

# **Liminality and in-betweenness: experiences of international students at British boarding schools**

Claire Ding



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**



# Tables of contents

<i>Introduction</i>	3
<i>Methodology</i>	3
<i>Family and education</i>	4
<i>Liminality as a temporary state</i>	5
<i>Liminality as a permanent state</i>	8
<i>Third Culture Kids (TCKs)</i>	10
<i>Conclusion</i>	12
<i>Bibliography</i>	12

## Introduction

The advantages and disadvantages of boarding schools have been an ongoing debate amongst scholars in various fields. The proponents of boarding schools argue it is a place where children gradually develop a sense of self, becoming independent from their families. Indeed, the rise in popularity of British boarding schools traces back to the colonial expansion of the British Empire, when children in the colonies were sent back to their home country to learn about British ideas and values, becoming the heirs of the Empire. However, increasingly scholars pick up on potential grave psychological consequences resulting from studying at boarding schools from a young age and there is a movement calling for the abolishment of boarding schools, especially hinging on how it is central to the reproduction of the classist British society.

My research, which focuses on the experiences of international students at British boarding schools, does not seek to take sides in this debate. Instead, by deploying the concept of “liminality” (van Gennep, 1909), I will explore the temporalities and ruptures in the lives of international students. Therefore, my research, nonetheless, brings light to both sides of the argument. While conventionally the anthropological concept of “liminality” refers to the middle stage in the tripartite structure of the rite of passage that is a liminal state, outside of time and space. I argue that for international students, liminality is not just a temporary state, that one undergoes when initially transitioning from schooling in one’s home country to the new British boarding school environment, but more importantly, it is a permanent state that arises from the boarding school lifestyle and extends to other areas of life. International students are in fact perpetually in a state of “between and betwixt” (Turner, 1967).

I argue that the liminal existence of international students at British boarding schools signifies uncertainty and confusion, as well as possibility and potentiality that create an open-ended future for international students. I also suggest that international students come to understand their sense of identity and belonging within the tension of their home country and the UK; the meaning of home is complicated by vacillating between “here and there” that inherit particular social configurations (Kandiyoti). I ultimately situate my exploration of liminal experiences of international students in the precarious world that we are living in, which is shaped by the global Covid-19 pandemic, interstate warfare, and intensified geopolitics; it is within such a temporal backdrop, that they embark on a journey of self-development, which is not only shaped by the immediate British boarding school environment, but also a transnational, cross-cultural context. My research is further linked to the broader discussion of Third Culture Kids (TCKs), which has become a global phenomenon.

## Methodology

The topic of my research initially arises from my personal experience of studying overseas in the UK since the age of 13. In a way, I often think of myself as born in China but nurtured by the British schooling system. It is undeniable that my sense of self and identity are shaped by

my early upbringing in China, however, over the years I have also observed myself transforming under the influences of British schooling and taking on a different set of practices and values. Increasingly I come to see my sense of identity and belonging as entangled, often rests on the tension between Chinese culture and British culture. Thus, I chose this research topic not only to explore the experiences of international students at British boarding schools in general but also as an opportunity to understand myself better.

The materials presented here are drawn from my conversations with my interlocutors in person and online over the summer of 2024. The six interlocutors were selected by means of snowballing technique, firstly beginning with my own personal network before extending to a broader social arena. I chose my interlocutors on the basis that they are all East Asian, having attended British boarding schools during their early adolescence that is around the age of 13 or 14, going into either Year 9 or Year 10; they have all attended an all-girls' school at one point during their educational journey and are currently full-time UK universities students. I had discussed the reasons for our conversations with my interlocutors and received informed consent from them.

I discussed with each of my interlocutors around two hours about their experiences of studying at British boarding schools and most questions were open-ended, foregrounding the perspectives of my interlocutors. I tried to allow my interlocutors to lead the conversations under the broad themes I had come up with ahead, which comprise education, language, culture, family and friends, worldview, identity and belonging, and future plans. I invited them to reflect on how they understand, negotiate, and imagine their own identity over time in relation to their educational path, moving across terrains of home and the UK. For purposes of personal privacy and data protection, all my interlocutors will remain anonymous and named based on a random alphabet.

### Family and education

Traditionally, education in East Asia and Britain respectively holds a different place in society. In East Asian countries, such as China, Korea, and Japan, due to influences of Confucianism, societies focus on “family-centred welfare provision” (Eun, 2023, p.138); the family is the basic unit of society and education is to supply family training by passing on received wisdom. The family comes first, and the individual is submerged within the group. In particular, in China family obligation is an enduring characteristic of social structure, legitimated and rationalised based on Confucianism (Qi, 2014). This can be seen from principles like, “raising a son to secure future prospects in old age” and “when parents are alive, children should not travel too far afield”, which have been central to Confucian thought.

However, in England, education is conceived rather differently. Rather than reinforcing the relationship between children and their parents, British schools take children outside of their families; in other words, “the school became the parents” (Macfarlane, 2019, p.42). The role of schools in England was to shape children into become individuals, being a phase of social

transition before children reach adulthood and integrate into the individualistic English society. Schools shape the bodies, minds, and character of children from the age of 8; in particular, boarding schools represent the most extreme form of this arrangement, in which young children are sent away home to learn to become an individual on their own.

Therefore, the experience of studying at a British boarding school for international students from East Asia not only means entering a new education system but also encountering a new set of values that is embedded in it. Going abroad to study removed them from their family, which is generally constituent to the 'self' in East Asia, instead the 'self' is now understood as the individual rather than a set of familial relations. My research is conscious of this tension and pays attention to how this is experienced in each of my interlocuter's journeys.

### Liminality as a temporary state

In *Rites of Passage* (1909), van Gennep comes up with an underlying pattern in all existing rites, "which accompany every change of place, state and social position and age", stressing the importance of boundary-crossing across societies. He suggests there is a tripartite structure in rites of passage, comprising separation, transition, and incorporation. The first stage of separation refers to people cutting or stripping away from something physically or spatially. Then the middle stage of transition is the crossing of boundaries between liminal spaces, which is signified by suspension and inversion of normality that people are outside of normal time and space. The third stage, reintegration, marks renewal and rebirth, granting people a new status. For example, Turner describes the chief initiation ritual in Central African tribes began with all men and women dressed in the same clothes, which signified a statelessness of *communitas*, then during the ritual the chief was dressed like a slave and wore a *lukunu* bracelet made of the blood of the slave, inverting his social status; after undergoing the ritual, the chief was finally initiated.

While the transition of international students from their former educational setting to British boarding schools is not marked by any overt rituals or ceremonies, it does follow a similar pattern. Several of my interlocutors said they withdrew from their old schools to receive intensive English tutoring in preparation for a British boarding school life, cutting away from their former education system and curriculum, before studying overseas. For example, **A** recalled studying English alone in another city to improve her English for half a year before starting her studies in the UK when she was 13; she commuted weekly on the train to see her family. **B** also started preparing a year ahead of studying abroad and went to an eight-week UK summer school to get used to the British boarding school life before actually starting Year 10. However, for some others, separation was a less gradual process that the decision to study abroad was abruptly made, primarily by parents, and with very little experience of living on one's own, they were sent overseas, being thousands of miles away from family and friends.

When arriving in the UK, the transition to boarding was experienced differently across the board for some it was only a few weeks to settle in, while others took a term or even a year. **C**

said for the entire first year she was questioning why she was here. All my interlocutors already spoke better English than most of their peers at home before studying in the UK; they either went to bilingual schools or received English tutoring outside of school. Nevertheless, to speak English comfortably was still a challenge. **D** remarked that it was a shock finding English hard as she was very confident about her English abilities back home. At the start, she struggled to understand slang or certain accents, as well as formulating what to say before a conversation had moved on.

However, the language barrier was not the biggest challenge that international students had to overcome in order to transition to British boarding school life. Being physically separated from home, many of my interlocutors found homesickness was the most difficult thing to cope with initially. **D** recalled not only herself undergoing a period of poor mental health in Year 10, but all the girls in her boarding house were dealing with emotional turmoil; “adapting well was only an appearance” that she used to cry at night so no one would know. This was particularly aggravated by time differences and strict phone policies, which created barriers for international students to stay in touch with family. **C** remembered having very little phone time when she was lower down the school and when she had her phone in the evenings it was nighttime in her home country, to overcome this she would drop a message in the family group chat every morning so her parents would know she is “alive”, which she still does at university now. She also used to call her parents on Skype as the school Wi-Fi had a very poor connection on WeChat.

Based on my observation, staying in close contact with family is key to mitigating feelings of homesickness and isolation for international students, thereby overcoming the physical separation to bring them with family together. **E** contacts her parents every day saying “No matter how late we will always say good night and love you” even today. She said this at first was a bit forced but looking back she sees the importance of consistently communicating with her parents; since they always express their love verbally when she is aboard, not only does she feel their support and company, but she also is open to share about her own boarding life with them, no matter if they are big or small things. In **E**’s words, she feels “close to her family at heart, even though distance has set them apart”. The daily practice of video call, therefore, can be seen as a ritualistic action that ties **E** and her family together, imaginatively reducing the distance between home and aboard, here and there. **F** mentioned that she would spend every holiday with her parents no matter if it was a week of half term or longer summer holidays and since Chinese New Year is during term time her family has replaced it with New Year’s Eve, so they would always be gathered together. Thus, in a transnational context, the relationship between children and parents comes to be shaped, negotiated, and maintained through various processes, which involve creative imagination and everyday practices.

According to van Gennep, the last stage of a rite of passage is incorporation, signifying renewal and rebirth, often marked by gaining a new status. I suggest here the new status international students obtained when going to study abroad was — “boarding school students”. By joining the school, they had to follow a code of conduct outlined by the school,

for example, wearing proper school uniform, handing in phones during classes, and going to meals based on the timetable. They also picked up cultural and symbolic practices that are integral to the institution. For example, **C** recalled there was a strong emphasis on sports ranging from hockey and lacrosse to netball and football at school and she chose football as it is “the easiest one out of all”. **D** also said gradually she was able to understand English in different accents and spoke in a British accent. Furthermore, I argue that physical appearance and bodily practices taken on by international students are only one level of integration, more importantly, are the values of British boarding schools that are imbued into students. All my interlocutors have attended all girls’ schools during their educational journey at one point and for several of them this was their way into feminism, often with reference to the idea of “girl power”. **E** said that the girls’ school environment made her believe in herself, that she is strong, and can pursue whatever she wishes regardless of other people’s opinions. She also increasingly became independent and developed great independent study abilities; she especially appreciates how the British boarding school system allows students to study what they want and gives more free time for one to think independently, unlike most teachers in South Asia, who emphasise academic achievement only. For **E**, boarding school is more about fostering an individual rather than a student, going beyond academics. **A** also said that studying at boarding school made her more curious, hardworking, and independent over the years.

Integration can also be seen in the interpersonal relationships and positive social bonds that international students have formed over time; many interlocutors spoke about the close relationships they formed with their peers and teachers with extreme gratitude. **B** looked back to her boarding school days as an overall positive experience; she recalled struggling with English Language and English Literature initially, but fortunately found a group of supportive friends. One of her friends hand-wrote her a list of literary techniques with examples in both English and Chinese to help her out. **B** said while currently, she is not in close contact with friends she made at school, they are very important people to her, who she met at a young age when everyone was very kind-hearted. **B** is also grateful to the teachers, who cared for and helped her throughout the years. She mentioned that when she was going to change Sixth Form, while her old school really wanted her to stay, her tutor, who was like her mum, advised her without bias and was very supportive of her decision to leave. **A** said her art teacher was like her mentor, giving her extra care, trust, and advice in art and beyond. It was the teacher’s praise and recognition of her art abilities that built her confidence and motivated her to experiment with art independently, greatly impacting her decision to study Fine Art at university.

### Liminality as a permanent state

However, a close examination of the experiences of international students at British boarding schools suggests that the liminal stage of transition can in fact be a permanent state that many international students were never fully incorporated into the boarding school environment and British culture as a whole. This can be linked to the fact that boarding school is a “totality of residence” (Goffman, 1961, p.15), resembling a total institution, which is “a place of

residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life” (Goffman, 1961, p.15). **E** remarked boarding was like living in an enclosed space, having very little contact with the outside world. **C** suggested that boarding school and its regimented rules from strict lights out time to meal schedules created a repressive system. **C** said in her boarding school, international students as boarders are only allowed to go into town during the weekends within a given period of time and her weekends would have to be taken up by compulsory activities like dance, especially lower down the school. **C** also recalled there were racist teachers, who would not allow students to speak in their mother tongue, even when they were calling their parents. Thus, boarding schools can be total institutions, creating alienation, thereby making integration a challenge in the first place.

A few of my interlocutors spoke about certain degrees of alienation that were created by a boarding school environment and amplified by the fact that one was an international student. In particular, **D** brought up the term “boarding school syndrome” (Schaverien) in our conversation, which refers to the negative psychological impacts that former boarding school attendees come to suffer from later in their lives. She explicitly said she would not consider sending children to boarding schools in the future; not only the boarding school environment inhibit her to show her real emotions when she was in fact mentally struggling, but also, she found the new social hierarchy in the student body that was based on a different set of values to her home country and difficult to get accustomed to. At the boarding school she attended, the social hierarchy was determined by how sociable, pretty, and sporty one was, and trying hard was being looked down upon, however, in her home country, students took pride in working hard and being high academic achievers. **D** does not see herself as part of the social hierarchy that is predominantly white and all the friends she has kept in contact with after graduating are all Asian, sharing similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds as her. **F** spoke about her negative experiences when first attending an all-girls’ boarding school in the UK as opportunities for self-development and growth, although having undergone bullying and exclusion. Her aesthetic practices, for example, wearing lipstick and decorating her room, were made fun of by her peers; she explained the boarding school environment required everyone to fit in, and standing out was prohibited. She also experienced bullying when she refused to skip lessons because of peer-pressure and informed teachers about this situation, which eventually escalated poorly leading the rest of the year group to turn against her.

Many of my interlocutors spoke about being in between their home country and the UK, where identity and belonging are entangled, no longer being clear-cut. **D** said she constantly feels like being “in limbo”, being a mix of Japan and the UK; she is not Japanese enough for Japan and British enough for the UK, therefore, tending to “vibe with people of similarly mixed backgrounds”. Growing up in an anti-Japan atmosphere, studying abroad has in fact made **D** proud of and appreciate Japanese culture; nowadays she always tries to be back at home to celebrate New Year. Looking back at her years at boarding school, she recalled speaking in a much stronger British accent at boarding school than now at university; increasingly she has embraced her accent as part of her identity that is a blend rather than one or the other. The relation between identity and accent is an interesting one, which is

particularly illuminated by Goffman's dramaturgical self. Instead of considering there is a true self, Goffman suggests that the self is a performative role based on the notion of impression management. The change in **D**'s accent can be understood as self-monitoring that as settings changed have been adjusted and attuned to a different set of social expectations and reactions of others. Upon reflection, ultimately **D** said choosing between the UK and Japan is like "choosing the better evil between racism and sexism" and culturally after all UK is freer and problems can be vocalised. However, she said she would not identify as British and the closest she would be is Japanese British.

Contradiction, confusion, and uncertainty are themes that frequently emerged in the conversations with my interlocutors on identity and belonging. **B** brought up the question of "Where is 'home'?" when discussing identity, which she has thought about a lot more in the last few years. Ever since studying overseas the idea of 'home' is complicated; for **B** the 'home' in China has become a place to live and she has very few friends there, however, she does not have any family in the UK. Nowadays she only goes back to China for one or two months each year and she remembers feeling out of place first entering the new place her family has moved into. **C** said she is "a Chinese, who is used to living in the UK" and that she found it very comfortable studying here and potentially working in the future. She also loves the city she grew up in and thinks about it with fondness, a place where she feels a sense of belonging, however, she would struggle to imagine living there. Equally, she never felt boarding school or university as a 'home' in the UK, but more of a place she lives at.

Instead of feeling out of place, some of my interlocutors suggest the liminal identity that they have developed over the years is an advantage to have. Liminality is characterised by *communitas*, which is anti-structure or unstructured, therefore simultaneously signifies uncertainty and potentiality; a liminal existence is a "subjunctive mood" (Turner, 1967, p.372). **E** spoke very positively about feeling more Chinese in the UK and more British in China that she is proud that her overseas background has offered her a unique blend of both. Studying in the UK has made her more proactive and friendly when meeting new people, which sometimes has caught people by surprise in China, but after all has offered her many more opportunities to make friends. For her, belonging is not tied to a place but a feeling about a place that gives her freedom and happiness and while she does not have an exact plan for the future, she would like to work at different places and eventually go back to China. Travelling between places from a young age on their own, the international students that I have spoken to envision their future to be open-ended. **F** considers her frequent travel between China and the UK as a positive thing that while she is uncertain about what exactly she would like to pursue in the future, she wants a career that offers flexibility and freedom, a global nomad life. Similarly, **B** said she wants to do what she enjoys rather than for money even though having little idea of what she would like to do and where she would go. Thus, liminality comes to be a powerful space that is open to imagination and signifies new possibilities.

The liminal experiences of my interlocutors are inseparable from the precarious world that we have been living through in the past few years. Many of them brought up the impacts of

the pandemic on their educational journey and how it created academic, social, and emotional challenges that are amplified by the distance between “here and there”. Several of them said online school and social distancing have made it difficult for them to make friends when they joined in new Sixth Forms. For example, to follow the health and safety rules students can only interact within their bubble. Academically, the online school has also made concentrating during lessons difficult, especially having to work around time differences. My interlocutors in general have described the pandemic as a period of emotional turmoil. **B**’s city was where Covid-19 outbreak started so she barely went back home because of strict quarantine rules and was constantly worried about her family in China, as well as having to manage the stress of university application. **C** said for a long time she struggled to imagine a life without wearing masks especially when her home city underwent one of the strictest lockdowns in China based on the government’s repressive zero Covid policy. **C** also recalled the pandemic years being a time when she suddenly grew up, she came to understand everyone has their own difficulty and what is right and wrong in such a precarious world becomes very relative.

### Third Culture Kids (TCKs)

My research on international students at boarding schools is further inked to the broader discussion of Third Culture Kids (TCKs) that has become a global phenomenon. TCK is a person “who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside their parents’ culture”; the third culture refers to a created culture that is in-between, neither the ‘home’ culture nor the ‘host’ culture (Walters, 2019). Such upbringings often include children from military, missionary, diplomatic and business backgrounds. Research surrounding TCKs shows that for many of them, “a sense of belonging is more relationship-based rather than geography-based” (McLachlan, 2007) and being “neither here nor there”, which have been mentioned by several of my interlocutors; one of my interlocutors in fact expressed that ‘home’ and ‘belonging’ are both feelings rather than concrete concepts, emphasise the dynamic fluidity behind them. Notably, my interlocutors are different from other TCKs in that they lived abroad on their own, which made their adolescent journey more difficult. Family relationships are indicated as a crucial contributor to providing a sense of safety, providing comfort, and belonging particularly during the adjustment phase at the beginning when TCKs first moved abroad; this kind of support from family is often missing in the experiences of my interlocutors or made much difficult to access because of the distance between them and their families overseas.

### Conclusion

“Who am I?” “Where do I come from?” and “Where am I going?” are three fundamental questions asked by Socrates. I tried to ask my interlocutors about these questions in relation to their educational journey as international students in British boarding schools and I came to conclude that while most of them are in their early 20s are just as uncertain and confused about their future as their peers, their educational experiences put them into a permanent state of liminality, situated the understanding of identity and belonging in between their home

country and the UK. On one hand, this often means my interlocutors are more uncertain about their future; on the other hand, they envision their future more open-endedly, often with acknowledgement that they would become global nomads constantly moving between or to different places; some of them especially embrace their liminal existence as a positive thing that gives them a unique sense of identity. In this transnational and cross-cultural context, 'home' does not refer to a single place, but multiple places or are associated with people; similarly, 'belonging' is not tied to a place, but is a feeling.

My research brings light to both propositions for and against attending boarding schools, however, it does not seek to take a stance. I found each of my interlocutors has a rather different take on their educational journey and appreciates it to different degrees based on their personal experiences. For some, boarding school is home-like, and they had an overall positive experience, while others consider it to be alienating and repressive, in other words, resembling Goffman's total institution, being a challenging and even alienating environment.

Within the institution of boarding school, my interlocutors not only underwent a transition from their home country to the UK but also a path from adolescence to adulthood, crossing multiple liminal boundaries, and having to deal with change in various aspects of life simultaneously and independently. Their sense of self thus is created and embedded in the multi-layered context of the immediate environment of the British boarding school, as well as their family overseas and the broader international and geopolitical context. Thus, they come to see their identity in rupture and temporalities, entangled with different cultures, places, and people.

## Acknowledgement

I am incredibly grateful for the consistent support and help of my research supervisor, Professor Alan Macfarlane, who not only has offered me useful advice when it came to conducting research and writing my report but also has been extremely encouraging since day one. I would also like to express my appreciation towards my interlocutors, who were willing to give me their invaluable time and openly share their experiences with me. I am moved by the story of every one of you and so honoured to have had the privilege of hearing them.

## Bibliography

Ayling, P. (2015). Embodying 'Britishness': The (re)making of the contemporary Nigerian elite child. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 45(5), pp.455–471.

doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2015.1095623>

Bashkow, I. (2004). A Neo-Boasian Conception of Cultural Boundaries. *American*

*Anthropologist*, 106(3), 443–458. <https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2004.106.3.443>

Blau, R. and Blau, P. (2019). Identity Status, Separation, and Parent-adolescent Relationships among Boarding and Day School Students. *Residential Treatment for Children & Youth*, 38(2), pp.1–20. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/0886571x.2019.1692757>.

de Waal, M. F., Born, M. Ph., Brinkmann, U., & Frasch, J. J. F. (2020). Third Culture Kids, their diversity beliefs and their intercultural competences. *International Journal of*

*Intercultural Relations*, 79, 177–190. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.09.002>

Doherty, L., Lieu, J., Muhammad Aledeh, Edwards, A.-M., & Kotera, Y. (2023). Examining the Impact of a Third Culture Kid Upbringing: Wellbeing, Attachment and Ethnic Identity Strength in Adult Third Culture Kids. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 22(2).

<https://doi.org/10.1177/14752409231189364>

Eun, S., & Seung Jae An. (2023). Who is my family?: A comparative study of the family boundary in East Asia. *Asian Social Work and Policy Review*, 17(2), 137–149.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/aswp.12279>

Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums : Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Immates*. Penguin Books.

Gu, Q. (2015). An emotional journey of identity change and transformation: The impact of study-abroad experience on the lives and careers of Chinese students and returnees. *Learning and Teaching*, 8(3). doi:<https://doi.org/10.3167/latiss.2015.080304>.

Hansen, A.S. (2015). The Temporal Experience of Chinese Students Abroad and the Present Human Condition. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 44(3), pp.49–77. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/186810261504400303>.

James, G. (2023). The Psychological Impact of Sending Children Away to Boarding Schools in Britain: Is there Cause for Concern? *British Journal of Psychotherapy* , 39(3). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjp.12854>.

Jones, E. M., Reed, M., Gaab, J., & Ooi, Y. P. (2022). Adjustment in third culture kids: A systematic review of literature. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13(13). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.939044>

Koh, A. and Kenway, J. (2016). *Elite Schools*. Routledge.

Liu, S., Liang, W. and Zhang, Y. (2023). Brighter or the richer? Understanding Chinese college students' choices to study abroad. *International Journal of Educational Development*, [online] 102, p.102856. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2023.102856>.

MacFarlane, A. (2019). *The Peculiarity of the English, A Personal View*.

Manying Ip (2011). *Transmigration and the new Chinese : theories and practices from the new Zealand experience*. S.L.: Hong Kong Univ. Press.

Mclachlan, D. A. (2007). Global nomads in an international school. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 6(2), 233–249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240907078615>

Nazimova, K. (2023). Angolan children's experiences in residential centers: displacement, liminality, and belonging. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2023(279), pp.101–129. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl-2022-0038>.

Qi, X. (2014). Filial Obligation in Contemporary China: Evolution of the Culture-System. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 45(1), 141–161.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jtsb.12052>

Schaverien, J. (2004). Boarding school: the trauma of the 'privileged' child. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, [online] 49(5), pp.683–705.

doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-8774.2004.00495.x>.

Simpson, F., Haughton, M. and Van Gordon, W. (2021). An Identity Process Theory Account of the Impact of Boarding School on Sense of Self and Mental Health: an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 20(2216-2133). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-021-00503-4>.

Thomassen, B. (2015). Thinking with liminality: To the boundaries of an anthropological concept. *International Political Anthropology*, 2(1).

Turner, V. (1967). *The forest of symbols: Aspects of ndembu ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ Press, pp.93–111.

Walters, K. A., & Auton-Cuff, F. P. (2009). A story to tell: the identity development of women growing up as third culture kids. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 12(7), 755–772.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13674670903029153>