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(Greenie)  
Former Pupil  
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Particularly - Lame Ducks

I, like the majority of people have been brought up to believe that the education system would pare my way into the future with gold, and give me for companions both knowledge and respect, sadly however this was not to be the case.

One of my first memories of school was the ritualistic gathering of a uniform, for which my elder sisters wardrobe was robbed of its maroon and grey heirloom to be passed ceremonially down to me, I received it with a humble smile, and wondered of its fate.

Its fate was short lived, for in the third year of school it was abolished and neglected once again to the depths of yet another wardrobe. I personally thought this a good move. In my experience the years between the ages of eleven and sixteen proved to be years of experimentation, I felt a need to express myself more, both in appearance and attitude, I wanted to form my own opinions from the facts I was given, so I found uniforms limited expression and forced me to identify unnaturally with a large organisation.

It was also at this time when I became aware that a lot of the practical work I did in various lessons went unacknowledged, this worried me for I couldn't understand how my work could be accurately assessed if it wasn't read, I also noticed, more frequently in English, that questions aimed at creative description were limited to descriptions that the teacher considered creative, I failed my mock English exam because my interpretation of a prism didn't conform to the examiners imagination. This made me conscious of a difference between the priorities of the school and myself, and I somehow linked this difference with inferiority, perhaps because I felt intimidated by my minority status within the school. I felt as if I was being educated more as a means to an end, when I had previously thought education was a foundation on which to build and develop ones own character and abilities.

I was disillusioned with the lack of time and conversation with the teachers, I would have liked to have felt genuine respect as opposed to obligatory response born from discipline, I felt a sympathy for the plight of the teacher, to remain true to the cause whilst still inevitably functioning beneath the blanket of conformity under which they originally studied. Fortunately I had one or two teachers deserving of my respect and admiration, the difference the level of communication, I learnt a lot more from conversation than I did from dictation. Of these teachers I still think fondly. When at last unavoidably I found myself staring blankly at the clock on the classroom wall I realised I was faced with convincing the examination board of my intelligence within the confines of an exam paper and two hours.....

The results of my exams were average, not unlike my education and my certificates, lost forever in the dust of some filing cabinet. (not regretfully.....)

## SUMMARY

I personally feel the schooling system would benefit from a greater degree of awareness of the individual needs of the pupil, to stereotype a young mind over a long period of time must surely hinder his or her natural growth or progression.

And finally, with regard to the examination system, improvements must be made to enable a wider range of abilities and talents to be integrated within the examination curriculum. It is no longer realistic to mass produce a hopeful working class who have no grounding for creative outlet in the disappointing event of unemployment.

"School is all well and good, as long as I don't let it interfere with my education"

Mark Twain