lection, the term "adolescence" created a screen that deflected attention away from viewing the complexities of the lived experiences of the focal students. I held tightly to my bedrock assumption about the growing significance of best friends and attempted to fit all girls into particular social relationships by force of this assumption.

Burke (1990) explains how "terministic screens" work like different colored photographic lenses to filter attention toward and away from a version of reality:

> Even if any given terminology is a reflection of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a selection of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a deflection of reality. (p. 1035)

The discourse circulating around the focal students constructed such "terministic screens," which seemed to homogenize them and, as will be seen, rendered many of their behaviors invisible to school personnel.

CHAPTER 2

Entering Adolescence: Literacy and Allegiance in Junior High

I turn now to the end of a story: The last weeks in May at a junior high school. I begin here because I believe that an examination of one culminating event reveals the themes and tensions that permeated my year at Northern Hills Junior High School. The distribution of the junior high yearbook serves as a window onto the complex processes that create and constrain, within the school context, social roles that are informed by socioeconomic status, gender, and social-group allegiances. As school years draw to a close, students across the nation anticipate the biggest school-sanctioned literacy event of the year: the sale and distribution of the school yearbook. Like students elsewhere, Northern Hills Junior High students anxiously awaited its arrival.

"A SENSE OF BELONGING": SOCIAL ROLES AND THE YEARBOOK "EVENT"

At Northern Hills, seventh grade marked the year in which students first produced and published a school yearbook, providing, it seems, a signpost of students' entrance into the adolescent arena. Many of these seventh graders bought their first yearbook, a symbol of distinction that separated them from elementary students. As elementary students, they had heard from older siblings and friends about *the junior high yearbook*, and its significance had been made clear since early October, when they were warned by way of intercom announcements to "Order now. Don't wait. Yearbooks will sell out fast."

With yearbook photographers occasionally popping into classrooms and disruptions from the intercom regularly announcing that band members or the volleyball team or the drama club should report to the

gym for yearbook photographs, the presence of the yearbook was felt not just in May but throughout the year.

Produced by 65 students working together with the help of two staff advisors, the yearbook, a 48-page soft-bound document, captured the year through photographs, student-produced artwork, and captions. Sports held a prominent place in the pages of the yearbook: Photos of football, track, basketball, and wrestling events for the boys and track, tennis, volleyball, and basketball for the girls filled the pages. The book also contained photos of Soda—a drug and alcohol awareness club—and drama club.

I believe that most teachers would agree with one of the yearbook's faculty advisors, the media specialist, who described the importance of the yearbook this way:

> If you can find your mug in here [yearbook], it gives you a tremendous sense of belonging. We tried to cover all of the major events, and it's important to find yourself. We took a lot of pictures. If you and your mom can find yourself in here, then everything is just A-OK.

Here, the media specialist pointed out the importance of belonging, describing how belonging is documented by a photo in the yearbook. Similarly, Smith (1986) describes the necessity of belonging in regard to literacy learning. Using the metaphor of a "literacy club," he writes:

> And once again, membership in the literacy club adds to the individual's sense of personal identity, of who he or she is. "Hi, kid, you're one of us," say the members of the literacy club. (p. 38)

Borrowing Smith's metaphor, Meyers (1992) examines how students' social relations and thinking processes impinge on each other by categorizing students' uses of literacy within different social contexts as follows: to share membership, to contest membership, to fake membership, and to maintain membership. At Northern Hills, the junior high yearbook served similar functions, documenting membership in what might be considered an adolescent club. I use the term "club" to describe a set of discursive practices that shape and create social roles. As it is used here, a club provides an opportunity to examine the institutional conception of membership, of belonging. Giroux (1992) argues that "student experience will have to be analyzed as part of a wider relationship between culture and power" (p. 16). What implicit cultural attributes encompass becoming "one of us"? What is valued? What roles

are made available? How is the organization structured? What privileges and rewards are conferred by such a membership? What are the duties and obligations?

Photographs of after-school club and team activities dominated the book, revealing implicit values: Clearly, high value was placed on extracurricular participation, team membership, and competition.

Teachers, administrators, and many parents perceived extracurricular involvement as the key to both enjoyment and academic success. The faculty and student handbooks referred to sports, drama, and club activities as "cocurricular" rather than as "extracurricular." While carried on outside the designated school day, these activities were perceived by teachers, administrators, and many parents as central to the school's academic program. When asked what was most beneficial for her daughter during the school year, one mother explained, "After-school sports. I really like them. They keep her involved." This parent, like many others, believed that involvement in after-school activities would have a positive academic impact.

I contend that an examination of the school as a club makes visible disparate positions of status and power. Infused with the discourse of adolescence, the junior high school filters attention toward one particular group of students and, as you will see, renders others invisible.

SOCIAL BOUNDARIES: THE QUEENS AND THE COOKIES

Just a few days before the sale of yearbooks, intercom announcements and rumors of the exact date of arrival revved students up. During second period, Mr. Anson, the building principal, announced, "The yearbooks are not here yet, but we will let you know the moment they get here." "The moment" was enunciated with such clarity that students in Mrs. Zmoleck's language arts class began buzzing with excitement. Mrs. Zmoleck attempted to distract them from the coming attraction. "Okay, it's free-reading time," she announced to counterbalance Mr. Anson on the intercom. For several days, Mr. Anson's morning announcements continued to remind students of the sale of yearbooks—as if any of them could not be keenly aware of the impending arrival.

Teachers' conversations, too, were laced with references to the arrival of the yearbook as they planned for the event. At Northern Hills Junior High, the yearbook had become a central part of the end-of-the-year curriculum. The distribution date seemed to be the only negative concern mentioned by teachers, who feared that an early release date might sabotage their scheduled plans for "signing time" in class during

the last week of school. They talked to each other about the need to save the yearbook for the last week so it would fit within their curricular calendar. For the most part, teachers described the yearbook as a celebration and a well-earned reward for a year of hard work. They allocated class time for signing and sharing yearbooks. Perceived as a way to control the behavior of the 531 seventh and eighth graders who in late May might not be eager to participate in discussions or complete end-of-semester projects, signing time was a tool for negotiating with students, often appearing as a bribe. Teachers told students: "If we get all our work done . . . ," "If you are all good . . . ," "If you cooperate, and we can hurry through this . . . " The following teacher comment received several nods and "me toos" from staff in the teacher's lounge: "I give them the last five to ten minutes to write depending on how the class goes. It's a reward. It's a privilege. It's their reward for good behavior."

When the book was sold one full week before the last day of the school year, several teachers expressed frustration: "What are we going to do with them the last week? Students won't have anything to do"; "It gives them something to do at the end of school." Teachers explained that all the students looked forward to receiving the book, and that this sense of urgency might have forced the early sales.

The yearbook played such a large part in the end-of-school activities because the teachers and administrators all believed, as the media specialist articulated, that it gave a tremendous sense of belonging. The discourse of adolescence that privileges peer-group allegiances constructed filters, it seems, that prevented school personnel from seeing the yearbook as exclusionary. Although the yearbook was viewed as a symbol of solidarity for all students, only a particular population of students was made to feel as if they belonged to this club. Other students remained outsiders.

Having provided insight into the role of the yearbook from the institutional perspective, I turn now to the focal students themselves, describing the day of arrival of the yearbook from their perspective.

The Arrival of the Yearbook: Tiffany's Scene

It was lunch time, but students crowded the hallway outside the cafeteria. Crouched down in bunches, girls giggled, shrieked, and tipped one another over as they huddled together to sign each other's books. Boys and girls leaned against lockers or used a friend's back to steady a book for signing. Yearbooks flew across the corridor with a verbal "Hey, sign mine," tagged onto them.

It was easy to hear Tiffany's voice above the loud chatter. She leaped up from a crowd of girls, her long red hair flying back as she cackled loudly and ran full speed to the end of the hall, sloshing small amounts of her chocolate malt across the tan carpet as she went. She slammed into a group of friends and yanked a yearbook from one boy's hand, screaming, "Whose's this? You want me to sign it, don't you?" She looked over her shoulder at me, shouting, "I just have to keep writing until they'll let me stop. Everybody wants me to sign their book." She grinned and plopped herself down in the middle of the group. Like a pile of puppies, her friends pushed up against each other as she elbowed them over and wriggled her way in.

The Arrival of the Yearbook: Cleo's Scene

Inside, the cafeteria was much less crowded on that day. The large room was nearly empty and particularly quiet. I scanned the room and found Cleo and her friends in their usual seats in the middle of the front section, "the woof-woof tables," as Tiffany's friends described the area. Without difficulty, because there were so few students in the area, I made my way to them and stuffed my backpack under the table. Beth, Pat, Cleo, and Dottie were eating in silence. Not one yearbook was visible at their table. Sensing the awkwardness of the silence, I did not ask about it. Instead, I mentioned the rainy weather, and Dottie complained that she and her mother had worked late the night before, trimming all the tall, wet grass from around their trailer so they wouldn't be charged a penalty fee by the trailer-park management. Lunch continued with talk about rain, cookies, and favorite flavors of malts.

After lunch, I asked Cleo privately about the yearbooks. "Oh, I'm not very interested in them," she reported. When I reminded her that she had told me a week before that she thought she'd get one, she just shrugged her shoulders and repeated that she wasn't interested: "I don't know why I would want one. None of my friends are in there anyway."

The literacy event surrounding the arrival of the yearbook appears very different when one looks through the eyes of Tiffany and Cleo. These two scenes illustrate sharp contrasts between the two groups of girlfriends.

The yearbook was one mechanism that created tangible boundaries between groups. Students used photos and messages to assess status and document allegiances. One powerful position within the school was that of yearbook staff member. Many considered it an honor to be a member of the yearbook staff and especially to be one of the eighth-

grade photographers, who were allowed to leave study halls throughout the year to snap candid shots of the student body. This position held power because it carried the privilege of added mobility around the school and access to other classrooms. Most important, individuals who held this position acted as gatekeepers, controlling who populated the pages of the yearbook.

The queens literally counted the number of photos each had in the yearbook, using the number as a measurement of popularity. When the yearbook arrived, these girls quickly flipped through the pages looking for themselves and their friends as proof of their belonging. On the other hand, Cleo's remark, "None of my friends are in there anyway," makes it clear that the cookies were aware of their absence.

Tiffany's and Cleo's networks of friends seemed to have very little in common. Tiffany loved to socialize. Her friends were active in athletic events, attended school activities and dances, and spent much of their leisure time together with same-age peers. In contrast, Cleo, like her friends, spent most of her leisure time with her family. She did not participate in any extracurricular activities and preferred to spend her time at home.

Constant comments from Northern Hills staff that "Everybody gets one" and "Everyone loves them" reveal that Cleo and Dottie and many others were invisible to school personnel. Current enrollment was 531; 425 books were ordered. Eight were sold to adults, 10 were distributed as complimentary copies, 10 were mailed to students who no longer lived in the district, and 5 remained unsold. In all, 397 copies were sold to students, which left 134 students without yearbooks. That figure represents 25% of the total student population. While students may not have purchased a yearbook for a variety of reasons, the socioeconomic status of families may have been a critical issue. For whatever reason, when teachers rewarded students with "signing time," one out of four students was not able to participate.

Economic constraints prevented some students from fully participating in the culture of the school and from participating in the biggest school-sanctioned literacy event of the year. This lack of a sense of belonging, of shared culture, was a constant tension in the conversations of Cleo, her family, and her friends. Cleo and Dottie lived in trailer parks, which in the Midwest carries a stigma that spills over into the school context, where some teachers and some administrators perceive that such living arrangements lead to school problems.

At times, it was not simply a matter of economics that interfered with the institution's construction of full participation in school activities, but the perceptions of economic status that others brought to the

school context. This attitude was more fully illustrated by the principal's comments about students who come from trailer parks, which he described as "places that are too closely knit. They live too closely together. They know each other's problems and that causes problems at school." Likewise, constructions of the social dimension of schooling created obstacles for some students. At Northern Hills, I often heard the category "trailer-park kids" used to connote a lack of appropriate social skills in particular students. Some teachers described their class makeup in terms of numbers of students from trailer parks. A teacher's comment such as "I've got seven trailer-park kids" conveyed to other teachers the implicit yet clearly understood assumption of impending trouble for that teacher.

While economic resources played a major part in determining who would participate more fully in ways that the school had constructed participation, there was much evidence to suggest that an equal if not greater factor was the circulation of what Bourdieu (1977) calls cultural capital: the attitudes, beliefs, cultural background, knowledge, and skills that are passed from one generation to the next. In order to understand the cultural capital that each girl carried to school, I turn now to their homes.

Perspectives from the Homes of the Social Queens

Tiffany and Angie were prominent members of this school's "club," clearly evidenced by the fact that each had four pictures in the yearbook. Besides her "mug shot," Tiffany appeared in team pictures with the volleyball team and the basketball team. She also appeared on the collage pages with her arms thrown around Lauren at the fall school dance. All of her best friends appeared throughout the book in candid shots and in volleyball, basketball, and track pictures.

While Tiffany's parents were concerned when her social life interfered with academics, they both explained that it was the cocurricular activities, especially sports, that were helping to shape her in a positive way. They attributed Tiffany's success in school to a great extent to her participation in extracurricular activities, and they encouraged her to undertake every opportunity that was available to her. "She's a very social person. With sports and friends and all," her mother told me. Later in the year, her father attributed her school-year success to this fact:

> I think overall it's been successful because of participating in extracurricular activities. That's been good for her, not only physically

but mentally. But I personally didn't think I'd survive this year with her, from the standpoint of the constantly, about every other week, getting a letter from the school about this or that, incomplete assignments or whatever just due to her social butterfly attitude she had throughout the year, you know.

Notice the values placed on the benefits of extracurricular activities, "not only physically but mentally." While her father acknowledged that her "social butterfly attitude" caused some difficulties at home due to the demands it entailed (making driving arrangements, attending sporting events and social functions, and occasionally dealing with incomplete assignments), he accepted them as healthy signs of this developmental period. The discourse of adolescence reverberates in Tiffany's father's words. Letters from school, incomplete assignments, along with the social butterfly attitude, signaled to him that Tiffany was a normal adolescent.

Like Tiffany, Angie was actively involved in the school's social life. She participated in volleyball, basketball, and track as well as chorus and weight-lifting. Angie's mother described her, too, as social:

> A big part of her life's her social life. She's involved in a lot of things. It's an important part of school, in terms of learning because if you've got a happy child, all around happy child, she's going to do better at everything. Probably doesn't need to be quite as involved as she is, but she needs it. I think it's important to have extracurricular activities to keep her happy.

Parents of the queens expressed concern that there simply wasn't as much time for reading or family now that they were in junior high, but they strongly supported the importance of extracurricular activities as a direct route to school success: physically, socially, and academically.

Perspectives from the Homes of the Tough Cookies

Missing from the yearbook were any pictures other than the official "mug shots" of Cleo, Dottie, or their friends. Tough cookies did not participate in any extracurricular activities and were invisible to the eighth-grade photographers who were busy throughout the year taking candid shots around school.

Even purchasing a yearbook created tension. Consider Cleo's mother's frustration with her inability to send $8.00 to school so her daughter could have a yearbook to sign like all the other girls. Torn between the

pressures of stretching a tight budget and wanting her daughter to belong, she said:

> I do not understand. I do not understand why they assume that everybody has tons of money, and every time I turn around it's more money for this and more money for that. Where do they get the idea that we've got all this money?

Like Cleo, Dottie had a picture only in the mug-shot section. Like Cleo's mother, Dottie's mother did not have the economic resources to allow Dottie to participate fully in school in ways the school might have envisioned. For instance, after Dottie's language arts teacher encouraged her to try out for the fall play, her mother explained to me why she did not "choose" to participate: "I think Dottie told you that we don't have a car right now. She's embarrassed and doesn't want her teachers to know."

Understanding the social dimensions of this condition go far beyond any economic factors. While Cleo's mother may have regretted that Cleo did not get a yearbook and Dottie's mother might have liked Dottie to try out for the play, both women regularly expressed values that conflicted with the sense of belonging that permeated the messages surrounding the sale of the yearbook. Cleo's mother explained her anxiety and worries in the move to junior high:

> The biggest thing for me is the social stuff. I'm not ready for her to move outside the family, and it's hard for me to say, "yeah, you can do it," because I don't feel comfortable yet.

Later in the same interview, she told me that she planned for her daughter to attend a nearby college so she can remain at home. She explained the importance of family in this way:

> Like the Orientals and even the Indian people, [I think] families are most important. And everybody works together to get wherever they're going. And I really don't think that us, as White people or whatever, I don't think we do that. I think we just start cutting off, saying you're on your own, you know. And I really do think that families should always stick together as long as possible. I mean you give them a boost up. I don't like that boot-out stuff.

In opposition to the discourse of adolescence, which privileges allegiance with same-age peers, this quote reveals a continued emphasis on close ties with significant adults. Unlike parents of the social queens,

who regarded severing ties with adults as a sign of normal progression into adolescence, the parents of the cookies regarded maintaining allegiances with family as central. Emphasis on maintaining family ties in working-class families during adolescence is documented elsewhere (Schlegel & Barry, 1991; Weiss, 1993). McRobbie's (1978) study documents the centrality of home and family life for working-class girls. I argue that one must account for marked differential role constructions that accompany the move into adolescence. In the school setting, it seems that adolescence as a life stage may have constructed filters that deny diversity.

Cleo's mother regularly made sharp contrasts between academic and social aspects of schooling. She explained, "I want Cleo to be educated. I don't want her to be social." Like Cleo's mother, Dottie's mother discouraged her daughter from participating in any cocurricular activities: "Maybe when she is in high school, 16 or 17, then she can do track or something. *Not now*!"

Both women expressed a strong distrust of the social side of schooling and presented a set of values that conflicted with Northern Hills teachers' thinking about appropriate pedagogy for the language arts classroom. (Note the importance of peer response and collaborative groups in reading and writing workshops in the work of Atwell, 1987, and Graves, 1983.) Both women deemphasized the importance of peer groups. Both mothers strongly resisted the notion that social activities were a part of the educational process or a sign of progression into the developmental stage of adolescence.

"SIGN MINE": CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY AND CLAIMING ALLEGIANCE

Time to write in the school yearbook was perceived as a reward by teachers, and students often announced that this sanctioned writing time was their right, demanding time to scrawl their messages across the face of another student.

Literacies—both sanctioned literacies and literate underlife—served to maintain particular social roles and document particular allegiances. At Northern Hills, writing in the yearbook provides a unique opportunity to examine the dimensions of sanctioned literacies (those that are recognized and circulated by adults in authority) and literate underlife (those literate practices that are out of sight and out of control of those in authority, practices in opposition to the institution). Within the pages

of the yearbook, literate practices marked membership and measured status within social groups. Messages were borrowed, erased, and scribbled over to present a particular kind of self as well as to document and deny allegiances. Six pages were included at the back for just such writing practices. Clearly, writing in the yearbook privileged those who matched the dominant image of the adolescent, both economically and culturally. The cookies are absent from the remaining discussion.

Presenting a particular self through their literate choices, boys' inscriptions centered on action while girls' messages focused on relationships. Messages such as "Your [*sic*] a total babe," "Yo, The spirit 40 lives on," and "Stay sweet and sexy, NOT" found their way onto these pages. Just as the sixth-grade girls in Cherland's (1994) study used dress, demeanor, and leisure-time activities (including reading) as a way to "do gender," signing the yearbook was a means of marking gender. Drawing on West and Zimmerman (1987), Cherland writes that "doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures'" (p. 12). Of the messages printed above, "Your [*sic*] a total babe" and "Yo, The spirit 40 lives on" were written by males, while "Stay sweet and sexy, NOT" was written by seventh-grade girls. The boys often inscribed their basketball jersey number into their messages: "The spirit 40 lives on." Although many girls participated in basketball, no reference to sports was evident in their yearbook inscriptions.

Both boys and girls sought to affix a kind of permanence to their messages. Yearbook inscriptions served, it seems, to secure one's role and relationships in print. "Forever" and "lives on" appeared in an overwhelming majority of messages. Girls most often signed their inscriptions with B.F.F. (Best Friends Forever) while boys secured their social position by such comments as "Yo, #15 Forever" and "We're #1 forever." In these attempts to attach permanence to a presentation of self, such signatures were clearly declarations of cultural masculine and feminine identification: Boys sought to present a competitive self while girls sought attachment with others.

Romance marked the signatures of the seventh-grade girls. They often searched for red and pink pens with which to write and dotted their I's with hearts. The girls often drew hearts around boys' pictures and wrote "Love," carefully turning the letter O into a small red heart near a particular boy's picture.

Boys' inscriptions focused on action and on power, presenting the male self as a powerful competitor at the top of the social hierarchy.

Girls, in contrast, presented the self through the male gaze, finding a place in the social order through one's ability to attract male attention: "Stay sweet and sexy" was the most common inscription for girls.

Some yearbooks were considered to be "ruined" by boys who wrote comments that girls feared would result in punishment at home. Comments such as "Hey, Boobs, I hope I see ALOT of you this summer" created bursts of muffled anger in groups of girls, yet the girls refused to tell adults about such practices and quickly hushed each other up so a teacher would not approach them. Similar to the Oak Town girls in Cherland's 1994 study, the Northern Hills girls never reported such acts. Cherland writes of similar acts of sexual harassment:

> Instead of telling the child what she must do, the culture tells her what she is (Bourdieu, 1991). MTV, the television news, novels, fashion advertisements, older relatives and the boys at school all told Oak Town girls what they were: powerless people whose bodies were "naturally" the object of others' desires. It is not surprising, therefore, that most accepted the practice of sexual harassment. Bourdieu suggests that people come to accept these violent suggestions inscribed in the practices of everyday life, no matter what their status or class, and no matter what the effect on them, because cultural discourses position them as people who must accept the warning, while they in turn come to interpret themselves as those who must submit. In this way, domination is sustained through interpersonal relations, and symbolic violence is accepted as legitimate. (p. 42)

While Northern Hills girls expressed outrage about certain boys' writing practices, they continued to ask Stevie, "the one who ruined that yearbook," to "sign mine" and granted status to the girl who was the victim of the message. Clearly, this comment can be read as a way boys exert control over girls. But trained by the larger culture, the Northern Hills girls received it as a mark of distinction, accepting their position as powerless people defined through their body images.

Gossip about the comment carried much currency for several days. While the Northern Hills male presented the self as a powerful actor, he represented the female as object of desire. The early adolescent girl accepts his representation of her as an object, more specifically as an anatomical commodity.

Although this particular comment was made invisible, by blocking it out with a thick black marker, the seventh graders continued to regard its presence. Under the black ink was the secret sexual message that was revealed to those deemed an appropriate audience. Girls led each other by the hand to the yearbook, "See, this is where it is." The phrase was repeated in present tense: "where it is," not "where it was." The sexual message remained present under the black marker. As children, these girls accepted sexuality as taboo; yet, as early adolescents, they sought to enact a sexual self through their literate practices. Although hidden from adults, the message was not erased. It was not erased from the yearbook or from the construction of identity that these girls were internalizing.

PATROLLING THE BORDERS: LITERACY AS RITUAL OF EXCLUSION

KATIE: Can I sign your yearbook?
BARB: No.

A quick glance at the yearbook shows row after row of white faces ordered by alphabetical arrangement. The seeming homogeneity conceals diversity: Invisible barriers such as attitudes, beliefs, economics, and experiences separate these young people into at least two camps. The girls created markers to maintain the borders between them. Allegiances became visible in both the act of writing and in the messages themselves. What is written and to whom is controlled by one's social status. Yearbooks circulated across social boundaries, yet those with the greatest social status stood in judgment of those less powerful. Students carefully monitored who could sign their yearbooks. To allow one of lesser status to mark one's book appeared to lower the status of the book owner. Students often asked for and were denied signing privileges. The cookies did not participate in signing, and within the queens' friendship network, a hierarchy was clearly visible. Some students were in fact told "No," after asking, "Can I sign your yearbook?" In the same way, some students refused to sign yearbooks of those perceived to be outside the circle of significance. Who had the right to write was clearly an issue of entitlement defined by Shuman (1986) as "the rights of both addressors and addressees, as well as to the onlookers, witnesses, eavesdroppers and third-party listeners to a message, as well as the characters in the message" (p. 18). If one was perceived as an outsider, then one was not entitled to write. Likewise, one might or might not be entitled to even view the message. Students guarded their written texts and controlled who had the right to see them.

The issue of entitlement, according to Shuman (1993), concerns one's rights to "appropriate another's voice as a means of borrowing authority, whether in an act of complicity or resistance to that authority" (p. 136). Messages inscribed in the yearbook illustrate positions of both compliance and resistance—most often compliance to peers deemed

higher in social status and resistance to adults. Layers of authority become visible when one examines these written texts. For example, as an act of resistance, one student parodied Mr. Tibidioux, her language arts teacher, taking that teacher's own words to mock his authority: "It is clear that . . . " Borrowing these words from his recurring instruction for writing appropriate responses, she wrote them in a yearbook and then, to claim publicly that she knew that he was leaving the school system at the close of the year, she added, "It is clear that Scooby-doo [rhymes with Tibidioux] is leaving," spoofing his name and his practice. Standing in judgment, the queens erased some teachers' pictures altogether. To exercise their authority over others, they drew over and scribbled on teachers' images and those of other students.

Students with the greatest status were freed from judgment, and their written comments became models for others to copy. As I watched, one student carefully moved her finger across the page, working cautiously to transfer a phrase exactly from one yearbook to another. Because a particular phrase was perceived as carrying more currency in this arena, this teen appropriated the words of another student as her own in order for her own voice to contain that power. Students shared texts and at times took another person's message for their own, copying the same phrase from one yearbook to the next to the next. In such borrowing of texts, one, in a sense, borrowed the social status of another. In taking another's message as her own, each girl had to be careful not to overstep her boundaries, and, as Shuman (1986) suggests, write what she was not entitled to write.

In the act of writing, students inadvertently may mark themselves as outsiders by writing a message judged inappropriate by others. If one was not savvy enough to create an appropriate text or powerful enough to forgo judgment, often, out of fear of marking oneself as outsider, one just scribbled safe messages such as "Have a good summer" or "See ya next year."

Some students, in order to preserve their social position, asked a friend, "What should I write? What do you want me to say?" Students took this opportunity to exert their position of authority and made such playful comments as "Say I'm 'just too cool'" or "Say 'she's always got a taco'" (a current description for shorts or jeans that were considered too tight across the seat of the pants) or "Write, 'BFF ASS'" (a code for best friends forever and always stay sweet or sexy). Many comments were so highly coded that only those few insiders could translate them.

In order for students to demonstrate that they were with it, comments carrying the current pop jargon taken from movies, television, or local sources become etched into this school-sanctioned document, creating an unusual juxtaposition of sanctioned and out-of-bounds literacies. Dark, graffiti-like messages boldly cut across the white-bordered layout and quite literally "defaced" students and teachers alike. With big pink erasers, students rubbed out the faces of outsiders.

Constructing a dual set of standards as a way to separate themselves from adults and from children, the queens at times judged their yearbook writing as appropriate for their friends but too obscene to share with parents, teachers, or those outside their social network. Adhering to the adolescent code, the queens sought to present a sexual self, lacing romance and sexual innuendo into their messages. They reported to me that such topics were appropriate for them as teenagers and continued to hide them from parents and teachers.

In all of this writing, the queens demonstrated a tremendous sense of play. Signing yearbooks had the feeling of recess, providing playtime away from the institutional demands of schooling, away from adult supervision. Similar to the playground, who could play was controlled by the peer dynamic. The yearbook was used to stake out territory and control social interactions. Yearbook messages regulated relationships and interests. In these ways, yearbook writing served two purposes: to construct a border around particular adolescents and to measure growth into adulthood.

EMBRACING ADOLESCENCE: THE YEARBOOK AS PROCESS AND OBJECT

The yearbook provided a pictorial history, freezing moments of friendship, of athletic prowess, of academic endeavors. It provided, too, a unique opportunity to blur the boundaries between school-sanctioned literacies and literate underlife: sanctioned time in the school context given over to leisure, words written publicly yet secretly and quite literally written across the faces of authority while under the watchful gaze of those in authority. For seventh graders here, it was their first yearbook, a symbol of membership in the junior high school and entry into an adolescent arena: photos published as proof of sanctioned membership in the junior high, words scribbled across those pages as proof of the unsanctioned resistance that marks one as adolescent.

As a member of any club, one accepts the rules and obligations of the organization in order to enjoy the rights and benefits that accompany such a membership. Membership in the junior high "club" carried dues; competition and cocurricular participation were a central part of

such obligations. In other words, one must embrace or at least comply with the roles that such a membership enlists.

Belonging to the Northern Hills district is a privilege that few parents or teachers would refute. With top standardized test scores and a near zero dropout rate, Northern Hills is looked on as a highly successful, fully functioning district. A full array of cocurricular opportunities, well-kept grounds and facilities, abundant instructional materials, and low student-teacher ratios serve as markers of school success that carry across state lines and distinguish the Northern Hills Community School District as one of the finest in the nation. Northern Hills, fully entitled to call itself a place of pride, closely matches an idealized school. Yet, do we fully understand the implications of this match? Terry Eagleton (1991) writes:

> In the field of education, for example, symbolic violence operates not so much by the teacher speaking "ideologically" to the students, but by the teacher being perceived as in possession of an amount of "cultural capital" which the student needs to acquire. The educational system thus contributes to reproducing the dominant social order not so much by the viewpoint it fosters, but by this regulated distribution of cultural capital . . . those who lack the "correct" taste are unobtrusively excluded, relegated to shame and silence. (pp. 157–58)

I contend that it is not the teacher alone but the entire institution and larger community that distribute a pervasive cultural capital. As a "Place of Pride," Northern Hills articulates a progressivism that characterizes its curriculum; yet such an insistent argument masks the traditional remnants that persist under the surface. When we examine school as a symbol of membership in a larger culture, we uncover a powerful ideology that continues to privilege the dominant class and insists on maintaining the status quo. The junior high comes equipped with one way of being in the world. The junior high school arena requires the strong sense of competition and team membership that permeated the pages of the yearbook. To resist the demands of this adolescent organization marks one as less than a fully functioning member.

I would argue that the characteristics of adolescence as a developmental stage are not so much a part of this stage because they are biologically wired or psychologically triggered. They emerge because they are ideological constructs that are fostered by the schedule and structure of the junior high school. Beyond economics, the emphasis at Northern Hills on cocurricular activities that fill up after-school, evening, and weekend hours requires children to realign their positions within their family structure. A focus on winning both in the classroom

and on the athletic field nurtured a keen focus on the self. Thus, to fully participate in this club, earning the privileges that it entails, demanded strong same-age social networks, severing or at least distancing from parental ties, and placing emphasis on a competitive self, all highly prized by Northern Hills standards. Members in good standing met such demands. Anyone who was unwilling or unable to meet them was marginalized.

The junior high yearbook packed the ideology of the school district and the larger culture into its 48 pages, translating a set of values into images and texts that were carried through the halls and through the community. Looking back at the yearbook as literacy event, looking through the eyes of Cleo and Tiffany, the yearbook takes on significance both as process (ideological inculcation) and object (cultural capital).

Throughout this examination of the yearbook as event, it becomes clear that while the discourse of adolescence denies diversity, those complexities, however subtle, do exist, creating invisible obstacles. A vast tangle of competing expectations and allegiances shapes the school context, which in turn shapes social roles. As an actual event and as a larger symbol, the school yearbook illustrates how one's membership constricts and enables particular literate practices that in turn constrict and enable particular roles available to group members.

Conceived of as an opportunity for all to celebrate the completion of another successful academic year, the yearbook provided much more. It served as a marker. For Tiffany and the other social queens it reaffirmed their position in the school arena and in the larger community. They measured their status by the number and size of their pictures and by the number of requests to sign books: "Everybody wants me to sign their book." For Cleo and her friends, it also reaffirmed their position: "None of my friends are in there anyway."

The role of the yearbook within the institutional context remains central to the closing of the school year. The yearbook stands as an icon. Unknowingly, some are allowed to speak while others are silenced, some to write while others are written upon.