



## NARRATION SICKNESS: AN INTRODUCTION

NICKY TISO

“Education is suffering from narration sickness.”

- Paulo Friere

“The swerve that makes change possible is the clotted moment of collision between what’s expected and unexpected, a crisis of unintelligibility, a moment of indeterminacy. A moment that invites the making of meaning.”

- Joan Retallack

The practice of writing creatively is an intensive intellectual labor whose value I want to reunite with the world from which it has been divided. I trace the disembodiment of creativity from education, poetry from society, to the alienating social strictures of capitalism, which tries to make critical thought irrelevant to reality. My poetry follows this war of wanting a space outside the exchange economy where it can still exist in a relationship with others, a space between intimacy and society. This quest for the freedom to re-narrate what education can look like depends ultimately on dialog but also a transformation of what that means. Such a form “puts knowing the world back together with changing the world, and at the same time unites an ideal of praxis with a conception of production.”<sup>1</sup> This may be different than the normative ways we’re conditioned to read, and indeed it’s just that normativity I want to question. I’m not interested in answers so much as what questions can undermine them, so that the conversation can continue, so that we can have a shared experience in this text outside positions of mastery.

I’m going to give you an experience you’re not prepared for; it requires taking a chance, the same kind of chance I took in documenting my own unintelligibility. I’m going to give you a kind of knowledge that cannot simply be received, but must be constructed. It will be uncomfortable, and I’m going to ask you to embrace the incoming irregularity on the faith that you will in the end feel

---

1. Fredric Jameson, afterword to *Aesthetics and Politics*, ed. Fredric Jameson (New York: Verso, 1977), 204.

freer. And if you don't, I'm going to ask: Was it really a loss? Because if you haven't taken a chance, is anything at stake?

In the drafts that follow I progressively and intuitively cut-up and redistribute my own language originally composed from class notes. I end up making more sense than when trying to be intellectually aware. Being open to accident and chance allows something other than the brain to influence one's writing process. This can be extremely liberating; our thinking habits get revealed, giving us the opportunity to change them. Chance allows for infinite possibilities of expression; it taps into the creativity we all have. The story I'm going to tell is one of my voice's desire to escape the fate of the page it is bound to, and how this depends on activating you, the reader, so that our relationship does not succumb to the indifference of its distance. Who I am gets lost and re-made, complicating identity. These drafts chart this exploration; they are a kind of map that I hope you cannot only follow but alter. Use this map to chart your own territory, so long as you're willing to share.

#### WORKS CITED

Friere, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum, 1970.

Jameson, Fredric. Afterword. *Aesthetics and Politics*. Edited by Fredric Jameson. New York: Verso, 1977.

Retallack, Joan. *The Poethical Wager*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

## NARRATION SICKNESS: 1

Typical knowledge manages productions of worlds, tense worlds.

Minimized interests reveal humanitarianism.

Easily led concepts individualize society.

Humans implicitly spectate, surround objects with disaster.

Education is a process of information adapting purposes for (verbal) action.

Use relationships as a kind of thinking.

Use dialog as a kind of revolution.

Instinctive relationships oppress.

What do you most want people to know about you?

What do you least want people to know about you?

Is this a kind of thinking?

Is thinking a kind of action?

Has this been a positive, decentering, worthwhile pedagogical experience so far?

Experiences can be marginalized, or staged as marginal.

That's the point.

To objectify how.

That is very nearly the way in which I intended it to be done.

Open but not festering.

To objectify one must open.

Once open, prone to infection.

The mind acts like a disease upon the body.

How does the body point to what it wants without lines emerging?

Because it won't fit moving on nor will it disappear.

What serves as preservatives in the meaning of a word?

Labor is all night long.

## NARRATION SICKNESS: 2

is Education the exerted surface of emotion's wish to escape?

A Voice That will sway. cannot be named.

without becoming incrementally wronged?

what are the trajectories responsible for directing The voice

Might right angles lost in grey, uneven things lead you to a mood.

The mechanism of flesh, compressed

What's circular should feel misplaced.

We are made of a false totality, an evacuated interior of the intact, ossified.

How's that for humanitarianism?

Always answer with

Don't let instinctive relationships oppress.

what it means to be natural?

A series is closed when There are only as many questions as there are answers.

Experiences can be irrefutable.

It's hard to remove A voice from known knowledge. without it becoming prone to

point to what it wants

If it won't fit moving on nor will it disappear can it do what it wants more than once

What

without lines emerging?

material is property.

Without becoming what serves as preservatives

How does the body

in the meaning of a word?

reject symmetry

this involve asking about

What do you most want people to know about you?

Can you

do

What

one must

to open what acts like a disease upon the body

without recapitulating

infection?

Has this been a positive, decentering, worthwhile pedagogical experience so far?

What do you least want people to know about you?

Is that a tense, surrounded object?

Its form

Easily led

by

what it means to be natural.

Typical knowledge manages

what sways?

with a name

is

Its name.

yourself

Is this a kind of thinking?

Is thinking a kind of action?

When does how we are made of to be named become for a moment silence?

Is the point

marginalized

, or staged as marginal.

world.

circulates unequally outside

How is what

will name other voices

productions of

society.

govern

them.

that is very nearly the way in which I intended it to be done

Open, but not festering

Labor is all night long.