

CHAPTER 7

PEDAGOGY AND COMMUNITY IN THREE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

An iterative description

PAUL DOWLING & ANDREW BROWN

STARTING THE DAY

The Mont Clair High School assembly was held after the first two lessons. We entered from the back of the gallery of a large hall. Students were sitting in the body of the hall and on the carpeted steps of the gallery. We, together with some of the teachers, sat on chairs at the back of the gallery. We were all facing the stage. There were large, upholstered chairs on the stage, arranged in rows. A number of teachers and four or five senior students were sitting on these chairs; there was a desk in front of them and a lectern to one side of the stage. We were all told to stand. The principal, wearing an academic gown, walked onto the stage and stood behind the desk. He addressed the school, ‘Good morning, school’. There was a mumbled response of ‘Good morning, sir’. The principal announced the name of the ‘today’s song’. The words of the song were displayed by an overhead projector to a piano accompaniment. Some of the teachers appeared to be singing the song; the students and the other teachers either mumbled or mouthed the words.

At the end of the song, we all sat down and the principal introduced the deputy principal, who was to present the lesson. The deputy principal talked about the trouble in Kwa-Zulu Natal. ‘What a sad situation in our country’, the democratic principle is being undermined by unscrupulous and selfish people. In a democracy, we as individuals must be responsible for government. The deputy principal referred to a discussion about shoplifting that he had had with the manager of a security firm. Again, the emphasis was on individual integrity, I believe in what is right and good and I do it. Corruption in high places is only possible because there is corruption in low places. He appealed to the community of the school by reference to ‘we of the Christian faith’. He read an extract from the Gospel of St John and a prayer that was introduced by ‘Let us pray’.

Another teacher and a student read notices; a water polo team from Eton—‘the most prestigious school in England’—was to play the Mont Clair side that afternoon. The deputy principal returned to talk about a current problem with theft. One of the workers had been dismissed; this may or may not be related to the

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problem. However, the pupil committee had requested that students should report any instance of another student looking into a bag other than their own. Any student about whom repeated reports were made would be investigated. The deputy principal read out the names of several students who have detention and others who had been given permission to wear long hair because they were to perform in the school play. The principal made a number of celebratory announcements regarding individual sporting and academic successes. Mont Clair students have obtained two out of only seven national scholarships for overseas study. Mont Clair students, the principal said, are so articulate and confident. The principal and teachers and students sitting on the stage left and the school was dismissed by a senior student.

It was the start of the school day at Siyafunda High School. The principal led us out of his office asking a member of staff on the way whether or not it was raining—it wasn't. The principal led us to a space between two of the school buildings where we stood against one of the walls. Another adult man (not a teacher) stood in front of us and a small group of members of staff stood at the side, mostly out of sight of the students. A number of students had already gathered in the space and were facing us; others joined them, filling up the space. There were about the same number of students as had been in the Mont Clair assembly hall, but we were outside; the assembly would have been cancelled had it been raining. We were waiting for the principal or the other adult to address the school, but neither of them did. Instead, a voice from amongst the mass of students started to sing in Xhosa. After a few words, the whole mass of students joined in in multipart harmony. The impact on us was visceral.

After the hymn, the man who had positioned himself in front of us read from the Gospel of St Matthew in a highly phatic manner. When he had finished, another voice from the student body began the chant the Lord's Prayer. As with the hymn, the whole school took up the chant in multipart harmony. Apart from us, everyone at the assembly had their eyes closed. Again, the impact was considerable.

At the end of the prayer, the principal gave out two notices. He introduced us, announcing that we would be tracking a particular standard seven class for the day and apologising that there had not been time to inform the pupil council. He said that he was sure that we would be welcomed. His second notice concerned a concert that was to be held on the following day. After this, we all left the assembly space.

The assembly at Protea High School also took place at the start of the day and was also held outside, this time in a quadrangle. It was the first day of the second term. The students had gathered in the space. There was a delay of approximately five minutes whilst the students were organised into lines and quietened down by those teachers who were present. The principal was standing on a podium and used a

public address system. He instructed the students to take a few moments for private reflection. After a short interval, the principal referred to the new curriculum, which was to be introduced and about which he had just received information. The curriculum introduced a new role for the teacher and for the parents and for the pupil. The pupil is now the learner. The teacher is no longer the educator, but the facilitator. ‘The responsibility now falls on your shoulders, your parents’ shoulders. ... teachers do not have to do that—the responsibility lies with you and your parents.’ The principal repeated this point a number of times. After this, the principal gave out a notice about uniform—pupils were allowed to wear tracksuits without ‘tackies’¹ in the second term—and a reminder about the June examination in which it was very important that pupils should do well. He ended with ‘I can see you’re all glad to be back, for hard work’. There was general laughter in response.

REVISITING A STUDY IN THREE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

I have a complex agenda for this chapter. The first objective is to get into publicly available print form something of a very brief piece of research that was carried out in the mid-nineties by Andrew Brown and myself. We have both always been well aware of its limitations, but we are, nevertheless, rather proud of it. The work gave us a short glimpse of pedagogic relations and practices in three very different schools within a society that was and, indeed, is only in the early stages of its emergence from the cruel apartheid regime. Three very different schools, but also three very good schools, by the accounts of others and by our own observations. I will try to indicate what *I* mean by ‘good’ at the end of the chapter. The three schools were located in three very different communities: the first, predominantly white and privileged; the second, at the opposite end of the economic spectrum, black and very severely disadvantaged; the third, a localised, but highly complex case of what I’m referring to as *class condensation*. We set out to explore how we might conceive of the relationship between the nature of pedagogic strategies that are deployed in a school by students and teachers, on the one hand, and the nature of the community that the school serves, on the other. A key source of our pride—until now celebrated mainly in private—was our sense that we had made some progress in this direction.

Now it’s important to say up front that there is no claim here to have *discovered* some essential features of schooling in general, about schooling in South Africa, even about schooling in these three schools; this is not a forensics of schooling. Rather, the aim is to present a commentary that allows us to look at and interrogate pedagogy in these schools in a new way. The coherence of this commentary—such as it is—also provides a new mode of interrogation of pedagogy in other schools and sites.

I also want to present, in a more dynamic way than is usual, the iterative nature of analysis. All of the school data and the majority of the data relating to the three

¹ ‘Tackies’ is a slang word equivalent to ‘trainers’, ‘sneakers’, etc.

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communities were collected by Andrew Brown and myself during two periods of three weeks in April 1996 and April 1997. The schools and their communities were all located in the Western Cape province of South Africa, a province that exhibits a unique demographic structure, some of the attributes of which will be described below. The initial analysis was also carried out by us between April 1996 and the Autumn of 1997. This is what is presented in the descriptions of the three assemblies in ‘Starting the day’ above and in the central sections of this chapter, between the end of this section and the beginning of the section, ‘Technology, Text, Commentary’; *these sections are spoken, conventionally, in the first person plural and the use of tenses is appropriate to a text written (mostly) in 1997*. This section of the chapter and those from ‘Technology, Text, Commentary’ onwards are spoken in the first person singular and with a choice of tenses appropriate to writing in 2007. They have been generated out of my (Dowling’s) revisiting of the work of nearly a decade ago. This revisiting has allowed me to establish the earlier work as the object of my own organisational language and produce a new commentary according to more explicit principles that are, themselves, developed out of the transaction. The next phase of the iteration would be to test out these principles in other settings in which the question of the relations between pedagogy and community are relevant. This phase remains, at this stage, programmatic.

I have received comments on earlier versions of this chapter (which were published on my website and presented in a number of settings in South Africa, the UK, and Japan). Some of these comments, in particular, those offered by Jaamiah Galant and Ursula Hoadley, have been extremely thoughtful and informed. I have not responded to everything that they have said in formulating this final version. An example may be helpful in clarifying the position that is being adopted here. Hoadley (personal communication) points out that social class is underplayed, particularly in respect of the ‘African field’ that, as she notes, is ‘far from homogenous’. I do not dispute this. It may well be that a more extended study—and particularly one that moved more substantially beyond the school gates in terms of data collection—would have led us to conceive of social class and, indeed, ethnicity in a more developed way than we have here. However, we have tried to resist imposing categories on the data, but rather to allow it to speak to us and we hope that it has.

Furthermore, even had we conducted a far more extensive study, we would not—as I hope that previous chapters in this book will have established—have been seeking to present a total description, but, as here, a view that emerges out of a transaction between a general method and a particular set of observations—a transaction between a problematic and an empirical setting. The outcome will be bound to upset at least some of those who identify with the South African settings and at least some of those who would expect sociology to take on a different form. Indeed, it already has. But this chapter does not set out to gainsay alternative, even contradictory accounts. Its pedagogic form should not be allowed to negate the exchange relation that is being encouraged between author and audience of this book. The questions that you are invited to answer are: does the method that is being introduced here have potential—in literal or heretical readings—for your

own work; does the description of the Western Cape setting of a decade ago raise useful questions for other settings in the here and now, wherever and whenever that may be?

A STUDY OF THREE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Post-apartheid South Africa is, of course, still very young. The organisation of residential communities, in particular, remains substantially structured, in formal terms, by the apartheid ‘racial’ classifications. In apartheid South Africa, education was officially organised under these headings. Thus, the Department of Education administered ‘white’ schools; the Department of Education and Training (DET) administered ‘black’ schools; the House of Representatives (HoR) administered schools for the ‘coloured’ population (which comprises 60% of the population of the Western Cape Province); and the House of Delegates administered schools for the ‘Indian’ population.² Under the current government, all schools in the Western Cape are administered by the Western Cape Department of Education. All South African schools charge fees. However, the amount of the fee and, in consequence, the available facilities, vary dramatically between schools. We shall describe the schools in our study and their referent communities below.

At this stage, we should simply indicate that one, Mont Clair High School,³ is an ex-Model C school⁴ serving a predominantly ‘white’ community. The second school, Siyafunda High School, is an ex-DET school in an African township. The third, Protea High School, is an ex-HoR school in a ‘coloured’ suburb. Our data collection involved, firstly, student-shadowing for whole days. Three of us⁵ shadowed Standard 7 (13-14-year-olds) and Standard 10 (16-17-year-olds) students. In addition, we interviewed 50 students in single-gendered groups of (generally) four. We also interviewed the Principals and several other teachers in each school. We also spoke with several officials in the Western Cape Department of Education. All of the interviews with the students were tape-recorded and

² The House of Representatives and the House of Delegates were separate assemblies ‘elected’ by the ‘coloured’ and ‘Indian’ population, respectively. It is important, however, to make clear that the ‘elections’ were a long way from what might be expected in most contemporary democracies. As Jaamiah Galant (personal communication) has emphasised: ‘The HOR and HOD were created by the government of the day in the context of a very contested ‘tricameral parliament’ in the early 80s in which each population group was given a separate ‘house’ in parliament and a very small section of the ‘Indian’ and ‘Coloured’ population groups participated and supported this initiative. It has to be stated that these ‘assemblies’ were not elected by the general populace in a ‘general free and open election’—we were still very much disenfranchised at the time, it was not a free vote. These so called elections were actively boycotted and ‘Africans’ were not given any vote. These officials were viewed by the majority of the non-white population as puppets of the apartheid regime—they had no constituencies.’

³ The names used here are fictitious.

⁴ The term ‘model C’ refers to the mode of state funding.

⁵ We were assisted by Parin Bahl in the data collection.

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transcribed. We used fieldnotes for interviews with the teachers and for observation. Here are the schools and their communities.

THE SCHOOLS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

We are defining a 'community' as a definable site for communicative action, which is characterised by specific forms of social relations that are produced and reproduced in cultural practices that, in general terms, may or may not be specific to the site. In this conception, individuals are not contained by a single community, rather they routinely participate in a complex of communities which might be conceived as 'cover-sets' in Atkin's sense (1981). A school clearly constitutes a community, in these terms. However, the school also refers to and is referred to by other communities in which its students and staff participate. This will always result in a highly complex structure. For the purposes of analysis, we must, of necessity, produce a simplified description. We are suggesting that *there is some reason to believe that those elements of community structure that we are foregrounding in this chapter are of particular significance in respect of understanding the pedagogic practices of schools.*

Mont Clair High School

Mont Clair High School is located in a stunning setting in the Western Cape. It is very well appointed. It comprises a number of buildings, including a sports centre and purpose-built music accommodation. There are also specialised laboratories for science, art and design rooms, and a seminar room for large group teaching. The school has a swimming pool and sports fields. Every classroom is equipped with an overhead projector and every student has a textbook for each subject. The carpeted staffroom is furnished with upholstered armchairs and sofas as well as working areas and there are lunch and tea facilities for the staff. All of the students wear school uniform. There are approximately 900 students in the school and approximately 55 teaching staff. Most classes contain approximately 30 students. South African education is currently undergoing a process of rationalisation, which is designed to produce a more even distribution of teachers across all South African schools. Since the target student: staff ratio is 30: 1, Mont Clair was scheduled to lose approximately 20 staff by the year 2000. However, the Parent Teacher Association decided to increase the fees from R3600 to R6000 per annum in order to maintain the status quo.

The students attending Mont Clair are predominantly from white, Protestant, middle class backgrounds. There are minorities of Jewish and Moslem students and very small numbers of Asian and African children.⁶ Their parents are mostly in

⁶ Unlike the situation at the other two schools described here, the demographics of the Mont Clair student population has changed considerably since 1997. It now has a ratio of white to non-white students close to 1:1; there has been minimal change in respect of teaching staff. See also footnote 22.

professional or managerial occupations. To a substantial extent, we can conceive of the Mont Clair students as the children of a globally distributed virtual community, which is, in abstract terms, the referent community of the school. The global nature of the virtual community may be enhanced by the tendency for 'white flight' from South Africa, following the installation of an ANC government. A number of the pupils indicated the possibility of their studying and/or working outside of South Africa in the future. French is an option on the senior school curriculum. The French teacher pointed out that French is an African language, although other non-South African African languages, such as Portuguese and Swahili, were not on the curriculum.

In practice, the school draws its students not from a global, but from a more localised space, although it is considerably more widely distributed than the catchments of either of the other two schools. Nevertheless, even this more localised space is served by a number of schools that are in competition with each other. The principal told us that he had rejected a suggestion that the school should become a 'community school', but that he attempted to develop a community within the school.

The school markets a range of services. The curriculum is a service that is specialised to the school. Educational success is a principal regulator of entry into occupations within the global virtual community, so that curricular provision as a service is an important purchase made by parents. The principal told us that most Mont Clair students enter the professions, although the current practice of 'affirmative action' had resulted in fewer going into medicine. The school also markets extracurricular activities in the form of sports and leisure activities. In general, these are not specialised to the school and such services are also provided by clubs, private tutors, and so forth. Nevertheless, in respect of these extracurricular activities, the school does provide one route into leisure networks that, like the school itself, constitute communities of the global virtual community. Parents are, we were told, very vocal in respect of monitoring the school's quality of service; the principal noted, for example, that he would expect to receive a delegation if the rugby team were not performing well.

Whilst it is clear that the students or their parents select the school, it is also the case that the school selects its students. In general, students are selected on the basis of their academic performances. Even siblings of current students would not necessarily obtain a place at Mont Clair and might be directed towards another school if their academic potential was not up to standard.

Thus the school is accountable to its student/parent community in respect of its provision of curricular and extracurricular services. Correspondingly, the student/parent community is accountable to the school in respect of academic and ethical performance and payment of fees. Sanctions in regard of student breach of the academic code are predominantly restitutive. Failure to produce homework will result in detention; latecomers may also face detention and/or they may be denied access to the lesson for which they have arrived late (that is, the service is denied). Breach of the ethical code is, in general, regarded as the responsibility of the parents. Smoking results in parents being called in immediately. 'Serious' offences,

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such as those relating to drugs or theft will result in the student ‘being asked to leave’. Bullying, we were told, was not a problem.

There is, then, a contractual relationship between the school and the student/parent, with a clear demarcation of responsibilities between them. In respect of the curriculum, the school is responsible for transmission, whilst the responsibility for acquisition lies clearly with the student. Both at the corporate level and at the level of the individual teacher, the school appears to adopt a professional comportment towards its curriculum service provision. The principal is developing a Total Quality Management approach towards the maintenance and enhancement of the school’s performance and subscribes to *Managing Schools Today*. He runs regular workshops and was currently working on a presentation to the staff on the new curriculum document (National Department of Education, 1997) that outlined the new curriculum policy, *Curriculum 2005*. He told us that he believed that the new curriculum would act as an incentive to him and his staff to review and improve their performance. In respect of the emphasis, in the curriculum, on the role of the student as taking responsibility for their own learning, there would appear to be a convergence with the code already in practice in the school.

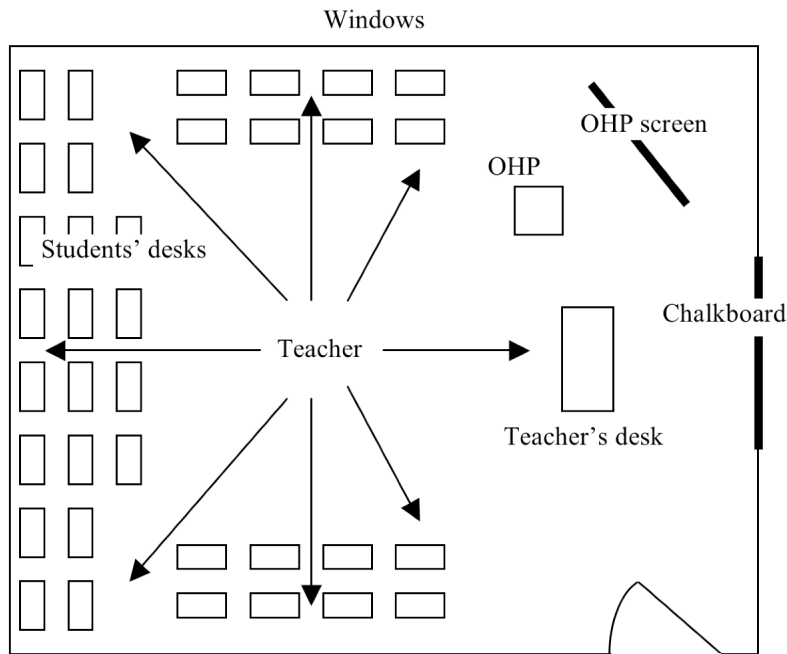


Figure 7.1. Classroom Layout in Mont Clair Geography Class

Attention to the management of time and space appeared to be an important feature of classroom performances. The head of the mathematics department, for

example, had organised the teaching on the basis of a combination of large group lectures and small group work, with students providing support for each other, together with individual tutorial work. The teacher of a Standard 7 geography class that we observed has arranged her classroom as in Figure 7.1.

The organisation of the desks in these orientations was not peculiar either to this classroom or to Mont Clair. The room was also similar to all of the others at Mont Clair (but different from most of those in the other schools) in being provided with an overhead projector (OHP) and screen and in having its walls covered in (mostly professionally produced) posters. However, this room stood out in respect of the large space that the teacher had established in the centre of the room. This was the area in which she could perform and from which she could penetrate the students' spaces. The subject of the lesson was erosion. The teacher made use of physical action in illustrating various geological formations: waterfalls, potholes and so on. She arranged the class into groups of different sizes, combined groups and held plenary discussions. The groups were set tasks, which required them to list geological formations that would be caused by given agents of erosion. While they were working, the teacher moved around the class offering suggestions, often in the form of physical encodings. For example, in discussion with the 'water' group, she asked what was going to happen when there was a big rock in the river, gesturing with her hands to signify a waterfall, which the students recognised. Later, she asked the same group what would happen if there was a 'huge rock' and a hole forming in it, gesturing in a circular, drilling motion with her finger, 'what's it going to make? a ...'. One student suggested 'borehole', 'that's not quite right', 'a pothole', the teacher confirmed, 'a pothole'. The groups reported back in a plenary session at the end of the lesson. In the plenary, a student would give one of their suggestions, the teacher would summarise and then show the students an illustration from one of a number of books of photographs of geological formations. The teacher also asked the students if they knew of or had seen examples of these formations.

In this lesson, the students were required to decode the teacher's representations of geological knowledge. The teacher summarised these decodings introducing a certain amount of technical language and clarifying erosive activity. The pedagogic practice could be described as initiating an apprenticing of the students into geological discourse by drawing on their existing geological and proto-geological knowledge. She was transmitting the privileged discourse that the students were to acquire.

We observed that the teachers in Mont Clair were also available themselves as resources for interrogation by the students. During a Standard 10 history lesson, for example, the teacher was asked to compare her description of the practices of Nazi Germany with those of Stalin's Soviet Union. The teacher readily complied. In a Standard 7 English class, the teacher, who appeared to be very clearly in control of the class, was nevertheless challenged in respect of a perceived inconsistency in her application of her rule for the correct use of an apostrophe-s.

The contract between the school and the student/parent is, in a number of respects, an individualised one. It is true that, as we have noted, the school

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community itself (via the Parent Teacher Association) can and does hold the principal and his staff accountable for the quality of their service provision. Nevertheless, there is no contractual obligation on the part of the school to a client community greater than that constituted by the actual clients themselves. The referent global community is, as we have indicated, more appropriately conceived of as virtual. The substantive contract, certainly in respect of the transmission of the academic curriculum is between the teacher/school and the individual student/parent.

The individualised nature of this relationship appeared to be realised in the classroom. Teachers interacted with individuals as frequently as they interacted with the group. The Standard 7 English teacher was taking one of the classes that we observed for only the second time. She had arranged for each student to place on their desk a sign showing their name. Similarly, opposition was also privatised. In a Standard 7 mathematics class, the teacher appeared to avoid any interaction with two Asian boys. The boys spent most of the lesson talking quietly to each other with no reference to the content of the lesson. At one point in her exposition to the class the teacher said, 'I got stuck on this when I was at school and I was hopeless at algebraic graphs after that'. One of the two Asian boys said quietly to the other, 'So how do you know it now, then?' This was a novice teacher. At any given time, possibly less than half of the students appeared to be attending to her exposition. Nevertheless, although the non-attendants chatted to each other, this was maintained at a low level. We did not observe any attempts to communalise an expression of negative evaluation of this lesson.

As we have suggested, success in respect of the school curriculum regulates entry into the professional occupations, which constitute both the family origins and intended and actual destinations of many if not most of the students at Mont Clair. The students whom we interviewed all expressed the opinion that academic success was important. However, they also generally denied that the curriculum had any intrinsic value, thus one Standard 10 girl noted:

It's purely, purely like just going, just getting through matric so you can get your piece of paper and say you've got this amount of whatever to get in, but once you're in, I mean, the work that you've done in matric or, like, learning something in geography is not going to help you if you want to go into advertising.

A Standard 10 boy:

No, I don't think so, I don't think matric itself is important, um, I'm doing history for matric and French, but when I leave school I, I might use French to talk to people, but I'll never use my history again, I'll never use all sorts of things that I've learnt. Matric is probably mainly for developing skills, study skills, lifestyle skills, but matric is important to get into university and university is important to get qualified and the qualification gets you the job. So it's one of the steps, but actual matric, I don't think is effective at all.

Almost without exception, none of the students in any of the schools intended to go into teaching themselves. One possible explanation may be because the rationalisation programme in South African education had resulted in very substantial retrenchment of teachers in the Western Cape and there are very few jobs for newly qualified teachers wishing to remain in the province.⁷ Ursula Hoadley has suggested that this has merely contributed to a general lowering of the status of teaching, which:

... is spread across the entire population. So in 2000, there was only *one* black student in pre-service education in the Western Cape, and seriously dwindling numbers across other population groups. This is partly historical, that teaching and nursing are no longer the only, nor desirable, entry in the middle class for black people, but also relates to the perceived poor salaries and conditions of teaching, contributed to by the rationalisation and redistribution process. (Hoadley, personal communication)

Presumably, the curriculum would be attributed intrinsic value as the basis of teachers' professional services. The teachers appeared to value their academic and pedagogic knowledge and skills in these terms irrespective of how they might see these discourses as relating to activities beyond schooling. We spoke to the French teacher about her involvement with the professional association of French teachers. The Head of mathematics had been awarded a scholarship to study for a masters degree in mathematics education in the US.⁸ He had also published articles and given presentations on his pedagogic strategies involving the use of different sizes of groups. The accounts teacher had produced his own textbook in photocopied form. He used this to supplement the official texts in his Standard 7 classes.

To summarise, then, we are proposing that the teacher-student relationship at Mont Clair can be described as individualised and contractual. The teacher provides a professional service in respect of the transmission of the curriculum. Curriculum and pedagogy constitute the discursive basis of the teacher's professional specialism, it marks them out within the professional division of

⁷ The programme of rationalisation is intended to move towards parity in respect of student:teacher ratio nationally. The Western Cape has a substantially lower average student:teacher ratio than the other provinces, so will experience a net outflow as teachers are relocated or 'take the [redundancy] package'. As we have noted above, Mont Clair would be scheduled to lose approximately 20 teachers were it not for the governors deciding, on the advice of the PTA, to raise the fees so as to maintain the current staffing. Siyafunda, which has an average of approximately 60 students per class on roll, but an attendance which rarely exceeds 45 per class, expected to increase its staff numbers by four. The head of mathematics told us that he did not expect this would have any significant impact. The class sizes at Protea are also approximately 40. However, this is in the context of an attendance rate much nearer to 100%. Protea expect to lose 19 teachers by the year 2000 with no possibility of increasing fees to compensate. As an oversubscribed school, Protea had, according to the principal, been taking on additional student numbers in order to keep staff. As a result, the buildings were very crowded.

⁸ He had taken up this scholarship in 1997 and was on sabbatical leave during the second year of our study.

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labour. The school also contracts to provide extracurricular services relating to leisure and sporting activities. The student contracts to pay a fee and also to be responsible for acquisition of the curriculum and to behave in accordance with an ethical code. The core activity of the school community is the transmission and acquisition of the academic curriculum, success in which regulates entry to the professional region of the division of labour. This region has a global referential community that is virtual, because it does not define a coherent space for communicative action. Rather, it comprises a complex of 'cover-sets', of which the school community itself may be said to be one. Other such cover-sets include teachers' professional organisations, sporting associations, religious communities, and so forth.

Siyafunda High School

Siyafunda High School is situated in a township that largely comprises shacks of wood and corrugated iron. The residents of the township are generally socially located in the most subaltern class. There is comparatively little access to regular paid employment. There are large chain supermarkets and other stores in the township, but there is also evidence of a substantial informal economy in the areas (at least) of services and retailing. The population of the township is complex in terms of origins, but we were told by teachers and students of Siyafunda that there is a significant representation of migrants from rural areas, mostly outside of the Western Cape Province. On the basis of comments made by teachers, students and other informants, we inferred that the population is predominantly Christian and the church is regarded as very important. The population is multilingual, although Xhosa seems to be the dominant language.

We have described the referential community of Mont Clair as a virtual community. That of Siyafunda, however, can be constituted as a substantive community. The township constitutes a definite location, which is bounded, on different sides, by a major freeway, by open country, and by a dramatic change in architecture, from shacks to permanent housing. The majority of Siyafunda students live in this community.

The community is to a considerable extent self-governing. One of our informants (we shall refer to him as Sivuyile) was chairman of his street committee. He told us that a 'street' generally comprised fifty householders, usually, but not necessarily, men. The street elects an executive committee and a chairman annually. This was currently Sivuyile's fifth year as chairman. Individuals or families wanting to move into the street have to submit an application to the committee, which (according to another informant) may take up references before deciding. One of us asked Sivuyile, 'What would happen if I asked to move into your street?' Sivuyile and his colleagues thought that this was quite amusing, but said that this would probably be OK, they noted that they work with white people, so that there is no reason why they shouldn't live with them. The committee and meetings of the whole street also make decisions relating to

law and order. An offender may be taken to the police station (also situated in the township).

In addition to the local community, there was also evidence of reference to a broader Xhosa virtual community. This was apparent in the responses of students, in particular, whose references to ‘my people’ clearly referred to such an entity. Entry into the Xhosa virtual community is regulated, for men, by male initiation. Sivuyile and his colleagues told us that the young men would have to go into the rural areas for this process. When they returned, they would be required to dress in a manner which marked them out from other members of the community for a period of time to be determined by their family, but which was generally about six months. During our observation in Siyafunda, we encountered two individuals who, we were told, were in this phase. They were both ‘sharply’ dressed in patterned trousers and jackets and large hats. One wore a large, floppy peaked cap, the other wore a round, green felt broad brimmed hat that we were told was the traditional form. Both of these individuals, and the latter, in particular, tended to keep to themselves.⁹ We were told, by the Standard 10 pupils whom we interviewed, that these individuals kept to themselves because they felt embarrassed to be marked out in this way.

Siyafunda is located within the township, but is fenced off from it. The gates to the fence are locked during the school day to prevent students from leaving. The teaching rooms are contained in two rectangular, two-storey, brick-built blocks. There is also a small administration block and another building from which refreshments can be bought. All of the ground floor windows have iron bars fitted. There is a library, which houses a small number of books. The teacher responsible for the library—a responsibility that is additional to her teaching and for which she is not paid—was, at the time of our first visit, in the process of sorting the books onto the appropriate shelves. The classrooms are furnished with fewer desks and chairs than there are students in each class. There are few textbooks and we saw no overhead projectors. The staffroom has a bare floor, six tables and about the same number of plastic chairs, one or two of which we observed to be broken. Some of the students wear tracksuits with the school badge, others wear school blazers, some wear everyday clothes. There are approximately 1400 students registered at Siyafunda and approximately 40 teaching staff. Class sizes may be up to 50 or 60, although absenteeism is comparatively high. A Standard 7 class that we shadowed contained 44 students on that particular day. The Standard 10 classes are (as is the case in the other schools) much smaller.

The teachers live outside the township community in permanent housing in somewhat more affluent suburbs. A number of them drive to school, others come by bus. The teachers are thus partially alienated from the community. The basis for this alienation is their marginal entry into association with the white global virtual

⁹ We encountered these individuals on the first day of our 1997 visit to Siyafunda, but did not have the opportunity to talk to them or ask why they were dressed differently from the other students. Before our next visit, we described their dress and demeanor to a number of non-Xhosa informants and were told by all but one that they were gangsters.

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community via their educational success. Sivuyile told us that people who attained this kind of career generally leave the township and move into houses.

Most of the Standard 10 students with whom we spoke at Siyafunda envisaged moving on to some form of further or higher education and into a professional career. Matriculation constitutes a necessary condition for this move.¹⁰ The students at Mont Clair viewed matric as a certification, rather than intrinsically valuable knowledge. The Siyafunda students, however, all expressed the view that the knowledge that they learned at school formed the basis for what was to follow, thus in an interview with Standard 10 boys:

AB ... is matriculation important for the careers that you have chosen.

P1 Yes I think it is important because, to me I say the base of, if you got no matric you can't do anything because each, each, anything that I'm going to do, the base of it would be a matric. So I say it is important to have a matric and then going to do [...] The base is matric and then take your career and then [...]

...

AB ... if I said that, OK, I've got some matriculation certificates here and I'll just write one for each of you and give them out.

P2 [...] it wouldn't count, you must have the base.

We want to suggest that this is consistent with a view of school knowledge as being associated, by these students, with a community beyond that of the township. A virtual community that is currently dominated by whites. As a Standard 10 girl put it:

OK, as I see now they are mostly white people who are doctors, so we have no chance to be doctors, like blacks, black people, they are not so much black people as white doctors, so I want to make that, I want, I want that to end and show them that we, as blacks, we can do that.

In Mont Clair, curricular knowledge specialises the teacher within the virtual community, which is the student's origin. In Siyafunda, the curriculum facilitates entry into the margins of this virtual community, which is the student's aspired destination. Furthermore, the Siyafunda students' evaluation of school knowledge is based upon evidence from the next stage in their career, for example, a Standard 10 girl:

I think it's important because when I heard some students were doing these things at tertiary level, they say they are not being taught like us so we don't know everything, so the other things that they do is they work from the low

¹⁰ But not a sufficient one. Unless they can obtain a scholarship, students must finance themselves for the first year of their higher education course before they are eligible for a loan.

standard, standard ten [...] so I think matric is important, because you know what you are going to do when you go after [...]

It seemed that many of the teachers saw teaching as a transitional occupation *en route* to something more lucrative. The head of mathematics, for example, told us that he was working towards a career in medicine or, if that failed, in engineering. Almost all of the teachers at Siyafunda were very young.

We want to propose that the teachers are partially alienated from the township community. Nevertheless, they retain an obligation to it via their organic association with this particular community and/or with the Xhosa virtual community, and perhaps an African virtual community. As they are no longer fully a part of the township community, the nature of their obligation is defined, essentially, in terms of the transmission of their means of success—the academic curriculum. In addition, the community, acting via the pupil council recruits the teachers as instruments of moral regulation. This recruitment is similar to the community's recruitment of the police for a similar purpose. In the school setting, the pupil council have, a teacher told us, asked the teachers to use corporal punishment even though this is officially proscribed. Such punishment is carried out in private and generally administered to boys who have assaulted girls.

We suggest, then, that the principal form of the relation between the teacher and the pupil is one of obligation and that the nature of the teacher's responsibility is defined by their recruitment by the community as agents of the transmission of the curriculum and, to a lesser degree, as instruments of moral regulation. This relationship, however, is probably best described as one-to-many. That is, the teacher's obligation is to the community, rather than to individuals, which is the case in the contractual relationship at Mont Clair. We noted, for example, that the teachers rarely addressed or referred to any students by name, even when calling on individuals to respond to a question.

Whilst it is the teacher's responsibility to transmit the curriculum, it seems clear that the students take collective responsibility for its acquisition. We found evidence of a considerable amount of informal self-help grouping. Standard 10 students formed study groups. The teacher remains a resource for students in their acquisition of the curriculum. Thus the students whom we interviewed said that a good teacher was someone who would help you with any difficulties that you had with your work. A bad teacher, by contrast, doesn't turn up, or is drunk, or swears at or becomes angry with the students.

A dominant mode of lesson at Standard 7 illustrates the collective nature of acquisition. In this lesson form we describe the classroom as a site for the collective production and acquisition of the privileged text. The teacher was clearly the leader in this production and students are largely undifferentiated.

In leading the production of the text, a number of resources appeared to be available to the teacher. Firstly, the teacher must recruit their own knowledge of the privileged text to the extent that textbooks are unavailable. Where they are available, they may nevertheless be backgrounded. For example, a science teacher said that she had bought her own textbook. She did not, however, remove it from

her bag at any point during the lesson. Secondly, the teacher may initiate a sentence to be collectively completed in a choral response. For example, the science teacher, pointing to a diagram on the chalkboard addressed the class with: ‘These are said to be ovules’. The last word of the sentence was chorused by the class, the invitation for this chorus being indicated by a rising intonation¹¹. Thirdly, the teacher may demand individual responses either in public or in private. In the private form, the teacher writes questions and incomplete sentences to be answered/completed by students in their exercise books. Publicly, the teacher may call upon an individual to answer a question. In each case, these individual responses affirm the acquisition of the privileged text. Fourthly, the teacher may make reference to a stock of common knowledge. Thus, the science teacher asked if the class had ever seen a ‘bird sitting on a flower’, (‘yes’); the English teacher made reference to current South African national politicians in elaborating on the political structure represented in a play. Finally, although the official medium of instruction is English, the teacher can make use of Xhosa, which is the first language of most of the students and teachers. We noticed, however, that apart from the Xhosa lesson, Xhosa was used to elaborate upon interpretations, but was not incorporated into the privileged text itself. Other than in Xhosa and Afrikaans lessons, one principle of evaluation of the privileged text was that it should be in English¹².

In a number of the lessons that we attended the format could be described as follows. Firstly, the privileged text was collectively produced as a system of signs that was represented on the chalkboard. Secondly, the teacher wrote on the board a number of questions and incomplete sentences which constituted the ‘classwork’. Thirdly, the teacher would move around the class offering assistance and, finally, marking the work. In the case of the geography lesson, for example, the privileged text consisted of a system of signs relating to maps. These signs included specialised terms and diagrams. In these lessons, the text was produced on the board primarily via the use of teacher exposition and the choral response. Students would actively assist in the completion of the chorus. Thus, if the response was not immediately forthcoming, an individual would offer a suggestion. If the teacher responded positively to the suggestion, the invitation to chorus was repeated and the whole class chorused the suggested expression. However, we observed that

¹¹ This mode of pedagogic interaction in South African schools is described by Muller (1989).

¹² In a response at a seminar at the Institute of Education given by Vivien de Klerk, I speculated that, under certain circumstances, it might be appropriate to understand the use of English within Xhosa-speaking communities in South Africa as dominated by style significations. In this respect, English use may be construed as similar to the use of Latinate or French expressions in European English. There is a resonance between this speculation and the finding that the privileged text in Siyafunda classrooms must be produced in English, whilst its content may be explicated in Xhosa. Thus there is a separation of mode of expression from content, with the former being dominated by style signification. That which is signified here is the academic genre. Academic success facilitates flight from the most dominated position; English—the language of the academic—was also seen as the language of the struggle in the sense of a symbolic language, rather than necessarily a functional language.

individuals offering suggestions in this way tended to do so whilst apparently drawing a minimum of attention to themselves. Sometimes the student ducked down, giving us the appearance of countering the individualising effect of their intervention by merging physically into the class. Students also assisted the individual written affirmation of the acquisition of the privileged text by sharing their answers with each other. For example, a student who had completed the written work in the Xhosa lesson passed her book to her colleagues who copied the answers into their own books. The teacher made no move to interfere with this.

We observed that chorused expressions were not confined to specialist terms. Hence these examples from the geography lesson: ‘When the topographical map is drawn a scale is used’; pointing at diagrams showing contour lines, ‘They can be close together, or they can be far apart’. In this geography lesson, the teacher also made use of material texts. She used a single photocopy of an aerial photograph and a number of maps each of which were shared by up to four students.

This format—collective production of the privileged text followed by affirmation of its acquisition—comprised the lesson. In the Xhosa lesson, the sequence had been completed with fifteen minutes of the lesson still remaining. Some students had, in fact, completed the work and had it marked with thirty minutes of the hour-long lesson remaining. For the remainder of the period, the students talked to each other and to the teacher. No more pedagogic content was introduced as far as we could tell (none of us speaks more than a few words of Xhosa).

A mathematics teacher produced a variation on this lesson format. Her strategy was to put an algebraic expression on the board and ask for suggestions as to its simplified form. She collected several suggestions and asked students to indicate support for one or other of them. The proposers of the suggestions were asked to explain their answers and the class asked to indicate support or otherwise, ‘Can he do it like that?’ Through asking questions like this and making minimal use of the choral response, the teacher eliminated the idiosyncratic suggestions and established an expression of consensus on each of the examples that she used, writing the correct, answer—the privileged text—on the board. Thus this lesson was constructed as a series of very short privileged texts that were, again, collectively produced. In this case, the series extended for the whole of the time allotted for the lesson.

The mathematics teacher had participated on in-service training courses given by the Mathematics Education Project (MEP) at the University of Cape Town. She indicated that this was the origin of the strategy that she used in this particular lesson. We have no evidence regarding the form in which the strategy was presented by MEP. Nevertheless, it is clear that the form that it took in this lesson conformed with the dominant mode of operation of pedagogic practice which we observed in the Standard 7 classes.

One Standard 7 lesson was very different. This was an Afrikaans lesson. We were informed by the Deputy Principal (who had been promoted to principal when we visited the school in 1997) that this subject was generally resented by students and teachers at Siyafunda. Afrikaans, she said, was recognised as the language of

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the oppressor¹³. Furthermore, there were no occasions when students would make use of this language. The Deputy Principal said that there was a general pattern of failure in this subject throughout the school until students reached Standard 10, when they would pass Afrikaans, which they needed for matriculation.

The teacher that we saw was unusual in that Afrikaans was her own first language; this, we were told, would not be the case for most teachers of Afrikaans in this category of school. The Afrikaans teacher—who was also the class teacher of this particular Standard 7 class—employed a form of pedagogic practice that was highly energetic, highly dramatic and highly unpredictable. She was clearly very well-prepared. There was an exercise already on the board and she had prepared two worksheets for this class. There was also evidence of similar preparation in respect of other classes for that day and the room was heavily decorated with posters relating to Afrikaans and to biology—the teacher’s other subject.

In all of the other classes, there was a clear space between teacher and students. Even when the teacher would move around the classroom, she would be standing and carrying a pen for marking, so that the division of labour between teacher and students was always apparent. The Afrikaans teacher, however, employed some strategies that questioned this division, but always ambiguously and always subject to sudden change. Thus, in an early interaction with an individual, she moved very close to him, putting her face very close to his and at the same level. He apparently answered her question incorrectly, because she reached behind her, took a ruler from another student’s desk and struck the first student on the hand with it. A little later, she slapped another student on the back several times with her hands. Neither of these actions were sufficiently forceful to inflict pain. The effect appeared to be, however, to disorientate the students.

Throughout the lesson, the teacher would move very close to students, especially the boys, putting her arm around them and calling them ‘darling’ and ‘sweetheart’ and allowing them to whisper answers to her. She would also make sudden, unpredictable moves and call sharply on a number of students in turn to answer the same question. The teacher also made considerable use of exaggerated facial expressions, moving, again rapidly, between a broad smile and a cross look. The lesson itself was moved along at a very fast rate, with a sequence of distinct, well-planned tasks (some in the form of photocopied activity sheets) being introduced by the teacher. It seemed clear that no one in the room had any idea what the teacher might do next. This was particularly apparent in the way in which students would flinch at the teacher’s sudden movements and the way in which they would attempt to privatise their interactions with her by whispering answers, which she might, and occasionally did, choose to make public.

There was no real possibility of the collective elaboration of this lesson, because the teacher was very effectively disrupting the community of the classroom. Each

¹³ This contrasts with English as the universal symbolic language of the struggle against apartheid.

individual was individually, not collectively, subject to the teacher's charismatic authority, which was personalised by and in the teacher.¹⁴

The Standard 10 lessons that we observed at Siyafunda were directly concerned with the matric examination and generally consisted of the teacher or (in the case of a mathematics lesson) individual students rehearsing worked examples or summaries (such as the construction of the standard taxonomy of forms of settlement in a geography lesson). This might be described as an expanded elaboration of the classwork phase that we observed in most of the Standard 7 lessons. To this extent, we would suggest that there was an apparent continuity in pedagogic strategies. There was, however, an important shift in the social structure of the classroom as we moved from Standard 7 to Standard 10. Our observations of the Standard 7 classroom suggested a degree of horizontality in gender relations. The classroom was not ungendered; boys tended to sit with boys and girls with girls, for example. However, in general terms (and given our limited period of observation) there was no obvious hierarchy in respect of teacher-student or student-student interactions.¹⁵ In an English lesson, for example, girls and boys were allocated parts to read in a play without any obvious regard to the gender of the respective character.

As far as we were able to tell, the individuals in Standard 7 came from approximately the same age cohort. However, by Standard 10, whilst the girls were all in the equivalent cohort (16-17 year-olds), there was a virtual absence of boys from this cohort. Rather, the boys were almost all two or more years older. The boys whom we interviewed told us that they thought that the average age of the boys in their class was about 22 years and that there was only one 17-year-old boy. One of our interviewees was, in fact, Sivuyile, the chairman of the street committee to whom we have referred above. Sivuyile was 34 years old and was married and had three children and was clearly a key member of the township community. Sivuyile had left school at the end of Standard 7 in 1980 because his family could not afford to keep him. He left home and worked for fourteen years, saving up to complete his schooling and higher education. Standard 10 at Siyafunda contains other returnees like Sivuyile (although we understood that he was the oldest student at that time) and also students who had repeated one or more years having failed to be promoted to the next Standard.

Thus, the Standard 10 class comprised approximately equal numbers of teenage girls and adult men. The hierarchical nature of the relationship between 'boys' and girls in this classroom was quite apparent. In particular, the teachers generally

¹⁴ On the first day of our 1997 visit to the school, we were told by the principal (who had been the deputy principal in 1996) that the charismatic Afrikaans/Biology teacher would be leaving that day and that this was a considerable loss to the school. She told us that the teacher was one of the best teachers she had worked with and that she put everything into her teaching, even buying fish with her own money for dissection in biology classes. The school had been unable to make a permanent post available for her. Such a post had been offered by the principal of another local school. This principal had been the principal of Siyafunda in 1996.

¹⁵ This horizontality was somewhat disturbed in the Afrikaans lesson that we describe above.

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tended to address themselves to the boys and the boys tended to dominate the responses, sometimes to the complete exclusion of the girls. In a physics class, for example, the boys sat on one side of the room and the girls on the other. The male teacher stood on the boys' side of the class and directed his gaze at them during his exposition. A substantial proportion of a geography lesson was spent on a discussion in Xhosa between the female teacher and the boys with the girls remaining completely silent. The teacher told us that the boys had been telling her about the sizes of towns in the Eastern Cape as she was unfamiliar with that region. The female principal (in our 1997 visit) organised an English lesson as a discussion, mainly, about teenage pregnancy. She had asked the class for suggestions for the topic of discussion. The boys made a number of suggestions. As far as we were able to tell, the girls did not offer any suggestions. Nevertheless, the teacher presented 'teenage pregnancy' as though it had come from the girls. When she asked the class which of the suggestions should be taken up, she again selected 'teenage pregnancy' as that which had been chosen by the girls, although we did not see or hear any girl indicating this or any other preference. The ensuing discussion was dominated by the principal and the boys almost to the exclusion of the girls, despite the principal's attempts to involve them.

We observed that the girls were clearly actively involved in the lessons insofar as written work had been set. Their exclusion seemed to be from interactive participation. We asked a group of girls whether the boys or the girls did most of the talking in class. They told us that the boys did most of the talking, 'maybe because the girls are shy'. One of the girls said,

Yes, some of them they talk too much in class, but when it comes to writing, we beat them.

The gendered hierarchy of the Standard 10 classroom clearly may have been related to its age structure. In any event, it would seem to be (re)productive of patriarchal relations within the school community and, potentially, beyond.

We suggest that, at Siyafunda, the teacher is alienated from the immediate community of the township, but retains an obligation to it by virtue of a mutual affiliation to a broader African virtual community. This obligation is to the collective rather than to individuals, so that the teacher-student relationship is characterised as one-to-many. The community recruits the teacher as transmitter of the curriculum as the means of their own alienation into an association with the global virtual community. In pedagogic action, the teacher must lead the collective in the production of the privileged text and affirm its authority. The community also recruits the teacher as an instrument of moral regulation. The teacher's authority is thus delimited and substantially bureaucratic in nature. In general, we observed no challenging or questioning of the teachers in respect of this authority. There was one exception to this to which we shall return later. The students claimed responsibility for the acquisition of the curriculum, although they retained an expectation that the teacher would serve as a resource in this respect.

It may be that this structure of classroom relations was distorted by the practice of the charismatic Afrikaans teacher who appeared to fragment the collective

student relations and, by virtue of her constant and often privatised interrogation of individuals, to claim some responsibility for acquisition. On the basis of just a single lesson, it is inappropriate to draw firm conclusions. Nevertheless, the unique, charismatic nature of this teacher's authority was explicitly recognised by at least the two principals of the school whom we met.

Protea High School

Protea High School is situated in a suburb of single storey detached permanent housing and some multi-storey multiple housing. The suburb is localised, in contrast to the virtual referential community of Mont Clair. Unlike the Siyafunda township, however, the Protea suburb is economically far more diverse. The principal told us that some of his students live in informal settlements on the outskirts of the suburb. There is also a great deal of unemployment. On the other hand, professional and managerial workers also live in the suburb. We observed that, whilst most of the students walked to school, some were dropped-off in new-looking BMWs. In social class terms, the suburb clearly represents a highly unusual community, a *class condensation*.¹⁶

The inhabitants of the suburb were categorised by the apartheid regime as 'coloured'. According to the principal of Protea, there are two main groups, firstly, there are mainly Afrikaans-speaking families, commonly Christian and designated, by the apartheid regime as 'of mixed race'. Secondly, there are mainly English-speaking, Moslem families. Members of this latter group were said to be descended from Malay indentured labour. We were told that there was some correlation between ethnicity and social class, the Moslem community being overrepresented amongst the professional and managerial classes. We are not asserting any more, here, than that that was what we were told at the time and that this understanding, at least on the part of the principal, may have been significant in terms of pedagogic practice. As Jaamiah Galant has pointed out to us:

... the assertion that Moslems are largely descended from Malay indentured labour is true only for a small percentage of the Moslem population in the Western Cape and is regarded nowadays more as a 'myth' that attempts to mask the San heritage of the majority of the 'Coloured' Western Cape population—irrespective of religious group. (Galant, personal communication).¹⁷

By the evidence of some of our interviews with students, it is also clear that Afrikaans was a home language for at least some of the Muslims. What is clear, however, is that the physical catchment community of Protea is highly complex in class, religious and ethnic terms. Protea is a 'parallel medium' school in which students' parents opt for either the Afrikaans track or the English track. Although

¹⁶ Unusual, generally, but not in the Western Cape region.

¹⁷ The San were the indigenous people of South Africa.

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individuals acknowledged either Afrikaans or English as their first language, we observed that bilingual fluency was a common (although not universal) state, certainly amongst the teachers. The staff meetings that we attended, for example, were characterised by frequent code-switching by and between individual speakers. For the Moslem boys whom we interviewed, Afrikaans had definite connotations:

AB And what you're saying is ... that English-speaking students get a better deal because

P1 The reputation, OK, like [another school in the area], most of the people there they speak Afrikaans. Now, um, ... I think it's associated Afrikaans with gangsterism and with er, and with the slum areas. So now they're coming here and they, and they already, when they come Afrikaans class already in the teachers mind, might be problems.

...

AB ... presumably your parents made the decision that you went into the English language ... stream of the school rather than the Afrikaans speaking ... why did they make that decision?

P2 Um, I won't say it's a decision they made, in most households, um, both languages are used quite often, in my, especially in my household, um I don't speak English with my father, I speak Afrikaans with him, because Afrikaans is more of a stern language, so I would associate it with my father [...] so he'd speak more Afrikaans and my mother speak English to me.

P1 Um, because, you know there's this kind of ... this period where the, um, the so-called whites, like ruled and what mostly, um Afrikaans speaking whites. So, when, when, the, our fathers ... when we were born we're still in that era and so they thought, we'll try and break away from their regime by going to English class. You see, like, like, um, they ... they were prominent Afrikaans speaking, so they, we tried to break away from them by going over to English class, then, then, alright different from them, so, so that we could become stronger and have our own identity instead of the identity they tried to give us ...

...

P3 Because, er, English is a language that is spoken throughout the world and Afrikaans is only, er, um, South African, like a South African language, it's only spoken in South Africa, so that's probably also another reason why.

According to the Director of Education¹⁸ for the province, the coloured population comprises 60 per cent of the population of the Western Cape. In our discussions with him and with other informants, it became clear that this population constitutes a complex arena of political divisions and alliances both internally and externally to itself. This population is, in a sense, sandwiched between the two virtual communities of the old white regime and the new African one and this is the basis of its unique form of condensation which may well not last very long into the new political era. On the basis of our current data, we cannot attempt to understand the complexities of the suburban community. It does, nevertheless, constitute a substantive community and the teachers at Protea appear to stand in a particular relationship to and within it. We shall attempt to describe this relationship and its apparent consequences for the classroom.

The school itself comprises a complex of buildings, mostly two-storeyed, and is set in a large grassed area. There are no specialised classrooms, such as laboratories, so that students are shown videoed experiments in some science lessons. The school also arranges local field trips for practical work in science and geography. There is a small staffroom with armchairs, lockers and some desk space. All of the students wore school uniform. In most cases the uniform took the form of the school tracksuit.

The principal told us that, because of the organic nature of the relationship with the community, the school could not impose any form of selection upon its intake, even though it is heavily oversubscribed. Should he attempt anything of the kind, there would be a deputation of residents to the local ANC who would lobby the Department of Education, which would most certainly intervene.¹⁹

The number of students on role at Protea in 1997 was 1434 and the student:staff ratio was approximately 24: 1. The largest class size is reportedly 47. Most classes contain about 40 students, although the Standard 10 teaching groups were smaller. Protea is scheduled to lose 19 staff under the rationalisation programme. However, it is also likely to reduce in student population because of its own overcrowding and because of spare capacity at other local schools. This would entail an even more substantial staff loss²⁰.

¹⁸ The director is himself a member of the coloured population and is an ANC supporter working under a National Party administration.

¹⁹ The principal contrasted this with the situation of another school, which was in a 'white' area. Since the local population tended to send their children to other schools (such as Mont Clair), this school served a widely distributed, which is to say, virtual coloured community. Under these circumstances, the school had no organic association with a community as such and was able to operate selection and, as a result, produce greater matriculation success and so forth.

²⁰ On one of our visits in 1996, each lesson was shortened by fifteen minutes in order to allow additional time for a staff meeting to discuss the rationalisation proposals. The principal and staff invited us to attend the staff meeting, which ran for three hours. It is worth noting that there appeared to be general agreement that there was a need for rationalisation because of the extreme shortage of teachers in some parts of the country (some schools have student: staff ratios of up to 120: 1). However, there was obvious concern about the likely outcome for Protea, which already had very large classes. The mechanisms of rationalisation were also having an impact on promotions and
(continued)

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Given the nature of the division of labour within the suburb, the teacher can be understood as a comparatively successful individual, having achieved professional status. At Protea, the teacher seems to be constituted as a guardian with respect to both the students and the community more generally, thus, the boys whom we interviewed contrasted Protea with another school in a somewhat different location:

- AB OK, so there's a lot of sport being played here, um, a lot of activities that are around sport and things
- P2 Yuh, that's, that's in our area, only in our area, I would say. You go furthest, further up you get the school, you get, like [the other school] then they don't have the same facilities, so they, instead of playing rugby on a weekend they'll ... stand on corners or go to a disco or do any nonsense, whatever. So they're not as fortunate as us.
- AB Right, and this is the school that has this effect, or is it the community that has the effect?
- Ps school
- P1 Because, um, ... that area's like, how can I say this, um, ... slums, but is ... like gangsters and stuff that ... it's the flats, that's where, um, the gangsters coming to school, not really interested in sports, they have drugs and gangs with gang fights... now the teachers are there, I would say, become despondent, then they just leave it at the beep teach the, day finish... You'll see that at night when you come here, parking lot's full, the teachers, everybody's here, nightclasses and things, always happen, school always alive.
- P There's activities here.
- PD ... do any of the people you're talking about, any of the gangsters, if you like, do any of them come to this school?
- P2 OK, here we have, you know, on the school we do have, you know, a couple of guys that want to be, you know, but not actually any serious cases where you can say, hey watch out for that guy, he's so-and-so, because he will be sorted out quick, cos, you know, the discipline here is quite strict over here. So, ... because... someone who don't waste any time, if there's anything to be done, he goes to the police station and have it done. Now ... the majority of the population in that area, this, er, you know, up to gangsterism and stuff like that. But here it's more, um, sports, ... understand?

management. The principal and his deputies were all acting up from head of department level in 1996, although two of these appointments (including that of the principal) had been made permanent by 1997. A principal on a permanent appointment would have to re-apply for his job at a lower salary should the school reduce in size.

The nature of the relationship between the teacher and the student was illustrated by one teacher's description of another:

He's got such a good relationship with the kids ... he's like a brother to them ... he gets the best out of them ... no one else here really has that talent.
(transcribed from fieldnotes)

The teacher being described was also reported as performing driving duties for members of the community, so that the latter did not drive home after having consumed alcohol.

As is the case at the other schools, academic success is a condition of entry into certain occupations. However, unlike Mont Clair, this is not a necessary condition for entering the referent community, which is socially very diverse. Unlike Siyafunda, academic success is not a route out of the community, which can contain the professional and managerial occupations. The deputy principal informed us that over half of the teachers at Protea lived within the community and he himself had moved into it, although he originates from another suburb in the area. Teachers' curricular responsibilities entail the transmission of the curriculum as the means of their own success and as the route into professional occupations. However, insofar as the teacher-student relationship is appropriately described as guardian-ward, teachers also take considerable responsibility for the acquisition of the curriculum. Thus, there is frequent assessment and the teachers (especially those of Standard 7) deploy tactics to ensure that the curriculum gets into the books, as well as the heads, of the students. For example, considerable use is made of printed and photocopied notes. On a number of occasions, the principal emphasised the extent of the expenditure on photocopying.

There was also some use of the choral response mode, which we observed in Siyafunda, although, in our observations, it was far less common at Protea. We did note that the chorus became more extended in the Standard 10 lesson, thus the mathematics teacher said as he wrote on the board:

If DE is parallel to BC then ...

employing an upward intonation on 'then'. The students responded in chorus:

AB over AD is equal to AC over AE²¹

In general, we observed considerable use of community strategies by the teacher, both inside and outside of the classroom. For example, the deputy principal, in whose office we conducted out student interviews, needed to enter the room upon several occasions. Each time, he engaged in some form of banter with the students. Within the classroom, there was a great deal of smiling by teachers and students were addressed by their first names. In a Standard 7 English lesson,

21 These utterances were recorded on the board symbolically, thus: If $DE \parallel BC$ then $\frac{AB}{AD} = \frac{AC}{AE}$.

CHAPTER 7

the teacher was encouraging students to suggest slang words that they used; at one point, she said:

... don't see me as the teacher ... remember that we are here to share.

There seemed to be very weak classification between the curricular and moral guardianship roles of the teacher, so that we observed an intrusion of the moral into the classroom. A Standard 10 English lesson, for example, began with an expression of disappointment on the part of the teacher over the students' behaviour in which alcohol had been brought onto the school premises.

The interrelationship between the moral and the curricular was particularly clear in a Standard 7 mathematics lesson. The teacher had collected students' books earlier in the day than had been expected and had discovered that most of the students had not completed their homework. She pointed to two piles of exercise books, one pile being about three times as high as the other. She indicated that the smaller pile comprised the books of those students who had completed their homework and the larger pile those of students who had not. She told the class that she felt that they had let her down, that she was providing work for them to do and that they were not taking advantage of it. The students in the room were silent during the teacher's admonition, mostly looking downwards rather than at the teacher. The teacher announced that the students who had not completed their homework would be punished by loss of marks and also they would have to do additional homework. The teacher then recruited some of the students who had completed the homework to put their answers on the board.

Despite the fact that many of the students hadn't completed their homework, it was still necessary for them to record the work in their books. As the students who had done the work were writing their answers on the board, the teacher told the others that they must do it quickly now, so that they could mark it.

It appeared that the mathematics teacher had initially established a differentiation in the class between the good students and the bad students. This was achieved through her display of the books, which was an anonymous differentiation, and her recruiting of good students to write on the board. This latter strategy identified at least some of the good students. At the start of the lesson, the teacher presented a very grave appearance, attenuated a little when she referred to the good students. During the course of the lesson, she became increasingly relaxed, so that, by the end of the lesson, the whole of the class had been rehabilitated. Right at the end of the lesson, however, the teacher returned to the homework issue, introducing the memory of shame, 'I'm really insulted'. She announced the additional, punishment homework and said that everyone should do it, even those who had done the original homework, because '... it will be good for you'. In what appeared to be a communal strategy, individual responsibility had been effectively equated with collective responsibility and the class, which had been divided at the start of the lesson, was reunited at the end. No student made any visible or audible objection.

Communal strategies were also employed more generally in punishment, which often made use of shaming. This was apparent in the mathematics lesson, but also

in the public display of offenders, who would be made to work at desks in the quadrangle. The deputy principal told us that students would sometimes be made to stand in public places holding a notice indicating their offence.

It appeared, then, that the teacher-student relationship at Protea was much closer to a parent-child relationship than seemed to be the case at the other two schools. That is, it was a personalised relationship and its remit extended over a wide range of the students' lives. It would seem that the students were allowed comparatively limited space of their own in the school context. Possibly as a response to the extent of their perceived supervision, the students appeared to attempt to establish or at least to desire their own space. In general terms, we observed far more evidence of resistance in the classroom at Protea than at the other schools (although not to the point of a breakdown of discipline) and, in their characterising of good teachers, students whom we interviewed identified recognition or provision of such space as an important element, thus, a Standard 10 girl:

OK, a good teacher, OK, that would be someone, um, who's very objective, you know, sort of open to what you have to say about the subject, um, [...] will be open, if you come with your own idea, er, and, um, you know, it's not the norm, OK, that person should be open to it, maybe consider it and, um, sort of accept it then as part of what she's supposed to pass down to the rest of the class. And also somebody, um, who goads you to thinking for yourself rather than, say, 'now, um, I'll tell you the way it's done'. Somebody who will encourage you to think, you know, cos that's important. Cos otherwise you come here and your brain rots and you just take in so much rather than also figure out something for yourself.

A Standard 10 boy said

A teacher who can distinguish between when we work and when we can have fun. OK, if you work now, you work now, you can have fun later, but now you get this, you know those [...] work whole period and have no fun. So soon the children will start being, you know, [...] if we're on our way to class, 'Oh no, you're going to that teacher's class, now', they feel despondent, they don't feel relaxed in the classroom, or. So that's, I think that's the bad teacher, when, er, they just want to work. But if you have a teacher who can, can, um, divide, having fun now and just now we will work, then I'm sure the majority of the class will, OK, we're gonna work now we had our fun, or we work now, just now we have our fun, OK? So, there must be some freedom in the class as well, you can't just work all the time.

The Protea students were the only ones who expressed their evaluations of teachers in these kinds of terms.

To summarise, then, we are suggesting that the teacher-student relationship at Protea can be described as that of guardian-ward, as personalised and non-specialised in the sense that it seems to cover a wide range of aspects of the students' lives.

CHAPTER 7

Having illustrated our descriptions of the relationships within the three communities and those between teachers and students at each of these schools, we will finally reconsider some of the key features of the three school assemblies that we described earlier.

RE-STARTING THE DAY

We have described the teacher-student relationship at Mont Clair as individualised and contractual. Teachers are specialists in respect of a curriculum area and its mode of transmission. The referent community of the school is, essentially, global and virtual. The curriculum constitutes the essential basis for students' entry into this community as adults. We propose that the school assembly is a site in which the corporate school can address the real community that constitutes the school and that, in doing so, it deploys two strategies which are consistent with the relationships that we have described.

Firstly, the school affiliates to its referent virtual community through affiliation to one of its cover-sets, that is, a particular form of Christianity. This potentially evokes resistance from non-Christian students. Indeed, one of the students whom we interviewed had been chairperson of the Students Jewish Association, which had made representations to the principal in opposition to the Christian form of the assemblies. However, the extent of this opposition appeared to have been limited and, indeed, this student did attend the assemblies.²²

We would propose, tentatively, that this comparatively muted opposition is in accord with the comparatively muted participation in the religious component of the assembly by the student body as a whole, especially in the first year of our visits. We suggest that this form of institutionalised Christianity stands as a metaphor for any religious institution of the global virtual community. There is a sense, then, in which we can interpret affiliation to Christianity as an affiliation to the virtual community that constitutes the students' origins and intended destinations. Their active participation is not necessary for this to be effective as an identity-forming marketing strategy. Indeed, it may be that the comparatively strong classification between the school services and community religious activities, serves to inhibit active participation. In 1997, the introduction of a charismatic 'warm-up man' who gave a talk before the song, seemed to increase participation insofar as the singing was a little louder than we had remembered from 1996.

²² Because of the change in the demographics of the school student population (referred to in footnote 6 above), the assemblies are now consciously 'inclusive' of the major religions. This entails the use of readings from the *Koran* and Imams invited to address the students. Arguably, however, the practice continues to constitute an affiliation to the virtual community that constitutes students' origins and intended destinations, because these are class rather than religiously based. I am grateful to Jaamiah Galant for this information and observation and for the information in footnote 6.

The assembly also incorporated another affiliation strategy through the reference to Eton school. This time, the affiliation was being made to a globalised icon of the virtual community rather than to one of its cover-sets.

The second strategy was a more or less direct marketing of the schools' services via the declarations of the academic and sporting successes of certain of its students which are distributed as the potential achievements of all of Mont Clair students. The claim of the marketing strategy is that Mont Clair is providing a good service, which is worthy of the continued support of the students in the contract.

At Siyafunda, there is, again, a strong classification between school and community practices insofar as the former relate to the partially alienated teacher and the latter to the township community. The school itself appears to constitute a site for both modes of practice. Township community practices are elaborated in, for example, sports (which appear to be organised by the students during lunch breaks and after school) and choral singing. The assembly seems, in general, to be constituted as a township community practice. The teachers played little or no part in the religious component, even the reading being given by an individual who was clearly not a teacher. The participation in the songs and prayers was very substantial, especially in comparison to that in the Mont Clair assembly. An African informant from outside of this particular township told us that this was because 'we' take our religion very seriously. But our interviews with informants from the white Christian communities suggested that they also took their religion very seriously and, no doubt, sang loudly in church. We offer, by way of an explanation, the suggestion that at Mont Clair, the assembly was constituted as a school practice, which was thus differentiated from the substantive community practices of the church.

The secular component of the Siyafunda assembly was brief and served simply as an informational relay and clearly not the marketing strategy of Mont Clair. In the second year of our visits to Siyafunda, the Deputy Principal of 1996 had, as we have indicated, been promoted to the position of Principal. We observed that she seemed to be adopting a more participative and evaluative role in the religious component of the assembly. In particular, she shuffled her feet and swung her arms in time to the singing and, at its conclusion, announced that it had been great. This principal had also organised and manipulated the discussion on teenage pregnancy that we observed in a Standard 10 English lesson, an apparent attempt to lay claim to moral leadership in and of the collective. The result, in this lesson, was unenthusiastic and even mocking participation by the boys. This was the only occasion that we observed when a teacher was called into question. When the principal instructed the students to discuss 'sex' with their parents, one of the boys said that he didn't live with his parents—a common situation of which the Principal would certainly have been well aware. In our interview with the Principal she appeared to us to misrepresent the status of the girls, suggesting that they are just as active as the boys and that there were just as many older girls. However, her main interest seemed to lie in how we might arrange for her to visit London. This was not an unreasonable interest, given her open, enthusiastic cooperation with us

in allowing access to the school; unhappily, it was an interest that we proved unable to satisfy.

If, in its assemblies, Mont Clair markets a service that is available, essentially on an individualised basis, Siyafunda is a site in which the collective recruits its educational leaders. Whilst the teachers stand in authority, they do so only as community servants. Attempts to turn the tables and establish charismatic leadership are, it seems made, but with uneven success. The Afrikaans teacher achieved success by radical individualising strategies. Arguably, this was necessary in the context of an apparently despised curriculum subject. The Principal, however, appeared eager to take on the collective as a whole. This may be seen as a worthy ambition for someone in her position—although the previous Principal did not seem to share it. But we might expect that such an already well-organised collective need do little more than shrug off such confrontation, or wait until it goes away.

Both Siyafunda and Mont Clair serve virtual communities that are united, in a sense, by, respectively, economic and political oppression and economic and political opportunity; a class very much in and for itself, in the township and its broader African field, and the organic solidarity of an entrepreneurial culture, insulated from the ravages of failure by the layers of underclass beneath it. Protea, by contrast, is sited within a *de facto* community that is always already riven by severe class and ethnic divisions and stratifications. The prison without walls of the Protea suburb condenses this diversity in a manner that may only hitherto have been found in frontier communities. Here, there is opportunity for success—though presumably filtered through the reproductive effect of a class society—but without the insulation from failure and in the context of objective cultural differentiation. The Mont Clair Principal can directly address his catchment community with a realistic sense of a unified audience and with a potentially effective marketing message. The Siyafunda teacher can recognise—or fail to recognise—their place as a community servant. But the Protea Principal confronts a motley congregation that has no unity other than the unity or, at least, equilibrium that he can establish. And so he does establish it. The Protea teacher—and the Principal *primus inter pares*—is the latest in a long line of community leaders celebrated in proudly displayed photographs of past generations of school staff.

The Protea teacher, it seems, deploys whatever resources may be at hand to decimate resistance and foster community, strategies most effectively illustrated by the Mathematics teacher, betrayed by her students. But the Principal does not have religion as a resource in his assemblies—both student and staff bodies are split between the Islamic and Christian faiths. We did not see an assembly during our time at Protea in 1996. *Curriculum 2005*, the policy introducing the new National Qualifications Framework, had been introduced in March 1997, immediately prior to our visit in April. When the Principal ascended his podium, his oration actually had the sense of the actor leaving the stage, ‘The responsibility now falls on your shoulders, your parents’ shoulders. ... teachers do not have to do that—the responsibility lies with you and your parents.’ Such was the repeated message of the assembly, the community leader was no longer to lead. In interview, the

Principal also spoke of his intention to retire in the not too distant future, though he appeared to be years, possibly even a decade or more short of his sixtieth birthday. On the face of it, placing responsibility for learning on the learner is entirely consistent with both the Mont Clair and Siyafunda communities within which the teacher stands as service provider and as community servant, respectively. In Protea, however, it seems to undermine fundamentally the *raison d'être* of the teacher as guardian; chivvying their wards out to fend for themselves.

TECHNOLOGY, TEXT, COMMENTARY

The limited extent of the data collection activity reported in this chapter disqualifies it as ethnography, by most interpretations of this approach. But then, Andrew Brown and I did not set out to conduct an ethnography—we lacked the resources, certainly in terms of time. We had a question: ‘how can we describe the relation between pedagogic strategies deployed in a school, on the one hand, and the nature of the community that the school serves, on the other?’ In attempting to address this question, we decided to go and have a look at what went on in three schools that had each been represented to us as very successful schools of their respective kind.

The operation of these schools on the days of our visits constituted the objects of our gaze; I want to say that we constituted them as a complex *text*. On these objects, this text, we deployed a range of research methodological strategies relating to, for example, sampling, data collection and data analysis. We also deployed theoretical resources in our analysis. These derived from our background knowledge of sociological and educational literature as well as from our own previous research. I want to refer to the apparatus of research methodology and theoretical resources as a *technology*. The outcome of the deployment of our technology on our text was the *commentary* that is provided above. This schema, *technology, text, commentary* is inspired by Jerome McGann’s acts of *deformance*, introduced in Chapter 3, but I’ll defer establishing the link until Chapter 8. The schema can, I want to maintain, be generally applied to any empirical research, but there will be variation in the relative emphasis that is placed on each moment of the schema. An ethnography is likely to place far more emphasis on the *text* in attempting to provide what Geertz (1973 (2000 Edn)), borrowing from Gilbert Ryle, (1968) refers to as ‘thick description’. We might suppose that a good deal of quantitative research will place rather more emphasis on the *technology* moment. Certainly, counting is pretty much as radical a reduction of textual richness as is generally attempted. Certain approaches to literary criticism, by deploying a lightly explicated *technology* on a lightly represented *text*, perhaps place more emphasis on the *commentary*; Geoffrey Hartman’s (1987) ‘mildly deconstructive reading’ of Wordsworth’s ode—introduced in Chapter 5 comes to mind.

At the time that our data collection and analysis was carried out and the first and second versions of our commentary originally written—in 1996 and 1997—our *technology* was not very well developed and certainly not very explicit. Yet some interest was shown in our *commentary* at various presentations in South Africa and

in the UK and by the editor of the *British Journal of Sociology of Education* that accepted our initial commentary, subject to some rather minor modifications—modifications that were never made, the paper never re-submitted, but published only on my own website (Dowling & Brown, 1996). The original ending to the second version, written by myself in 1997, was lost in a computer breakdown. I have included most of this version above together with a prosthetic termination of some 750 words, rendered possible by notes for a presentation that I gave at Chuoo University in Tokyo in September 2001. At this point and in this brief and belated conclusion, I shall try to firm up a little on my *technology* in a manner that is consistent with the general approach that is the central rationale of this book. In doing this, I shall highlight and somewhat and only in part organise the analysis of this second version, which now itself stands as my *text*.

I shall begin by observing that the students in these schools were either *individualised* or organised *collectively* by teacher and/or student strategies, whether in collaboration or in resistance. Thus the Mont Clair Standard 10 students' individual calling to account of their teachers contrasts with the general situation at Siyafunda in which the student collectivity was seen as recruiting the teachers as *community servants*. At the same time, the teacher might be constructed as a *recruit*—as in these two cases—or as a *leader*, as was commonly the case in Protea. The cross-product of the student and teacher variables gives rise to the relational space represented in Figure 7.2. The result is four categories of teacher identity and four categories of student identity that are organised in teacher/student pairs. I shall define a state of *identity equilibrium* as one in which teacher and students collaborate, or at least coincide, in their identity constructions. States of *disequilibrium* are those in which teacher and student identity constructions differ.

Student	Teacher	
	Recruit	Leader
Individualised	<i>service provider/client</i>	<i>guardian/ward</i>
Collective	<i>community servant/community member</i>	<i>general/footsoldier</i>

Figure 7.2. Teacher/Student Identity

Again, as is consistent with my method, my analysis does not fix particular settings in specified locations within this space. Much of the classroom interactions between Mont Clair students and teachers—especially in the Standard 10 classes—might be described as collaboration in the *client/service provider* mode that was, therefore, sustained in equilibrium. This relates to what Bernstein (2000) refers to as the 'instructional discourse'. However, in terms of his 'regulative discourse'—in the Mont Clair assemblies, for example, as well as in the general disciplinary practices—there is evidence of *guardian* strategies, in the *individualising* of blame and praise.

Bernstein's (1996, 2000) analytic distinction between 'regulative' and 'instructional' discourses constitutes the former as the moral order. This discourse is, he claims, dominant. 'Instructional' discourse is concerned with the transmission of competences. Bernstein points out that this kind of distinction tends to be reified in educational research, as if there were entirely separate discourses. Similar kinds of differentiation are, of course, very familiar in the professional discourse of schooling. I recall, as a high school mathematics teacher, having to grade students separately on the basis of 'achievement' and 'effort'.²³ Bernstein's own view, however, is that there is only one discourse, but he seems, nevertheless, to want to maintain an analytic distinction. I introduced Bernstein's distinction in Chapter 4 and there is a little more on it in Chapter 8. Some of the data in this chapter does appear to challenge the usefulness of Bernstein's claim that 'there are not two discourses, there is only one' (Bernstein, 1996; p. 46) and also reveals the analytic binary, regulative/instructional to be perhaps unduly reductionist. The use of detentions and the denial of the service (students having to sit outside the classroom) in exchange for lateness at Mont Clair seems to be divorced from those aspects of the curriculum that are formally assessed in the matric, for example. The same would appear to be the case with the beating of boys who have assaulted girls in Siyafunda and the regulation of school uniform and clampdown on alcohol etc at Protea. On the other hand, there are clearly instances displaying strongly institutionalised modes of transmission/acquisition of the official curriculum. The collective production of the privileged text that was dominant at Siyafunda being an outstanding case in point, but also the Geography teacher's performance of the curriculum and orchestration of the class at Mont Clair and the use of the choral response mode in both Siyafunda and Protea.

Some kind of distinction seems to be called for. I am inclined to reject both of Bernstein's terms. I hope that it is clear from earlier chapters in this book that I am conceiving of subjectivity as having been/being achieved via the apprenticeship (explicit or otherwise) into a more or less strongly institutionalised practice. One is always a subject *of* something and that something may be academic discourse or body hexis or may be theorised as some kind of psychological or biological drive. The point is that being a subject *of* always entails being subject *to*, which is to say, it always entails a regulation on behaviour in some form or other. Instruction, as the transmission of competences, is, therefore, also tied up with the production of subjectivity (or potential subjectivity) and so also concerned with the regulation of behaviour. What does seem to be the case is that these schools, through their regulatory practices, constitute a distinction between *disciplinary* and *non-disciplinary* practice. The former category relates to *specialised* areas of the curriculum—mathematics, geography, and so forth. The latter relate to what are constituted as *generalised* practices that are not *specialised* to particular curriculum areas—school uniform, religious and moral dispositions would be examples, here.

²³ I also recall reflecting on the rather cruel irony that, whilst the most damning assessment would appear to be an E for 'achievement', but an A for 'effort', the highest praise would seem to be the reverse. Presumably, neither school nor parents would welcome either.

In respect of each of these two dimensions of school practice, the school (at any given level of analysis) may seek to establish either pedagogic or exchange relations *vis a vis* its students. Taking the cross-product of these two variables produces the relational space for *regulatory strategies* in Figure 7.3.

Disciplinary (specialised practice)	Non-disciplinary (generalised practice)	
	Pedagogic	Exchange
Pedagogic	<i>disciplinary regulation</i>	<i>disciplinary enquiry</i>
Exchange	<i>moral regulation</i>	<i>de-regulation</i>

Figure 7.3. Regulatory Strategies

We can exemplify these strategies from the schools data and, at the same time, explore the teacher/student identity modes in the three schools. *Moral regulation* strategies at Mont Clair entail the deployment of *guardian* strategies in the *individualising* of blame and praise in certain of the assembly practices and in terms of the general punishment regime—the withdrawal of instructional services, detentions and so forth. There is also evidence of the strategies of the *general* in the *collective* identification of the whole school with various high profile institutions, the government, the church, English public schools and so forth. The use of the ‘warm-up man’, the ‘song’, the hierarchical organisation of senior students, teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal, the trappings of academia and so forth are also strategies of the *general* deployed by or on behalf of the Principal *vis a vis* the school as a whole. The success of these strategies of the *general* in terms of the establishing of an identity equilibrium was clearly patchy. But, as marketing strategies—and moral regulation may also be constituted as a marketing device—rather than substantive community leadership moves, they might be understood as functioning in marking out the fictional identities of imagined communities (c.f. Anderson, 1991). It may not matter if the students do not really think of themselves as *footsoldiers* in a moral crusade; a virtual identity may be more readily accepted than a substantive one.

The subject lessons at Mont Clair clearly involved *disciplinary regulation* in, for example, the performance of the geography teacher. Here, the mode of activity of the class as well as the knowledge content were well-orchestrated by the teacher. The general context of the disciplinary curriculum at Mont Clair established a service provider teacher identity, so we might speculate (in the absence of additional data) that the geography teacher’s disciplinary regulation was constituted as a part of this *service* and would be accepted, which is to say, an identity equilibrium would be sustained, so long as it proved to be effective. There was some evidence of disequilibrium in the classrooms of the novice mathematics

teacher and a teacher of Xhosa. Here, we might question the perceived adequacy of the service.

Other aspects of the Mont Clair disciplinary curricular service are more appropriately interpreted as *disciplinary enquiry*. The openness of the teacher to student interrogation would be an example. Clearly, there would be (probably tacit) limits on student behaviour, but this does at least represent a shift towards more of an *exchange* mode in respect of non-disciplinary, generalised student engagement.

Evidence of *de-regulation* was comparatively sparse at Mont Clair and, perhaps was limited to the relaxing of the general strategies relating to presentation under very special circumstances, such as the granting of permission for boys performing in a particular school play to wear their hair longer than would normally be permitted.

At Siyafunda, the prevalent condition seemed to be an equilibrium, *community servant/community member* mode in relation to all apparent regulatory strategies, though moral regulation was not generally in evidence. In general, teachers were recruited as community servants in disciplinary regulation (the leading of the collective construction of the privileged text), in disciplinary enquiry (teachers would be available to study groups), and in de-regulation, in which the 1996 Principal was almost a guest at the assembly and it was the students, not the Principal, who required teachers to beat moral offenders. There were, however, local deviations. The Standard 7 Afrikaans teacher's individualising and leadership strategies in respect of disciplinary regulation were not only consistent with the guardian/ward mode, but seemed to be very effective in establishing this as an equilibrium state. By contrast, the 1997 Principal's attempts to deploy the strategies of the general in the assembly and in the class on teenage pregnancy seemed either to be collectively ignored by community members or, occasionally, individually resisted by dissatisfied clients. The teenage pregnancy discussion took place in what was scheduled as an English lesson, where the appropriate regulatory strategy seemed generally to be disciplinary regulation, but here seemed to be shifting towards moral regulation, a strategy apparently unacceptable in this setting.

The dominant identity mode at Protea is a fairly stable guardian/ward mode operating within strongly pedagogic non-disciplinary practice. There was resistance; the maths teacher's students had not, after all, done their homework. But whilst this is clearly a resistance to authority, it is not necessarily to be interpreted as a resistance to identity; the equilibrium of the guardian/ward mode was very quickly re-established. The students' evaluations of their teachers is also not inconsistent with a stable guardian/ward mode, especially as these tended to be directed precisely at the teachers' ability to discharge their guardian role in encouraging the students to work—disciplinary regulation. As has been mentioned, one teacher in particular—another mathematics teacher—volunteered to drive locals to football matches in a minibus so that they would not be tempted to drive themselves after drinking. This teacher had extended the guardian/ward mode well beyond the school gates and into the wider community. We did not meet this teacher at Protea, as he was seconded to work at the University of Cape Town, where we did meet him. It is perhaps particularly moving that this young teacher,

as a Moslem, took an ethical stand against drinking alcohol. This guardian was well aware of the ‘frailties’ of his wards and readily forgave them—their protection was far more important, but this was offered in exchange mode and so de-regulation. Other teachers spoke in admiration of this man, constituting him as, perhaps, the ideal teacher identity for Protea.

Of all the schools, Protea exhibited the most coordinated identity structure. Perhaps the only routine directed at a collective student body was the insistence on uniform. This is the strategy of the *general* in constituting a recognisable army—moral regulation. However, the students’ general acceptance of this was probably also more in keeping with the guardian/ward mode; teacher and students constructing different identity structures that contingently produced a stable outcome. A more austere uniform policy may have shattered this. As the commentary on the Protea assembly suggests, the new education policy, *Curriculum 2005*—by apparently constituting the teacher as a recruit rather than a leader—was received by many (not all) of the teachers as a potential threat to their *guardian* identity.²⁴ The Principal’s utterances at the assembly—‘The responsibility now falls on your shoulders, your parents’ shoulders. ... teachers do not have to do that—the responsibility lies with you and your parents’—might be interpreted as a half-hearted attempt to foment collective resistance to an external authority, but this seems a little less plausible than its understanding as sigh in the face of anticipated anomie.

CONCLUSION: THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL?

I said at the beginning of this chapter that I would give some indication as to what I mean by referring to these schools as ‘good’ schools. To try to get at this, I want to report briefly on an EdD thesis in which Rod Cunningham (2004) explored the potential of a complexity approach to school effectiveness. In the thesis, Cunningham takes issue with conventional approaches to school effectiveness/improvement which often seem to propose the possibility of a more or less continuous state of improvement that might be achieved via the deployment of generalisable strategies that may be imposed, top-down, or evolved, bottom-up. These approaches also have a tendency to focus their attention on management and on teaching. Cunningham’s first point of departure was to place his own focus on learning. Consistent with the complexity approach, he placed an emphasis on local activity rather than on utopian states—we might recall that this was Forrest Gump’s recipe for success, paying attention only to the matter at hand (see Chapter 3). Cunningham looked at different levels within school activity: student-student; student-teacher; teacher-teacher; teacher-manager; manager-local education authority; and so forth. In Cunningham’s approach, there was no presumption that practices at each level either would or should be consistent. On the basis of

²⁴ The retrenchments and relocations expected as a result of a national redistribution of teacher resources also generated a good deal of anxiety, as might be expected, and this economic threat may have been seen as rather more urgent than the identity issue.

interview data relating to each level, Cunningham produced two ‘attractor states’ as follows:

Research—Process Attractor

- authority is with the author or shared
- levels of negotiation are high
- collaboration is viewed positively
- solutions to problems are generalised and it is expected that new solutions will emerge.
- practices are consistently applied
- similar patterns emerge across level

Adopt—Content Attractor

- authority is with others
- levels of negotiation are low
- collaboration is viewed positively
- solutions to problems are generalised and are largely taken from elsewhere.
- practices are consistently applied
- similar patterns emerge across levels

(Cunningham, 2004)

These are very different states. The first involves the local generation of good practice in a research mode at all levels. The second state involves the importing of good practice from other levels, described by Cunningham as the ‘adopt-content’ attractor. One of Cunningham’s schools complied with the conditions of the ‘research’ attractor and the other with those of the ‘adopt’ attractor. Both of these schools were ‘successful’ according to more conventional criteria. A third school—less ‘successful’—did not conform to either pattern. This study, like our study of the three South African Schools, was a very small-scale study and so raises questions—presents a mode of interrogation—rather than a blueprint for excellence. Indeed, the latter would run counter to the methodology adopted in both Cunningham’s study and that conducted by Andrew Brown and myself. But Cunningham’s study does suggest that attending to consistency across levels may be worthwhile.

Cunningham’s ‘attractor states’ do not, of course, necessarily entail specific teacher/student identities in the terms constituted in Figure 7.2. But the equilibrium achieved by a convergence of teacher and student identities, service provider/client, guardian/ward, community servant/community member, and general/footsoldier, would suggest a continuity across levels (ie teacher-teacher, student-student), perhaps resonating with the last pair of conditions in each of Cunningham’s ‘attractor states’. This is not to say that a ‘good’ school is one that can be defined by only a single teacher/student identity. Indeed, the identity pairs vary to some degree across the practices of at least two of the South African schools. If we look at Siyafunda, in particular, whilst the prevalent equilibrium was in the community servant/community member mode, the Standard 7 Afrikaans

teacher's class quite clearly worked as guardian/ward, suggesting, perhaps, that where charismatic authority strategies are effectively deployed, identities are mutable. Identity modes may also vary between different regulatory strategies as is illustrated in the Mont Clair setting. However, there may be contingent limits on this. The 1997 Siyafunda Principal's attempts to deploy the strategies of the general and to shift towards moral regulation did appear to result in disequilibrium.

Nor am I suggesting that identity equilibrium should be regarded as a sufficient condition for a 'good' school. Whilst there was general stability in the service provider/client identities in Mont Clair, it did seem to be the case that one or two of the teachers (only one or two) were not, at that time, providing a particularly good service. We might, rather, we think of identity equilibrium—perhaps equilibria, accounting for possible variation across regulatory strategies—as a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for a 'good' school. This would call into question the wisdom of the attempt, apparent in *Curriculum 2005*, to delimit the range of identity models—by constructing the teacher as a recruit—across all schools. Where the available models do not include ones that are consistent with that achieved within a particular school (and in relation to particular regulatory strategies), we might not be surprised if the transition to the new regime resulted in the disruption of the equilibrium. The analysis here suggests that the greatest threat in terms of identity was to Protea, though, of course, it is always possible that government initiatives may be ignored, thwarted or recontextualised.

But it's a little more complicated that this—or, perhaps a little simpler. This study set out to explore the possibility of describing the relationship between pedagogic strategies deployed in a school, on the one hand, and the community that the school serves, on the other. In this second phase analysis, I have, so far, focused exclusively on pedagogic identities and their stability or instability as mapped across the range of regulatory strategies. I have suggested that equilibrium might be interpreted as a necessary condition for school quality. What is less important, as with Cunningham's 'attractor states', is around which particular modes identity stabilises. However, the first phase commentary above proposes a substantial coherence between the structure of the community and the structure of student and teacher identities in these three schools.

The virtual community that is served by Mont Clair resonates somewhat with the culture of 'active individualism' in Mary Douglas's (1996) 'cultural theory'—to be discussed briefly in Chapter 8 (see Figure 8.1). Here, the individual is weakly incorporated into a weak structure. Authority, in this cultural mode, is affirmed by individual entrepreneurial initiative. Insofar as the symbolic capital (cf Bourdieu, 1991) of schooling qualifications are perceived as legitimate currency within this culture, student initiative is appropriately directed at obtaining the best possible service from the teacher. The interests of the teacher—a junior member of this virtual community—are best served by providing a good service. At the level of classroom interaction in respect of disciplinary practice, the teacher stands in legitimate traditional authority. This mode closes both the practice—here, the disciplinary practice—and the author—here, the teacher—as qualified to transmit it. The relationship between teacher and student is, in its most legitimate form,

pedagogic in terms of this disciplinary practice, that is to say, the author/teacher may legitimately retain control over the principles of evaluation of instructional texts. This is the case even where, as in disciplinary enquiry, there is an exchange relation in respect of the manner of engagement by the student with the instructional text. The teacher is thus in authority, but this authority is potentially limited by exchange relations in the non-disciplinary practice and, presumably, by exchange relations pertaining to the evaluation of objective measures of success, most particularly examination results. At Mont Clair, teachers and students, though individualised, are all motivated by the same ambition, the provision and receiving of a high quality schooling service, so that the service provider/client identity pair is optimal in the context of the virtual community of ‘active individualism’. Naturally, both the Principal and the students in general have an interest in excluding bad clients, provided that they constitute a manageably small proportion of the school population. Where disciplinary authority is minimised—that is, where relations in this respect are exchange—non-disciplinary practice is most likely to be in pedagogic mode, constituted as a legitimate identity equilibrium in guardian/ward mode in respect of moral regulation. The ‘attractor state’ at Mont Clair, then, seems to enable a switch between disciplinary regulation and disciplinary enquiry, where the disciplinary practice is foregrounded, and guardian/ward, where it is not. To the extent that the teacher is *in loco parentis*, which is to say, that a part of the service that the virtual community buys is one of child care, then the nature of this complex attractor state would seem to be appropriate.

The Siyafunda community seems to fit best with Douglas’s (1996) ‘conservative hierarchy’, which consists of strongly incorporated groups with complex hierarchies. Here, authority is affirmed by collective and rule following action. Advancement is clearly on the basis of individual effort, but in the context of a supportive community—study groups, for example, were common at Siyafunda. It is in everyone’s interests that individuals succeed in order to reproduce the pool of, shall we say, organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971; Connell et al, 1982) as well as to advance the interests of the community as a whole through the achievement of influential positions within the national and international sphere now that the ending of the apartheid era would permit such upward mobility. The teachers at Siyafunda commonly saw themselves on their way to bigger and better positions in administration or, after they had saved enough for the next phase of their education, in the higher professions. *En route*, however, they were recruited to leadership roles in the school. Here, the teacher is, again, installed in a position of traditional authority as community servants in respect of the disciplinary practice. Non-disciplinary practice is, at least in some respects, de-regulated in the sense that the teacher is subordinated to the bureaucratic authority of the community in being required—against the regulations—to administer corporal punishment. At the same time, this subordination to the general bureaucratic authority of the community in general, establishes the teacher in bureaucratic authority *vis a vis* the offending individual. The ‘attractor state’—an identity equilibrium of community servant/community member—was disturbed only by the charismatic practices of

the Afrikaans teacher, who successfully maintained a guardian/ward equilibrium and the hegemonic moves of the 1997 Principal in an apparent attempt to establish moral regulation where either de-regulation or disciplinary regulation would have been expected by the students/community.

The Protea community is rather more problematic in the complexity of its class and ethnic structure. I have insufficient data to make confident statements about it, but some speculation is perhaps warranted. During the apartheid regime, individual advancement was largely restricted to advancement within the coloured community itself, giving rise to positions for community leadership. The teachers at Protea presented themselves in this kind of role, both in the school and, at least in some cases, beyond its gates. As a senior community member, the position of teacher is not consistent with the service provider that is the legitimate role of the junior community member at Mont Clair. Nor is it consistent with the even more junior position of community servant as at Siyafunda. The substantive lack of unity in the structure of the community generally seems unlikely to be consistent with the general/footsoldier identity equilibrium in the absence of some external motivating force (physical, economic, charismatic) and, indeed, tends to place the student in a more individual relationship to teachers and other potential sponsors (including, presumably, senior family members etc). The guardian/ward identity equilibrium, then, would seem to be the only sustainable mode—the ‘attractor state’. Protea was the only one of the three schools in which we found no substantial evidence of any of the other modes in operation. This situation places the Protea teacher in traditional authority within a pedagogic relation to the student in respect of both disciplinary and non-disciplinary practices, so that we would expect to see very limited evidence of de-regulation. Perhaps the only instances that were hinted at were in the student expectations that the ‘good’ teacher would allow time for ‘fun’, though this might also signal an approval of what was perhaps better interpreted as the successful deployment of a charismatic strategy in the context of disciplinary regulation. The authority mode is generally traditional insofar as the teacher is associated with the closed disciplinary and non-disciplinary practices by virtue of their own qualities and knowledges that have enable them to reach the community leader position.

Community	Leadership Relations	
	Exchange	Pedagogic
Individualised	<i>service provider/client</i>	<i>guardian/ward</i>
Collective	<i>servant/community</i>	<i>general/footsoldier</i>

Figure 7.4. Leader/Follower Identity

Given the potential to align identity equilibrium states in schools with community structure illustrated by this, admittedly rather speculative (in the absence of adequate ethnographic data) description, we might re-label the table

presented in Figure 7.2 to give the more general schema for leadership identities in Figure 7.4. I have labelled the variable defined by the columns of the table as leadership relations and scaled it exchange/pedagogic. The rationale should be clear from the description above. Service providers and servants, whilst in pedagogic relations with their clients/communities in respect of their professional competencies, are recruited by these clients/communities, who/which ultimately retain control over the principles of evaluation of their performances. Guardians and generals, by contrast, can stand as such only to the extent that they retain this control themselves.

Douglas suggests that her four cultural types—of which two have been introduced here—are mutually inconsistent, which is to say that none can ‘flourish in the conditions predicated for any of the others’ (Douglas, 1996; p. 42); this tendency towards essentialising will be questioned in Chapter 8. South Africa, in the immediate post-apartheid era, is probably unique in many ways, not least in the structure of its various communities in the Western Cape and elsewhere. It may be that the virtual community served by Mont Clair is approximated in other regions of privilege, such as that defined by the clientele of the English Public Schools.²⁵ It is less clear that the Siyafunda or Protea communities have obvious equivalents. My guess is that the communities served by, for example, inner city schools in Europe or the US are rather more complex, structurally, and rather less appropriately described as ‘communities’, lacking the legacy of an oppressive, racist regime to hold them—historically by force—together. If this is the case, then it may be even less appropriate to think, generally, in terms of monolithic identity equilibrium states that match the school to its community. Rather, the school might strive to respond to the more diverse identity constructions of and in its fragmented catchment. This may be too much to ask. Clearly, we hope that South Africa moves rapidly away from the extremes of inequality and oppression that characterised apartheid and that are still its legacy. It may be that the end of the ‘good’ school will be a price that will just have to be paid.

As I have indicated at the beginning of this chapter, what is produced here—two commentaries and a simple technology—is not being presented as a discovery about the nature of these schools and certainly not a discovery about the Western Cape of South Africa. It is, rather, an iterative analysis. The first commentary was achieved via the transaction between, on the one hand, a fairly loosely defined (in theoretical, though not research methodological terms) technology and, on the other, a data text—the visits to the Western Cape by Andrew Brown and myself. The second commentary arises out of the transaction between a somewhat more explicit analytic technology—an aspect of the organisational language that is being

²⁵ The so-called English public schools are, in fact, high status, high fee-paying private schools and include Eton College, the school mentioned in the Mont Clair assembly.

CHAPTER 7

presented in this book—and the first commentary as its text. Whilst the language of the commentaries is presented in conventional, ‘realist’—even forensic—terms, what I am offering is a construction that, at least to some degree, includes some directions for further constructions, its method. New constructions may be achieved by following and by developing, or indeed critiquing, this method. Whilst none of these constructions should be understood as blueprints for concrete social action, they can ask some searching and potentially productive questions.

The general approach—*constructive description*—that I am introducing in this book is to be distinguished from other methods associated with qualitative analysis—ethnography, ethnomethodology, grounded theory, analytic induction, and so forth. Essentially, the method and the organisational languages that it generates are inspired by successive engagements with the empirical. In being so inspired, it constitutes commentaries on the settings that it encounters. What it does not do is lay claim to the enduring truth of these commentaries and this is why it is particularly suited to iteration. Its deployment does the same kind of thing that surveys do; it raises questions that, if its done well, would have been unlikely to have been formulated in the absence of this deployment; it shows the setting in a new light. Furthermore, to the extent that the method encourages the use of such data as is available, rather than insisting on the thickest of possible description, its use is appropriate for studies of any scale, rather like the experimental method in quantitative research, though without necessitating the manipulation of the empirical and generally understood within the frame of a rather different epistemology.