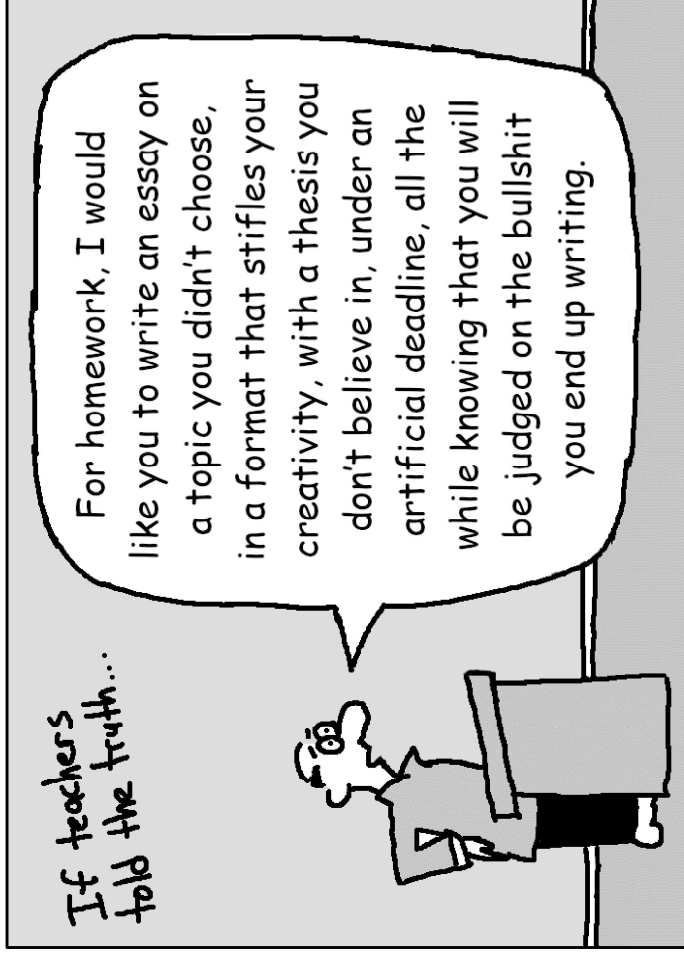


# WELCOME TO YOUR DISORIENTATION

“The most overwhelming reality of school is control. School controls the way you spend your time, how you behave, what you read, and to a large extent what you think.”

“All the time you are in school, you learn through experience how to live in a dictatorship. In school you shut your notebook when the bell rings. You do not speak unless granted permission. You are guilty until proven innocent, and who will prove you innocent? The most constant and thorough thing students in school experience – and learn – is the antithesis of democracy.”

-Grace Llewellyn



One of school's main functions is to sort students into winners and losers.

But that is unacceptable.

Because if we don't join together soon,  
we will all become losers.

If you graduate from Yale,  
you will be set for life.\*

\* which may not be long due to democratic collapse. Sorry about that.



Peter Gray

## A PLACE FOR LEARNING?

By the time they are 11 or 12 years old, most [students] are realistically cynical about the idea that school is fundamentally a place for learning. They realize that much of what they are required to do is senseless and that they will forget most of what they are tested on shortly after the test.

They see little direct connection — because there usually is none — between their school assignments and the real world in which they live. They learn that their own questions and interests don't count. What counts are their abilities to provide the “correct” answers to questions that they did not ask and that do not interest them. [...]

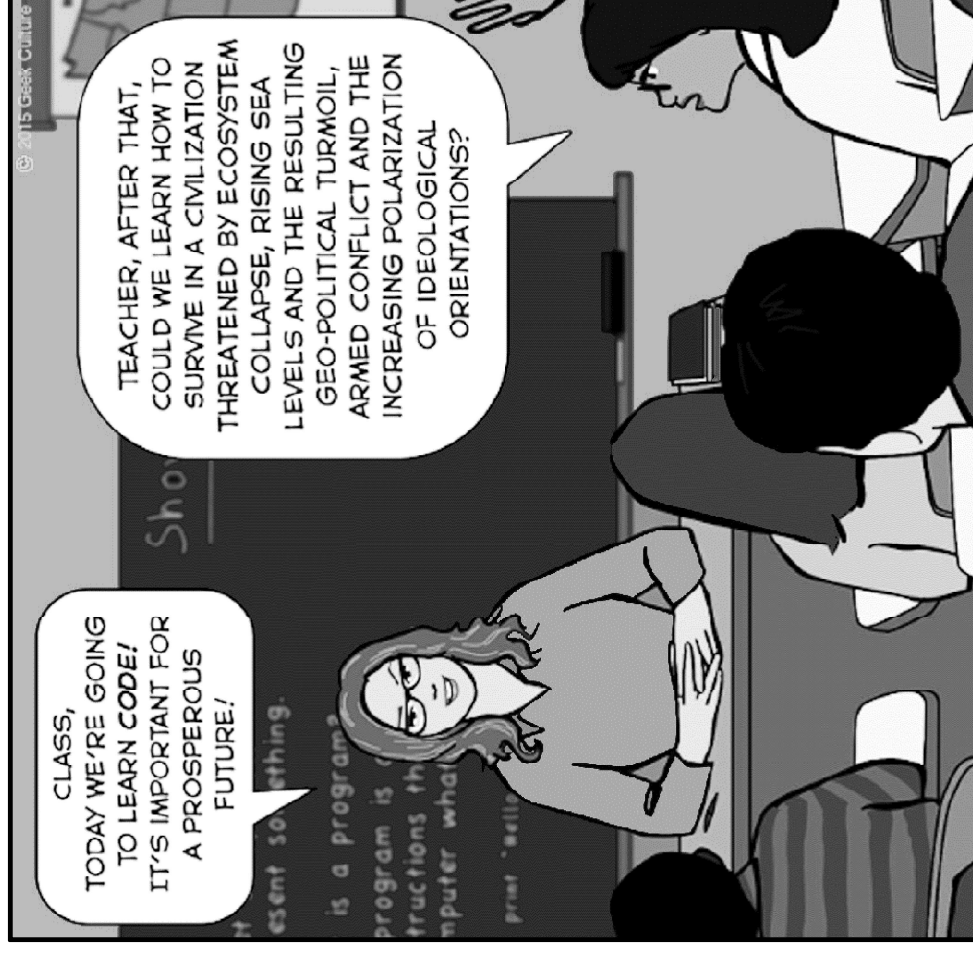
To succeed, students must acquire just the limited information and shallow understanding that is needed to perform well on the tests; anything beyond that is wasted time.

## MINDFUCK

Ecosystems are collapsing. Inequality is rising. Our democracy is under threat. But incredibly, our schools are staying the same.

As a result, you are being trained for a future that will not exist. And even worse, your training is getting in the way of the lessons you actually need. Lessons in love, rebellion, and solidarity. Lessons in creating a livable future.

This is a mindfuck, to say the least. Because as civilization is racing off a cliff, you are stuck in school, filling out scantrons.



What did you learn in school today?



So much! I learned to hate poetry. I learned to despise the quadratic formula. And I learned to loathe mitosis.





Nikhil Goyal  
**BULLYING**

Anti-bullying programs are based on the assumption that there is something intrinsically wrong with children and that their inclination to bully others in something that demands reforming by adults; if we somehow just teach them to be kinder to one another and to stop being bystanders when witnessing someone else being bullied, we'll solve the bullying issue in school.

That couldn't be more wrong.

Until the school environment is radically transformed, every anti-bullying initiative will fall flat. Virtually everyone who has commented on bullying in schools has committed a grave error by failing to draw a link between the design of schools—age segregation, prison-like atmosphere, authoritarian governing structure, and deprivation of freedom and rights—to the acts of aggression. Our schools are veritable petri dishes for bullying behavior.

**“Children who are beaten will in turn give beatings, those who are intimidated will be intimidating, those who are humiliated will impose humiliation, and those whose souls are murdered will murder.”**

**Alice Miller**

Lark

## **CONSUMED BY SCHOOL**

There is something about being in school that makes you feel as if your whole life is consumed by it. You wake up at 6am (7am if you're lucky) and groggily pull yourself out of bed. Then comes the bus, the bells, the chatter, the tests, the anxiety, the boredom, the momentary elation, the bus again. After seven hours in the building, you have another two hours of homework and three hours of extracurriculars.

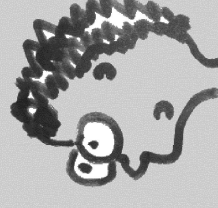
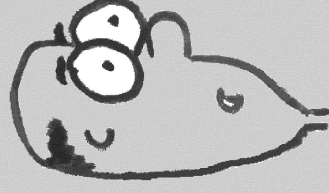
Life is utterly consumed by a stifled sense of living. There is no escape. You have to do this all again tomorrow.

Someday we ought to wake up to real life and realize that school was nothing but a mirage designed to trick us into believing that society must continue as it is. If we believe capitalism is killing the world, then why do we send children to a place that is meant to bring them into that grand fight against life and humanity? If we are in school, why do we still go to school? In a society so rotten, we often agree to rot with it to survive.

What do you want to be when you grow up?

**An honest, brave, compassionate human being.**

No... I mean, how do you want to sell your labor?

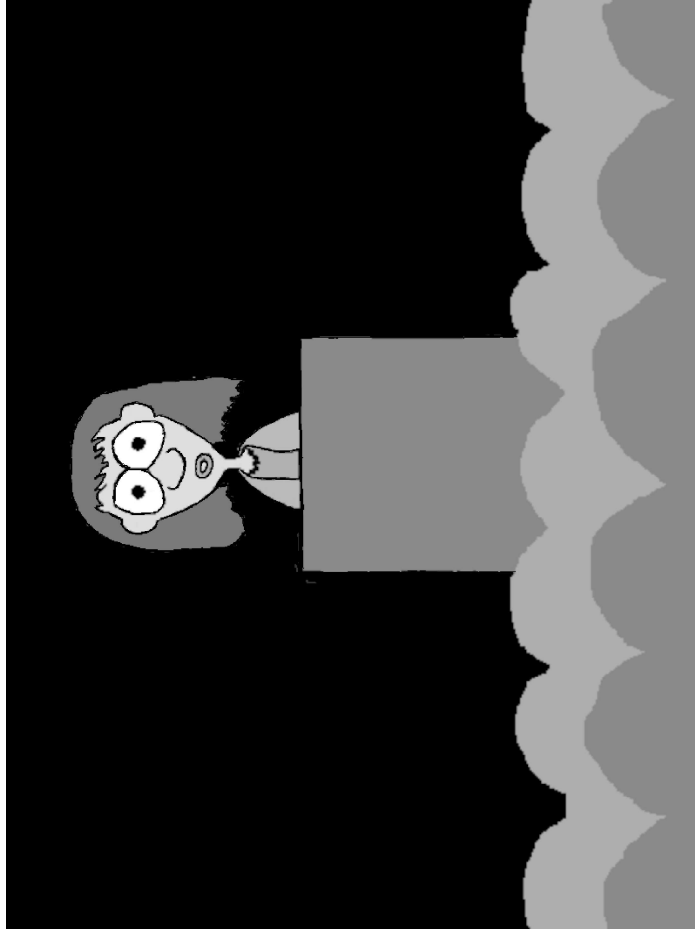


Alan Watts

## THE RAT RACE

We are breeding a type of human being incapable of living in the present—that is, of really living. For unless one is able to live fully in the present, the future is a hoax. There is no point whatever in making plans for a future you will never be able to enjoy. When your plans mature, you will still be living for some other future beyond. You will never, never be able to sit back with full contentment and say, "Now, I've arrived!"

Your entire education has deprived you of this capacity because it was preparing you for the future, instead of showing you how to be alive now.



I know school is no fun, but let me tell you this. If you are willing to postpone your happiness for 50 more years, your retirement party is going to be **EPIC**.

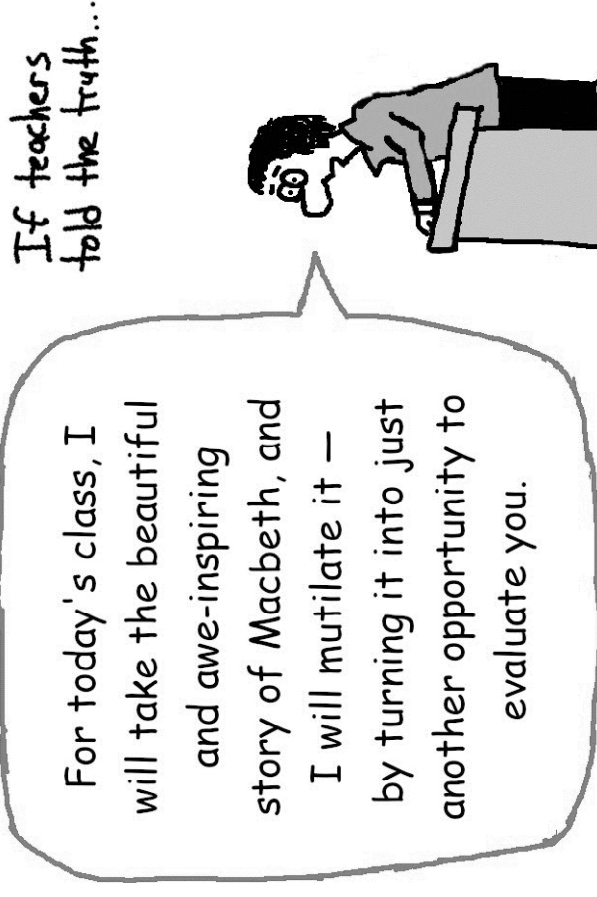
Carol Black

## WATCHED AND MEASURED

There is something profoundly deadening to a curious, engaged child about the feeling of being watched and measured, or even, some studies suggest, the anticipation of being measured. [...]

This business of being constantly scrutinized and compared to others does something insidious to the life of a child. I've seen kids drop what they're doing in an instant when they realize they're being observed in an appraising way. A wall goes up. The lights go out. As psychologist Peter Gray puts it,

"Evaluation, when it is not asked for, and when it has consequences as it does in school, is a threat. It narrows the mind... it inhibits new learning, new insights, and creative thought—the very processes that some people think school is supposed to promote."



For today's class, I will take the beautiful and awe-inspiring story of Macbeth, and I will mutilate it — by turning it into just another opportunity to evaluate you.

If teachers told the truth...