



# Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids

By Murray Milner Jr.

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*Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids* argues that the teenage behaviors that annoy adults do not arise from "hormones," bad parenting, poor teaching, or "the media," but from adolescents' lack of power over the central features of their lives: they must attend school; they have no control over the curriculum; they can't choose who their classmates are. What teenagers do have is the power to create status systems and symbols that not only exasperate adults, but also impede learning and maturing. Ironically, parents, educators, and businesses are inadvertently major contributors to these outcomes.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

"Murray Milner has done more than perhaps any other American sociologist to remind us that 'status' remains a primary mode of stratification, one that is dependent on cultural, not material power. He first set out this claim in his study of the Hindu caste system. In this new installment of his research program, he applies his considerable powers to American teenagers, and he shows how they produce caste systems of an equally deep and irrational kind. *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids* is exemplary sociological research and theory. It is also wise and witty, and often touching as well." - Jeffrey C. Alexander, co-editor of *The New Social Theory Reader: Contemporary Debates*

### **About the Author**

**Murray Milner, Jr.**, is Senior Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia. His books focus on the many faces of status, and include *Status and Sacredness*, winner of the American Sociological Association's Distinguished Publication Award, *Unequal Care*, and *The Illusion of Equality*.

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#### **Beth Murray:**

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