

John Taylor Gatto – The Purpose of Schooling

Truth versus Disinformation . . . Everything You Know is Wrong About Schooling

School was intended, on this continent, to be as it had been in northern Germany, a fifth column into the burgeoning libertarian condition where disenfranchised and oppressed groups were clamoring for some kind of seat at the bargaining table.

School was to be a surgical incision into which the class-based management theories of England were to be inserted to interdict the liberty traditions. England's multi-layered social class is simply a modern day representation of Julius Caesar's advice that when you are overwhelmed by the enemy you divide them and conquer them that way by setting them against each other.

The method was to be by infiltration into the minds of children out of sight of their parents. The well-read here won't be shocked. Theorists from Plato to Rousseau to Frederick of Prussia knew and taught explicitly that if children could be kept childish beyond its term in nature, if they could be cloistered in a society of children without any real responsibility except obedience, if their inner lives could be attenuated by removing the insights of history, literature, philosophy, economics, religion, if the imminence of death and the certainty of pain and loss could be removed from daily consciousness, if the profound reflections on one's own death could be replaced by the trivializing emotions of greed, envy, jealousy and fear, young people would grow older, but they would never grow up, and a great enduring problem of supervision would be solved, for who can argue against the truth that childish and childlike people are much easier to manage than critically trained, self-reliant, ones.

Now you are ready to hear the six purposes of modern schooling taken directly from Dr. Anglisse's book.

The first function of schooling is *adjustive*. Schools are to establish fixed habits of reaction to authority. It is *fixed* habits of reaction. Notice that this precludes critical judgment completely. Notice too that requiring obedience to stupid orders is a much better test of *function one* than following sensible orders ever could be. You don't know whether people are reflexibly obedient unless they will march right off the cliff.

Second is the diagnostic function. Each school is to determine each student's proper social role, logging the evidence mathematically and anecdotally on cumulative records. You probably thought that the kid, or parents, or neighbors, the region, or circumstances . . . no, the school is to determine your proper social role and they are to fix you in that role mathematically on their cumulative records.

Next comes the sorting function. School sorts children by training individuals only so far as their likely destination in the social machine, not one step beyond. Keep in mind, you're not listening to John Gatto, you're listening to the man for whom the Honor Lecture in Education at Harvard is named.

The fourth function is conformity. As much as possible, kids are to be made alike, whatever the background they come from they are to be made alike. This is not done from any passion for egalitarian

ideals but so that their future behavior will be mathematically predictable in service to market research and government research.

Next comes the hygienic function. This one is my favorite. This has nothing to do with individual health, but it has a lot to do with the health of the race, at least as Anglisses or Darwin or his first cousin, Galton, saw it. Hygiene is a polite way of saying that school is expected to accelerate natural selection by tagging the unfit so clearly by humiliation –that’s what all those humiliations from first grade on, that’s what all the posted list of rankings are all about -- so clearly that the unfit will drop from the reproduction sweepstakes, either in despair or because their likely mates will have accepted the schools judgment of them as terminally inferior.

And last comes a fancy Latin word . . . the *propi edutic* function. That’s fancy word meaning that a small fraction of lucky kids will quietly be taught how to take over management of this continuing project, guardians of a population deliberately dumbed-down and rendered childlike in order that government and economic life can be managed with a minimum of hassle, it’s that low down nitty-gritty common purpose. Not Marxist grand warfare between classes and greedy captains of industry, it’s simply so that management will have a minimum of hassles.