

Benign Violence: Education in and beyond the Age of Reason

Allen



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Education is a violent act, yet this violence is concealed by its good intent. Education presents itself as a distinctly improving, enabling practice. Even its most radical critics assume that education is, at core, an incontestable social good.

Setting education in its political context, this book, now in paperback, offers a history of good intentions, ranging from the birth of modern schooling and modern examination, to the rise (and fall) of meritocracy. In challenging all that is well-intentioned in education, it reveals how our educational commitments are always underwritten by violence. Our highest ideals have the lowest origins.

Seeking to unsettle a settled conscience, Benign Violence: Education in and beyond the Age of Reason is designed to disturb the reader. Education constitutes us as subjects; we owe our existence to its violent inscriptions. Those who refuse or rebel against our educational present must begin by objecting to the subjects we have become.

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