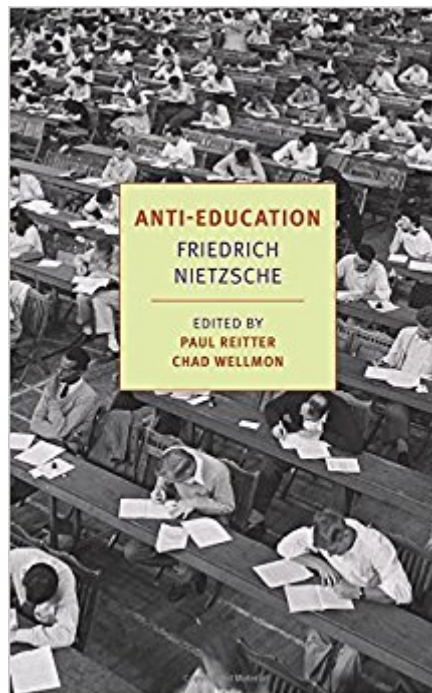


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Anti-Education: On The Future Of Our Educational Institutions (New York Review Books Classics)



Synopsis

AN NYRB Classics Original In 1869, at the age of twenty-four, the precociously brilliant Friedrich Nietzsche was appointed to a professorship of classical philology at the University of Basel. He seemed marked for a successful and conventional academic career. Then the philosophy of Schopenhauer and the music of Wagner transformed his ambitions. The genius of such thinkers and makers "the kind of genius that had emerged in ancient Greece" this alone was the touchstone for true understanding. But how was education to serve genius, especially in a modern society marked more and more by an unholy alliance between academic specialization, mass-market journalism, and the militarized state? Something more than sturdy scholarship was called for. A new way of teaching and questioning, a new philosophy . . . What that new way might be was the question Nietzsche broached in five vivid, popular public lectures in Basel in 1872. *Anti-Education* presents a provocative and timely reckoning with what remains one of the central challenges of the modern world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although it may seem a matter of recent concern, the debate about the state of education in America is one that has been ongoing along similar grounds for decades and across many countries. Friedrich Nietzsche is now the bogeyman of philosophy, but in his early years he was a rising academic and tackled this same subject. At the age of twenty-seven, he gave a series of public lectures in Basel, Switzerland and later edited them into a book. Perpetually revising his work,

the material was never published during Nietzsche's lifetime, but was recently printed by the New York Review of Books in a translation from Damion Searls. Succinctly titled *Anti-Education*, the critique Nietzsche offers is much more nuanced than that, and has a great deal of relevance for our time. Nietzsche himself offers the best summary of his outlook: "No one would strive for education if they knew how unbelievably small the number of truly educated people actually was, or ever could be. But that it was impossible to achieve even this small quota of truly educated people unless a great mass of people were tricked, seduced, into going against their nature and pursuing an education." Although he offers the fiction that he is merely recounting an overheard dialogue between a philosopher and student, both are stand-ins for his own views on education. From the beginning of instruction, Nietzsche says educators are making mistakes. Giving a student the intellectual independence of the essay and then striking down their confidence with critical marks is a recipe for disaster. A proper teacher should offer rigorous, uniform instruction that drills proper grammar into the student until they physically wretch at poor sentence structure. The old adage that muddled writing hints at a muddled mind might be an apt summary.

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