the tensions that crisscross South African society. In this chapter, teachers, management, and students speak to their experiences of daily life at Fernwood and the multiple collisions that frame their interactions.

The first half of chapter 4 examines the institutional structures and practices of race at Fernwood, through an examination of how the management and teachers at the school construct “black” and “white” through their practices. Students’ confrontation with race and change is discussed in the second half of the chapter, as I use interview data to examine students’ responses to discourses such as the new South Africa, and the material conditions of violence and death that envelop Durban in the mid-1990s. Race’s constant presence at Fernwood assures that it will not disappear, be submerged under a discourse of nonracialism, or melt into a liberal celebration of difference. Instead, race persists, though, as I argue, its form and meaning change.

Students’ production of race at Fernwood is the focus of chapter 5, which examines the conflicting dynamics of taste. Here, I elaborate on Bourdieu’s notion of habitus and discuss its relevance to the analysis of racialized taste practices at Fernwood. I use taste to interpret the racial, and in some instances, class dynamics at Fernwood, demonstrating how Fernwood students use fashion and music to construct racialized selves and others and recreate local meanings of race that are inextricably bound to and within the global.

Using examples from everyday life and experiences at Fernwood, chapter 6 examines the conflicts and connections at the borders of racial relations within Fernwood. Conflict manifests itself through the setting and policing of racial taste borders and through the resentment (McCarthy et al., 1997) of white students towards their black classmates. Connections, though less common, are also evident, and again taste plays a formative role. Here, I examine how taste serves to help create divergent racial alliances among Fernwood students in grade 12 and grade 8. Chapter 6 also forefronts the ways in which class intersects with and influences the play of race at Fernwood, as shifting class dynamics influence the particular configurations of the connections that emerge both in grade 12 and grade 8.

Chapter 7 zeroes in on the lives and experiences of seven individual Fernwood students, as I interpret how they negotiate the racial politics of the school. Each student profile takes a different approach to working the borders of race, and their experiences and lives exemplify tales of possibility, which focus our attention not on the what is and what was of race, but the potentials for its future.

Chapter 8 looks at the future of race in educational research and pedagogy. In this concluding chapter, I argue that race and difference must be engaged, analyzed, and challenged through ways that expose how and why they matter, as part of the work of defusing their power.

Chapter Two

HISTORICAL FRAMES:
APARTHEID, IDENTITY, AND SCHOOLING

Segregation in schooling in South Africa predates apartheid by almost 400 years, though “race” as a structuring concept of separation is not a constant. Following the arrival of the Dutch at the Cape in 1652, formal schooling coexisted with the traditional educational practices of indigenous societies. One of the first schools established by Europeans was founded by the Dutch East India Company, and initially enrolled white colonialist children, enslaved Africans, and local Africans. However, the Dutch Reformed Church raised objections to the schooling of free and non free children in the same school, and eventually separate schools were established. The distinction here was not “racial” in the modern sense of the word, but instead was based on one's position in society.

Mission schools, established in the 18th century, represented another attempt at racial integration in schooling. For African, Indian, and coloured children, mission schooling was the primary means of obtaining a Western education. Black, and a few white, children attended these schools, which provided desegregated classrooms, but with segregated dining and boarding facilities. Mission schools, overall, achieved excellent examination results, competing with and often surpassing the results of white schools (Horrell, 1963).

The growth of the mining industry in the late 1800s provided the beginning of segregationist policies that invoked the modern concept of race. Mine owners preferred to hire unskilled, underpaid, black labor, as opposed to skilled and semiskilled
white labor, thus causing a small, but politically astute and experienced group of white workers to band together along racial lines to save their jobs. Skin color became an important line of division, as white workers' class and employment interests became synonymous with race (Davies, 1982; Jeeves, 1982). In 1906, the government stepped in to secure jobs outside of the mining industry for whites, thus preventing white unemployment. These policies, often referred to as job color bars, designated specific jobs for individuals of a particular race, thus spreading an ideology of segregation and inequality. "Race" as a "scientific" concept also emerged at this time, via disciplines such as eugenics and anthropology (Manzo, 1992b).

Job color bar policies influenced the development of educational policies and practices in the 20th century (Cross & Chisholm, 1990). Natal, soon to be followed by the Cape, introduced government funding for schools based on policies of selective segregation. Following the Anglo-Boer war, free primary education for white children was instituted, part of a British policy to Anglicize Afrikaner children. Numerous acts followed, including the Cape 1905 School Board Act, Smuts' Education Act of 1907 (Transvaal), and the Hertzog's School Act of 1908 (Orange Free State), all of which provided for compulsory, and racially segregated, education for white children.

Concurrently, the report of the South African Native Affairs Commission in 1905 advocated geographical separation of the races, separate systems of political representation, and an inferior, fee-based, noncompulsory system of education for Africans. Segregationist policies reflected more than the racist perspectives of the British rulers of the time; they also guarded against the possibility of concerted political action between poor whites and poor blacks. As Michael Cross and Linda Chisholm argue (1990), "Through education, white workers and youth were to be politically and ideologically incorporated into a white state to absorb and mute rising social and cultural conflicts" (p. 47).

The next several decades witnessed the consolidation and refinement of the system of segregated schooling. Mission education came under stringent criticism for attempting to raise the African to European standards, particularly in light of the emerging discourse of "culture" emanating from social anthropology. The Victorian idea of "civilizing" the native was replaced with a pseudoscientific discourse that argued for Africans to be educated in a manner that suited their abilities. Manzo (1992a) argues that this shift in discourse was a significant break as previously there was no necessary correlation between skin color and civilization. Anyone who became Christian would be considered civilized, and there was also the possibility that whites could be uncivilized. Now, however, the "science" of race provided for separate, biologically determined paths. Government-sponsored African education became synonymous with training for manual (boys) and domestic (girls) work. Furthermore, African education, under the 1922 Financial Relations Fourth Extension Act, was wholly financed through African taxation, thus severely limiting the available resources to be spent. Mission schools faced decreasing state subsidies, though they continued to educate significantly more

African children than the government schools (Horrell, 1963). At the same time, separate schooling for coloured and Indian children developed, establishing the rudimentary structures for the apartheid educational system that would soon follow.

BANTU EDUCATION AND THE CREATION OF RACIAL IDENTITIES

The National Party's victory in 1948 marked the beginning of the era of apartheid and the implementation of numerous legislative acts that defined everyday life in South Africa around one's racial classification. The Race Classification Act of 1950 (also known as the Population Registration Act) provided for the division of South Africans into specified racial groups, with each group accorded a particular location within a hierarchy—Afrikanders on the top, followed by other whites, Indians, coloureds, and Africans. The Group Areas Act of 1950 (reformed in 1957) ensured that South Africans would live in racially demarcated and divided areas, and the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, No. 49 (1953) guaranteed that public premises would be reserved for the exclusive use of one race only. These acts were forcibly implemented, with millions of individuals, predominantly black, required to relocate. Africans were made to leave "South Africa" and forced onto remote, barren, "ethnic" homelands (known as bantustans), which were governed by South African-appointed and controlled dictators. Men were allowed permits to reside in the cities so as to provide inexpensive labor for mines and other industry, and most often lived in crowded, filthy barracks, traveling home to see their families in the homelands once a year. Women and children, left without any means of support, and usually no electricity, running water, or other infrastructure, survived on the small amounts of money sent by their husbands and attempts to farm on the worst land in South Africa.

A system of stratified education was one of the key means through which the apartheid government attempted to maintain division and disparity. At its core, the apartheid educational system was designed to structure and reproduce inequality, by ensuring that blacks received an education that was grossly inferior to that provided to whites. One of the cornerstones of apartheid education, the Bantu Education Act of 1953, functioned on many levels—political, economic, social, and cultural—to contain blacks. For example, it has been argued that Bantu Education served the labor needs of the capitalist class (Kallaway, 1984; Unterhalter et al., 1991); that it was designed to create and reinforce ethnic identities among Africans, thus crushing emerging nationalistic sentiments (Manzo, 1992a; Molteno, 1984) and that its aim was to eliminate the influence of missionary education (Dube, 1985). Bantu Education cannot be considered one, monolithic, unchanging system of domination, but instead must be seen as a system that reformed itself philosophically as shifting political and economic conditions warranted (Unterhalter, 1991).
Bantu education required all schools, including those operated by churches and missions, to use a common syllabus. State subsidies for mission schools would also be eliminated over a four-year period, thus forcing the closure of many of these schools. Additionally, Bantu Education mandated that primary school education be conducted in the student’s “mother tongue,” thus recreating (and in many cases, creating) ethnic affiliations. The Bantu Education Act, followed by the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, Coloured Persons Education Act of 1963, the Indian Education Act of 1965, and the National Education Act of 1967 established the segregated and unequal system of mass schooling that, as Cross and Chisholm (1990) argue, became the basis for the construction of racial and ethnic subjects.

At the same time, however, race under apartheid was never an absolutely stable category; instead it was continually reformed. The apartheid government created and defined specific racial categories, invoking a mixture of scientific and new, or cultural, racism, to justify its policies. Manzo (1992) argues that the apartheid system was fueled not by a consistent application of population categorization, but by inconsistency, which was “an imperative, not an oversight” (p. 38). In other words, in order to maintain political and economic domination, the apartheid state had to deploy “race” in multiple and contradictory ways, which allowed for the maintenance and consolidation of white power and control. As an example, she cites the criteria used in the Population Registration Act (PRA), which provided for the classification of every individual. Manzo notes that though the act claimed to use “scientific” criteria to differentiate populations, in fact the PRA, “defined two of the races—White and Coloured—by skin color; one—Native—by country of origin; and the fourth one—Asian—by continent of origin” (p. 37). Thus, the discourse of apartheid shifts gears as it is necessary, invoking history, culture, nation, and biology to explain and perpetuate systems of domination. Bob Nixon (1994) also notes the inconsistencies in apartheid rhetoric and policies, as Africans are separated by defined criteria of language and culture, while whites with multiple lines of descent and languages (including Afrikaans, English, Portuguese, Greek, Hebrew, German, and Hungarian) constitute a single population group.

Dubow (1994, see also 1995) argues that “ethnicity” as an explanation for difference appeared in South Africa first in the 1930s and 1940s, as race as biology lost its explanatory power worldwide, and again in the 1960s and 1970s, as the apartheid government hijacked international movements for cultural pluralism and self-determination (including the multiple struggles for independence on the African continent) to justify its policy of separate development. Within the philosophy of Afrikaner nationalism, the separation of nations was also rhetorically premised on the lack of historical contact between whites and blacks, and the “empty land” thesis that proposed that whites had legitimate claims to South African territory because, they argue, the land was empty when the first European settlers arrived in the Cape. Racism, thus, was coded by appeals to the preservation of white national identity. Christian National Education, one of the philosophies underlying the South African educational system, was theoretically grounded in the development of these distinct “nations” under the broad rubric of Christianity. As a philosophy, Christian National Education (CNE), perhaps in marginally altered forms, was followed in many white schools, including Fernwood, well into the 1990s.

CHALLENGES TO BANTU EDUCATION AND “RACE”

Bantu Education provided the framework for mass schooling of Africans, though it was never free, nor available to all. School enrollments rose dramatically, more than doubling between 1953 and 1965, and doubling again between 1965 and 1975 (Unterhalter, 1991). Chisholm and Cross (1990) attribute dramatic growth in the early 1970s to shifts in state policy, which began to bend to industry needs for more educated workers and thus allowed increased enrollments in African schools, with only minimal increase in funding. Politically, the 1960s and early 1970s were a time of intense repression, with the banning of opposition parties in 1960, and the imprisonment of their leaders, including Nelson Mandela, in 1963.

Although Bantu Education had met with opposition from its inception (Lodge, 1984; Nikomo, 1990; Unterhalter et al., 1991), the introduction of Afrikaans as a language of instruction in 1976 led to small, limited boycotts that eventually grew into the landmark historical event known as the Soweto uprisings. With hundreds of children dead following the protests of June 1976, schools became a key site for political organizing and resistance. In 1979, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was established and school boycotts followed in the Cape (1980) and then more generally throughout the country in the mid-1980s. By this time, black schools throughout the country were in a permanent state of crisis, as resistance to the apartheid state surged. As apartheid was a system that was challenged, “race” as an organizing concept was questioned and disputed. For example, the Azanian People’s Organization (AZAPO) preached essential African identities, while the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), led by Steve Biko, promulgated a “blackness” that included Africans, Indians, and coloureds (Biko, 1978). Under the umbrella of the African National Congress, Africans, Indians, and coloureds welcomed whites to join with them in promoting a philosophy of nonracialism. Nonracialism rejected the apartheid government’s categorization of individuals by “race” and is thus in some tension with the current discourse of the “rainbow nation” that celebrates, not rejects, these differences (see Adam, 1995; Frederikse, 1990; and Price, 1997, on nonracialism and ethnic identity).

In the midst of this concerted, organized, and growing opposition, the state was sinking into an economic and political crisis. On the economic front, recession, an unstable gold price, falling profits, high inflation, and a shortage of skilled workers all contributed to the growing sense that the established apartheid system was unworkable. In response to this crisis of capitalism, the state instituted reforms that began a process of substituting the language of capitalism for the language of racial classification. This modernization of apartheid reflected the state’s realization that
some of its apartheid policies worked against the economic stability of the country (Levy, 1991; Nason, 1990; Unterhalter, 1991; Wolpe, 1988). Politically, South Africa was no longer physically surrounded by supportive, white, colonialist regimes. Instead, as Angola (1975), Mozambique (1975), and Zimbabwe (1980) became independent, South Africa was increasingly isolated. In this environment, the state began to repackaging apartheid under the guise of separate development, establishing and ideologically promoting the bantustans and giving the Indian and coloured education departments self-control. The government tried to split any developing coalitions between Africans and Indians/coloureds by establishing a Tricameral Parliament with Indian and coloured representation, and making small concessions to the African urban and bantustan middle class by providing increased and upgraded services, including access, for a tiny minority, to improved education.


Against this background of crisis and cursory reforms, the government was also attempting to improve its relations with other African countries. In 1973, the government approached selected white Catholic schools and requested that they admit the black children of African diplomats. However, similar privileges could not be granted to South African blacks. While the government's request to admit non-South African black children was accommodated, the schools that had admitted these children joined with other Catholic schools and began to meet with the government to negotiate for the admittance of local black children. Although the government denied these requests, some convent-administered schools defied the government and admitted black students. As desegregation of Catholic schools spread, philosophical issues about the implications of these changes became contested territory. Sr. Louis Michael addressed these issues in a statement prepared for the Catholic Department of Schools:

Do we mean by integration the admission of a few numbers of other races into existing White schools, expecting them to conform to the way of life of the White pupil, to adopt his attitude and values? If we do, then we should think more deeply on this matter. (Christie, 1990, p. 23)

The philosophical differences over opening of white, Catholic schools should be contextualized within the political upheaval that characterized South African society in the 1970s. Because of the minute number of black students affected, the “opening” of white Catholic schools was of little concern to broader black political movements, who were occupied with ending the system of mass education which had denied opportunity to millions. Thus, the struggle over the terms of the integration of white, Catholic schooling would be fought primarily among white, religious leaders, who took differing political perspectives about the extent of reform necessary.

Ultimately, the more radically transformative view of integration was rejected, and the parameters of open schooling became relatively defined and fixed as a reform movement that provided for limited access for black students, but no interrogation of church and societal structures. In 1986, the Private Schools Act officially brought the open schools under the jurisdiction of the white education department, though they were allowed to “render services” to other groups. However the impact of the Catholic open schools was relatively limited; by 1986 only 75 of these schools existed throughout the country, and the schools were still 79% white (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1989). Other private schools eventually followed the lead of the Catholic church and began to admit students of all races under a similar “open” philosophy.

Despite the perhaps symbolic importance of the open schools movement in challenging the state’s hegemonic control of schooling, its impact was quite minor, affecting only a small percentage of children, and coexisting with apartheid policies as a troublesome, though limited and contained, exception.

THE OPENING OF WHITE STATE SCHOOLS

In the 1980s, the apartheid system was collapsing on multiple fronts, including education. Mass movements, such as the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) had irrevocably altered the political climate. The National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was formed and called for the establishment of “people's education,” a new system of education that would be democratic and nonracial (Krus, 1988; Levin, 1991; Mashamba, 1990; Sisulu, 1986; Wolpe, 1991). Bantu Education, as a system designed to control the aspirations of Africans and school them for subservience, had failed. Instead South Africa was increasingly ungovernable and systemic change was imminent.

White government schools also faced a crossroads. Declining white populations, particularly in inner city and rural areas, threatened the closure of many white schools. Simultaneously, blacks were moving into these areas. For example, 60,000 blacks lived in central Johannesburg in 1989, but there were no provisions for education for them in these areas as the schools remained designated for whites only (Bot, 1990). By 1989, 26% of white school places were empty, while there was an acknowledged shortage of over 150,000 places in black schools (Christie, 1993). Although the initial opening of white, Catholic schools in the 1970s was only of peripheral concern to black groups because of the small numbers of black students involved, the empty seats and classrooms of white state schools in the late 1980s become symbolic of the inequality and absurdity of the apartheid system (Mncwabe, 1992, 1993). Opposition black-led groups rallied for black students to be allowed to fill empty places in white schools and some groups threatened to occupy empty white schools and use them to provide education to black students (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990).
In 1990, South Africa began a transition to a new era, as the ANC and PAC (Pan African Congress) were unbanned and pillars of apartheid legislation, such as the Group Areas Act, were repealed. Although sweeping changes were announced in other areas, the government continually refused requests by numerous white schools to admit black pupils. However, in late 1990, the minister of white education, Piet Claeys, announced a new model for limited school desegregation, which gave white schools the power to decide on their own admission policies. It is important to note that these schools still continued to operate under their “own” affairs department, and that the legislation did not dissolve the racially based system of educational governance. In Claeys’s words, “...a change in the admission policy of the school may not detract from the traditional values and ethos of such school” (Christie, 1993, p.7). In what became known as the Claeys Models, “Model A” permitted schools to become private but with reduced financial assistance from the state; “Model B” allowed schools to continue with the same level of funding, but gave them the right to adopt their own admission procedures; and “Model C” allowed for conversion to a semi-private school. In all cases, schools had to comply with a 50% plus 1 white enrollment policy. In order to convert to one of these models, an elaborate voting process was imposed that gave decision-making power to white parents.

The Claeys models were highly criticized from all quarters. The opening of white schools would have little impact on the masses of black students—they would still operate under the strictures of apartheid education and ultimately the changes would barely affect equality of opportunity. Christie (1993) argues that in demographics and in philosophy, apartheid ideology would be maintained:

Stipulations that schools would continue to operate within racially-based departments, that quotas would be monitored, and that the ethos of the schools would remain unaltered were evidence that the government was reinforcing racial ideologies rather than abandoning them. (p.9)

The apartheid government’s moves towards the desegregation of white schools was similar to the position adopted by Catholic schools almost fifteen years earlier—allow a small number of black students into white schools, but permit no changes to the fundamental structure and ethos of the schools.

By the end of 1991, 667 of the 2,130 historically white schools had chosen Model B—most had voted for no change, and a handful had chosen other options (Christie, 1993). In effect, white parents had been given control over their own school’s admission policy and most had chosen to remain segregated, even at the expense of perhaps losing their school to declining enrollment. By 1992, facing pressure to cut spending on white education, the new white minister of Education, Piet Marais, declared that all Model B schools would automatically be converted to Model C, unless they voted to retain Model B. Most schools, unable to once again rally parents for a complicated voting procedure, by default accepted Model C status, which decreased the school’s state subsidy to 75%. A fourth option introduced by Marais, Model D, did allow white schools to operate without racial quotas. Only a handful of white schools throughout South Africa embraced this model.

Although the opening of white state schools received sustained media and public attention, Indian and coloured schools had been open to students of other racial classifications since 1985. By 1989, Indian schools enrolled 5,315 non-Indian students (Annual Report of the House of Delegates, 1989 in Carrim, 1992) and coloured schools enrolled 8,106 non-coloured (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990). Furthermore, African schools under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education and Training (African schools outside of the homeland) enrolled over 4,000 coloured students in 1986 (Bot, 1990, p. 16). The reason for their enrollment, according to the DET’s public relations department, is that

during a transition phase in the fifties and sixties, a very small percentage of brown pupils attended schools for blacks and vice versa. This was done, and is still done, in accordance with practical guidelines mutually agreed upon by the two departments mainly with regard to the availability of facilities and always serving the best interests of the child. (Bot, 1990, p. 16)

Although the numbers of students enrolled in schools different from their legal population classification was clearly quite small (I note the phenomenon for two reasons: 1) despite apartheid philosophies, education departments serving African, coloured, and Indian students were, it appears, less rigid than white education departments about issues of desegregation in schools and 2) absolute segregation was never a complete and total state of affairs, though exceptions were isolated. From the perspective of the government, the opening of white schools was a response to a changing political and economic situation, not a fundamental shift in ideology. White schools, for the most part, followed the government’s position: opening the schools to children of all races, without questioning the underlying ideologies and philosophies.

THE EXPERIENCE OF MULTIRACIAL SCHOOLING

Before the 1990s, only limited research on multiracial schooling existed, most notably Christie’s (1990) scholarship on open Catholic schools in the 1980s. But as multiracial schooling became the norm at white government schools throughout the country, there was increased interest in the experiences of the students, teachers, administrators, and parents who were seen as the harbingers of the South Africa to come.

During the apartheid years, nonracialism was a guiding principle of the opposition movement (primarily the African National Congress and affiliated United Democratic Front). Seeking to reject apartheid’s systemic segregation, proponents of nonracialism struggled to reject “race” as a category of identification, while at
the same time recognize that race's significance in a still-stratified society could not be ignored.

One of the most important aspects of this early research on desegregated schools is its focus on how white administrators and teachers (and students in Christie's study) responded to the arrival of black children. Unlike Fernwood in 1996 (where black children are in the majority), these studies examine the more common situation in the 1990s, where black children constitute substantially less than half (often only one-third) of the student population. By the 1990s, many multiracial schools prided themselves on what one principal described as "a race-free school" (Penny et al., 1993, p. 424). Another principal interviewed by Penny et al. was "adamant that once an African enters the school gates the boy becomes simply another student, one whose racial background is irrelevant to all concerned" (p. 426). Nonracialism in these cases translates into a denial of race and becomes part of the larger trend towards assimilation and status, instead of change and transformation. With the numbers of black students in these schools still averaging 25 to 33% (and the vast majority of these students middle class), there is little pressing need to reexamine institutional structures and priorities.

Teachers and administrators often insist that nothing about the school has changed. Instead, blacks simply adjust to the already constituted ethos of the school. One teacher in Crain Soudien's (1994) study remarked:

I think blacks in this school still respect the traditions and they really understand that it is a good school and that they must try to fit in and respect the school. So I think that they don't have to really adjust, they just come to the school. (p. 285)

Christie (1990) argues that in their refusal to support integration open schools were instead choosing to adopt an assimilationist philosophy:

In their institutional dimensions—premises, staffing, curriculum, sporting and other extramural activities—most open schools carry a powerful legacy of white education... the established assumptions of white schooling have acted as gatekeepers against fundamental change, and have provided the material conditions for assimilationism. (p. 192)

Contradictorily, these newly admitted black children are seen as both special and different from other blacks, and simultaneously as inferior. Many schools took comfort in denying the "blackness" of their black students, instead emphasizing their familiarity with and acceptance of white norms. Referring to the home life of an African student in his school, one headmaster commented:

Alan Khumalo's father is an insurance broker, his mother is a teacher. Their home language at this stage is English and they stay in a mansion... I don't think you can compare Alan to the next guy who has grown up on the farm, who can't speak English. (Sadie, 1993, p. 108)

Similarly, a teacher in David Sadie's study separated "her" black children from her imaginings of authentic black life in South Africa: "When we went on tour to Natal we went to Zululand. We went to a traditional Zulu kraal and some of the black children were horrified that there was no television and life was so completely different from what they knew" (p. 142). This teacher justified the presence of black children in her school by separating them from rural blackness, which she read as authentic, though it is quite likely that the Zulu kraal they visited was a re-creation and re-presentation of an imagined Zuluness designed to entertain tourists (Golan, 1994; Nixon, 1994). Nevertheless, the teacher accepted this re-creation as the definition of blackness and noted with relief that her students were civilized enough to appreciate television.

At the same time, however, black children were also constructed as inferior, so as not to threaten the balance of power and privilege within society. A teacher at an Indian school (Carrim, 1992) explains her reaction to the academic success of African children, "I am always surprised when a black child does well because I don't expect them to. That's how I realised I am prejudiced as well. I am trying to confront it now" (p. 21). A white student in Christie's (1990) study similarly comments, "...the general thing about it is that they are lower than us. You know what I mean, like it's just people. I don't know. They are, and that's why they get lower pay than a white man" (p. 74).

The inferiority of blacks is constantly re-encoded through concern about the lowering of academic and behavioral standards when they are admitted to formerly all-white schools. For example, one of Penny et al.'s (1993) major findings is that principals were concerned with bringing African students "up to standard" and "whether standards would be maintained" (p. 416). Black children were also blamed for being loud and disruptive. One teacher in Sadie's study (1993) observed, "The black children are very different to the white children in their culture and everything and especially in the noise level. The noise level immediately shot up" (p. 137).

Far from being models for a newly democratic nation, the majority of multiracial schools in the 1990s retained the values and practices of earlier years, while allowing a small, contained, select number of black students to join their communities, if only on the periphery.

**This study in context**

The research on the lived experience of schooling in South Africa, both past and present, is quite limited. As Soudien (1996) observes, schooling under apartheid was a "black box," as "the apartheid authorities made schools off-limits to all but the most politically submissive" (p. 11). These restrictions, and the political climate under apartheid, severely limited the possibilities for substantial earlier research that may have probed the questions of identity and race that are central to this study. Two of the most significant exceptions are the work of Soudien (1996,
who specifically investigates the impact of the apartheid school on African
and coloured students' production of identities, and Christie (1990) who focuses
her study on the experiences of students (as opposed to administrators or teachers)
at multiracial Catholic schools in the 1980s.

As political change comes to South Africa, the amount of research in schools
will increase, and there will more studies that, like this one, use ethnographic meth-
ods to investigate educational, sociological, and cultural questions. Clearly, the
experiences of youth (both in and outside of school) in the immediate post-apartheid
era is an area of research that demands further development. Methodologically, all
the cited studies employ qualitative, though not extended ethnographic, methods.
Thus my study of Fernwood expands and deepens this literature, as I weave inter-
view data with ethnographic examples gathered over the course of one year.

Throughout this book, I argue that to analyze Fernwood youths' construc-
tion of racialized identities, it is necessary to interrogate their relationship to global
flows. At the same time, South Africa is clearly saturated with its own history: of
apartheid, of a (relatively) peaceful and rapid transition to democracy, and of the
current struggle for a decent and humane existence for all of its people. That history
provided the circumstance that made this study possible, and serves as a frame
within which the study rests. Yet, South Africa is only a click away from the United
States, Britain, Europe, Australia, Canada, and anywhere else on the globe. Its
reality, and its youth's engagement with race and popular culture, may be forma-
tive not only of its own future, but of many others'.

Chapter Three

Daily Life at Fernwood

Located in a valley in a quiet, lower-middle-class white neighborhood next to
a park, Fernwood, in the 1980s, could easily have felt as isolated as a school in
a small, rural town. In 1985, a typical year, Fernwood's rugby team lost twelve
games out of sixteen, the school play was Boeing, Boeing, the boys' cadets program
became an integrated part of the school curriculum, and the school's first com-
puters arrived. In this year, its twentieth anniversary, Fernwood's students and staff
are still virtually all white. The only blacks on the premises except one (a biology
laboratory assistant) were cleaning and maintenance staff. Despite the boycotts,
states of emergency, and general crisis enveloping South African society, life at
Fernwood was remarkably normal, full of field trips, cricket games, and dances. In
this aspect, Fernwood was representative of many white communities and schools
that continued to deny that tinkering at apartheid's edges was inadequate, and
had little idea of the future that awaited them.

Like other white schools, Fernwood was a product of apartheid South Africa,
and the specific context of Durban. Durban, a port city of four million people
located on the Indian Ocean, was deliberately partitioned under apartheid, dividing
white Durban from Indian, coloured, and African areas. Durban's extent of
racial segregation was so extreme that Paul Maylam (1985) refers to the city as a
"pioneer in the establishment of urban segregation in South Africa" (p. 47). Dur-
ban created this whiteness through the forced removal of Africans, Indians, and