

**Aronowitz, Stanley. *Against Schooling: For an Education that Matters*. Paradigm Publishers, 2008. Pp. 208. \$24.95 (paper). ISBN 978-1594515033**

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This book, the most recent in Aronowitz's corpus of twenty-five, is a collection of essays and speeches that have previously appeared in a variety of other venues, revised and with a new introduction. In many ways, *Against Schooling* is not a conventional academic book, even as it fits squarely into the Aronowitz corpus. Though theory can be found here, in a pair of concluding chapters that read Freire, Gramsci, and others, it does not aim to develop theoretical understanding. Though Aronowitz ably compiles data to support his argument, this is not a work of empirical social science. Instead, it is a call to arms. I intend to read it in that light and against my own experience as a sociologist at an underfunded comprehensive public college who has also spent time in both the elite research university and the elite liberal arts college. *Against Schooling* has three main thrusts. First, the text begins with Aronowitz's memoir of his own family and how it shaped his education. His story is a model for what we in sociology call the sociological imagination, the practice of making connections between our own private lives and the public issues that surround them. But the story is interesting for other reasons as well. Aronowitz was able to collect his academic credentials and develop a long teaching career without spending much time in the conventional classrooms that most academics occupy. Perhaps this explains why he is so very critical of those classrooms.

The majority of the text concerns Aronowitz's critiques of the contemporary education system, a system, he argues, that has become focused on schooling and credentialism rather than the real work of education. This section also considers the history and future promise of academic unionism. Finally, the last two chapters of the text delve into theory. Aronowitz clearly believes that social theory should be at the heart of all educational enterprises, and so he ends the book on that note.

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