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### **AGAINST SCHOOL : A SUMMARY**

Our natural state is rife with prodigious capacity for genius, according to John Taylor Gatto, author of "Against School", first published in the September 2003 issue of Harper's Magazine. The genius potential, he argues, is however critically compromised by a propensity for apathy, which is part self-inflicted and part engineered by an inherited scholastic system of Prussian provenance.

Gatto insists that this system produces mediocrity on an industrial scale, marked by lockstep response and intellectual impotence. The schooling complex, he suggests, has been deliberately calibrated to dull creative potential, resulting in the vacuous existence of malleable citizenry with limited attention spans, and even more limited career options.

Gatto candidly asserts his *raison d'être* in the essay title. He is unrepentantly opposed to the tuition complex engendering and anesthetizing failure through systemic stratification, which is based on learning outcomes weighed with biased pre-sets, securing a pigeonhole life sentence.

Compelling warrants include verifiable sources, name-checking individuals with stellar credentials including Woodrow Wilson, effectively advocating for an American caste system.

Gatto clearly delineates a Dickensian intersection between an incarceration-style learning culture and the assembly line. He identifies the programmed submission of students, which promotes cloning, and allows for fixed ranking on a life-destiny matrix. He offers that this is due to an ability-obsolescence preset with restricted amplitude, the fetishizing of vapid consumer gratification and advocacy for in-strata coupling, all but guaranteeing intellectual eugenics.

The author's critical hypothesis is however not a self-fulfilling prophecy. A lifeline in the form of a Damascus moment is ours to seize, thereby emancipating our children and, if it's not too late, ourselves, from the seemingly preordained toxic tedium.