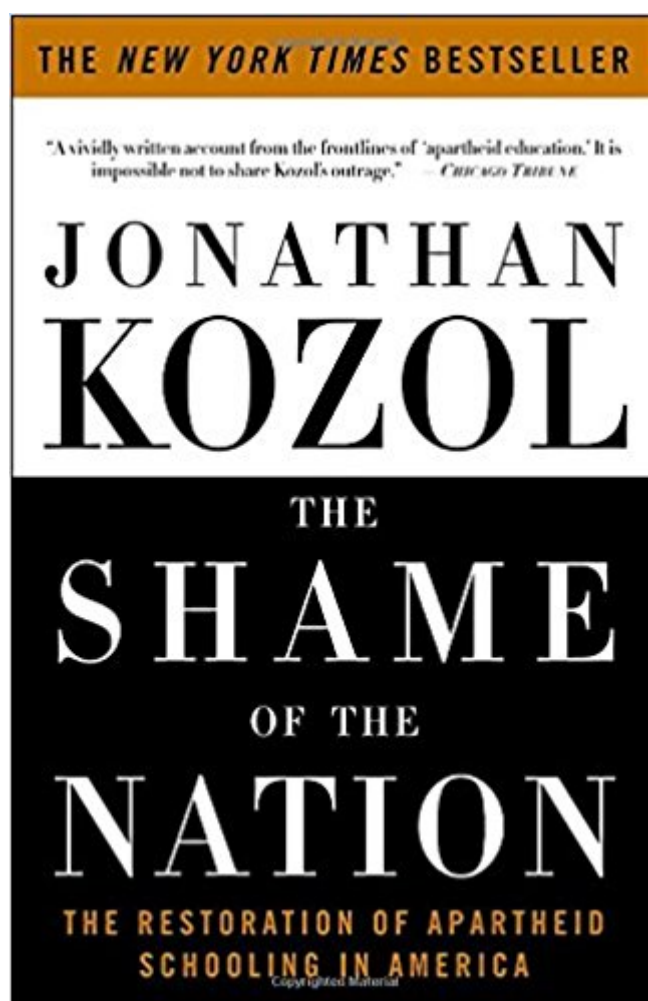


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# The Shame Of The Nation: The Restoration Of Apartheid Schooling In America



## Synopsis

Since the early 1980s, when the federal courts began dismantling the landmark ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, segregation of black children has reverted to its highest level since 1968. In many inner-city schools, a stick-and-carrot method of behavioral control traditionally used in prisons is now used with students. Meanwhile, as high-stakes testing takes on pathological and punitive dimensions, liberal education has been increasingly replaced by culturally barren and robotic methods of instruction that would be rejected out of hand by schools that serve the mainstream of society. Filled with the passionate voices of children, principals, and teachers, and some of the most revered leaders in the black community, *The Shame of the Nation* pays tribute to those undefeated educators who persist against the odds, but directly challenges the chilling practices now being forced upon our urban systems. In their place, Kozol offers a humane, dramatic challenge to our nation to fulfill at last the promise made some 50 years ago to all our youngest citizens.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Public school resegregation is a "national horror hidden in plain view," writes former educator turned public education activist Kozol (*Savage Inequalities*, *Amazing Grace*). Kozol visited 60 schools in 11 states over a five-year period and finds, despite the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*, many schools serving black and Hispanic children are spiraling backward to the pre-*Brown* era. These schools lack the basics: clean classrooms, hallways and restrooms; up-to-date books in good condition; and appropriate laboratory supplies. Teachers and administrators eschew creative

coursework for rote learning to meet testing and accountability mandates, thereby "embracing a pedagogy of direct command and absolute control" usually found in "penal institutions and drug rehabilitation programs." As always, Kozol presents sharp and poignant portraits of the indignities vulnerable individuals endure. "You have all the things and we do not have all the things," one eight-year-old Bronx boy wrote the author. In another revealing exchange, a cynical high school student tells his classmate, a young woman with college ambitions who was forced into hair braiding and sewing classes, "You're ghetto-so you sew." Kozol discovers widespread acceptance for the notion that "schools in ghettoized communities must settle for a different set of academic and career goals" than schools serving middle-and upper-class children. Kozol tempers this gloom with hopeful interactions between energetic teachers and receptive children in schools where all is not lost. But these "treasured places" don't hide the fact, Kozol argues, that school segregation is still the rule for poor minorities, or that Kozol, and the like-minded politicians, educators and advocates he seeks out, believe a new civil rights movement will be necessary to eradicate it. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Kozol has been one of the most relentless critics of educational and social inequalities in the United States. After 40 years, neither his energy nor his outrage appears to be exhausted. In turning his gaze to school segregation, he discovers what should be obvious to anyone who has spent time in public schools—they are more segregated than ever. Kozol's research and reporting is so extensive that no one can challenge his conclusions: Separate is indeed unequal, and as a society we are robbing successive generations of poor, minority children of their only lifeline out of poverty. Kozol is, unfortunately, better at diagnosing the problem than prescribing a solution, but his optimism remains untempered. Copyright © 2004 Phillips & Nelson Media, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is quintessential Kozol. No one familiar with any of Kozol's other work will fail to recognize the crusading journalistic stance that Kozol typically takes in his work. He does a lot of observation and describes what he sees. He also delves into the history, statistics and other backstory material behind the stories he presents. He moves from example to example, trying not to let too much commentary get in the way of letting the story present itself. But he makes no pretences of being "objective" or "unbiased". He clearly has an agenda, perhaps even a mission - one to expose the seamy underside of how the richest country on earth treats "the least of these my brethren". This

time Kozol's focus is on the educational system and the de facto return of segregated schooling, especially in urban areas, and the failure of the dream of *Brown v. the Board of Education*, despite the fact that *Brown* is still nominally the law of the land. Kozol shines his spotlight on how it is that 60 years after the landmark Supreme Court case, many schools are nearly as segregated as they were the day the decision was handed down. In fact, segregation is once again worsening, as funding cuts are disproportionately impacting "low-performing" (usually high minority population) schools, leading the more affluent (white) to pull their children out. Furthermore, laws designed to promote integration and equitable funding are either sunseting or are being overturned by the courts, and charter schools are arising that aggravate the disparity between the "pedagogy of poverty", how poor and minority children are educated, vs. how affluent children are educated. Kozol spends page after page in the first two-thirds of the book documenting conditions he often finds when he visits schools in poor and minority neighborhoods: the lack of textbooks, the unsafe and unsanitary physical conditions from leaking roofs to unusable bathrooms to entire wings being shut off and condemned. He documents the "tortured dignity" of teachers who do their best to provide decent education and a positive influence to children under such conditions, but who struggle with burnout and top-down imposed "no excuses", rigidly controlled curricula and behavior management programs. One teacher, using the mandated system of silent hand gestures to control her class tells Kozol, "I could do this with my dog". But Kozol isn't merely saying that we need to provide better resources or more progressive curricula to poor and minority schools. He is saying that segregation itself is the problem. The conditions he documents would not be tolerated in schools serving predominantly white children. As the "Brown" court found, there is no such thing as "separate but equal". Segregated education is inherently harmful to the minority group (and, he hints, to the majority groups as well, albeit in different ways). Furthermore, Kozol spends nearly a chapter exploring the impact of a later Supreme Court decision, *Rodriguez*, which ruled that states are not obligated to provide "equal" education, merely to ensure that all students receive "adequate" instruction. Hence, we now are actually one step behind even the horrendous *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision because we no longer need to pretend to equality, only adequacy. One man's "adequate", however, is another man's "shameful". Some reviewers have criticized Kozol for being short on solutions. However, Kozol is quite explicit about his solution. Integration (along with the resultant equitable funding) is the only way the imbalances will ever be fairly worked out. Yes, in the meantime, poor and minority schools need to be made more human and progressive. All schools should receive equitable funding (Note: "equitable" does not mean "equal" - the funding should follow the need, such that schools in low-income neighborhoods should get more funding to deal

with greater needs, which is exactly the opposite of the No Child Left Behind/Race to the Top system in which the most affluent schools are "rewarded" for having the highest test scores. But in Kozol's view, there should be neither low-income nor affluent schools, much less "black" or "white" schools, as integration is the key step. Not that such integration will come easily, nor will it just happen. It's going to involve a new mass movement, comparable to the Civil rights Movement. It's a matter of more and more people waking up to the reality of what's happening and deciding to do the right thing. O one can do it for us - for you or for me. It takes committed people working across geographical and socio-economic barriers. Funny, but when the current batch of "reformers" - the Michelle Rhee's and the Bill Gates and the Sam Walton's of the world - claim that education is "the civil rights issue of our time", I don't think that that's really what they have in mind. The first step is to get informed and the second step is to get angry. Reading THE SHAME OF THE NATION can help kickstart both of those steps and I recommend it highly. But it can't end there. Too often the problem seems overwhelming, so we shrug our shoulders and focus on our own children. But Kozol sees inner-city poor and minority children as his children too, not someone else's problem. Race and socio-economic status may be obstacles, but they shouldn't be barriers. Our educational system should provide a quality education to all children - future voting citizens of our democracy - and should be the pride of the richest country on earth; it shouldn't be the shame of the nation.

This book made me cry because it itemizes the very real, and very current divergence in the learning experiences between differing races of American children. Kozol has been an educator, researcher, author, and speaker for many years. His bleak look at the educational disparities between the opportunities for children of color and white children will break your heart. His irrefutable data back up his claims that we REALLY MUST do something differently within our public educational system to bring parity to all children.

Great read and eye opener for those who think segregation is a thing of the past. This book will show you the insides of Americas worse schools.

reality

This book really opens your eyes and helps you to see how corrupt education in America is. This book is well written and uses a number of experiences as well as evidence to showcase the many discrepancies in our educational system and how it affects everyone in a negative light.

Preachy Jonathan Kozol is great at seeing the problem, but extremely weak at offering solutions. The fact is that one-size-fits-none, cookie-cutter solutions to education will never be the solution, and until you take the unions out of the equation, we will never see long-term, individualized solutions to the nation's K-12 problems.

This is a very interesting book to read as much of the problems that we all may be aware of in the school system in urban areas are described very well. I took a star off because the writer goes on some unnecessary rants that make the book longer than it should be..

"No Child's Behind Left" or "No Child Left Behind" is described in this book as a system that is not working... in fact, this book gives an example of how NCLB was LIED about in Houston, just to get the broken system to be NATIONAL! This is a very interesting read for those who have children in public school. It tells us why some schools are granted great amounts of money and others are left alone, for the corporate wolves to pick the weak from the herd. White, black and hispanic alike should be concerned with what Mr. Kozol has to say.

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