychological principles with clarity for the lay-reader; and he describes the pain of his clients and the damage they have suffered with compassion but not with sentimentality. The depth of his humanity comes through loud and clear.

The book will be of most benefit to those who, in later life, are beginning to suspect that the source of their difficulties lies in their early boarding experience. But this is not a problem specific to the eccentricities of the British ruling class - there is a wider message here. The survival personality constructed in response to the shock and confusion of the fracturing of family life can be seen in all manner of people the world over. This book gives us a framework within which to recognise and understand such characteristics when we meet them.

I have learned a lot from "The Making of Them" about myself and about my fellow man. The book marks a watershed in our knowledge of ourselves, and the implications for mankind are profound. We can only improve society with understanding, and the way we do that is to inform ourselves and then educate our leaders. Read this book and then send it to your representatives!

13 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

Useful attack on British ruling class institution

By William Podmore

"The book proposes that children who board are compelled to `survive' psychologically - sometimes to their great cost. It argues that in adapting to their loss of family and school environment, children unconsciously construct a `Strategic Survival Personality', which become counter-productive in adult life. It offers some suggestions for reversing these effects by means of the development of self-awareness and psychotherapeutic help."

Duffell cites evidence from memoirs, literature and case histories. On a personal note, I found, much later, that I had taught in a comprehensive school for exactly the same number of terms that I had boarded at private schools: I had exorcised the abnormal experience by giving myself a normal school experience.

Duffell describes the pathology produced by boarding school, which is very similar to the Stockholm syndrome of identifying with your jailer. He depicts the cruel expulsion from family life and the system's

culture of denial and lying. He shows how its suppression of childhood trains its victims for the repression of the working class, of women and of foreigners, all seen as inferior, immature, emotional, incapable and ignorant. As Lord Esher said, "the English people are children in foreign politics." These schools trained the self-righteous bullies who ran the empire, and who now want to run a would-be European empire.

Duffell ascribes these failings to the British as a whole, but clearly the whole British people do not go to these schools, only those being groomed for rule through the Inns of Court, the officers' messes and the Houses of Parliament. These schools reproduce the 'two-nation class system'. They distort the whole education system and misuse scarce educational resources. These private enterprises, ludicrously, get the tax relief given to charities. It is as if 5% of the population were still allowed the freedom to own slaves, or could buy into private hospitals.

A purely psychotherapeutic approach, while clearly aiding some individuals, does not address the roots of the problem: there is little point in later reducing some of the system's dehumanising effects if we permit it to grind out these effects generation after generation.

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