Nikko Valerio

Unit 1 Narrative

Education Narrative

Being born in the Philippines to a wonderful, caring mother and her humble abode; I was raised to hold great significance to education at a young age. In my mother’s perspective she meant a formal education, school and all that. She introduced me to books and reading as soon as I could speak in coherent sentences, prepping me for the harsh realities of preschool, I guess. I caught on quick, and in fact apparently enjoyed it quite a lot, Mom’s family photo album could attest for that, because I don’t remember a thing. What she didn’t realize, is that, in simple act of giving, she awakened in me a thirst for learning and another form of education, self-education. Of course, I had no idea for those notions and its meanings at that time, but looking back into it with my current perspective, this was at the point in time my relationship with reading and education started. This was also around the time I got really into animals, obsessed even, which can be attributed to my exposure to them through books. There is something amazing about them, and I mean all of them. Humans are no doubt incredible, and our achievements are incomparable but we as a species also must admit that we are a little insane. Animals on the other hand are like simple mechanical flesh machines made through the process of evolution for the sole purpose to survive in a world that is always trying to kill them. There is no time for pondering about what life means, every second is constant danger. Nature is legit a free for all. I was fascinated, and whenever I would get a chance, through either a book a newspaper or a magazine, I would scour the pages looking for any excerpt about a species to read. I owe my love for learning to my mother, books and animals. But this isn’t what this essay is about. Rather this is about my fall from grace away from education as a whole and the grueling amount of time it would take to come back to it again, like a lost lover.

I moved to the United States, Long Island from the Philippines when I was seven. This move changed my world, literally. The culture shock was immense and right from the airport I was exposed to the many peoples of this world, and it was a great feeling. It wasn’t like I didn’t know that there were other races, but unless you see the diversity for the first time like that, it is like some fantasy novel in real life. Like Plato’s allegorical cave, we only know what we know. Moving here was an incredible experience and I could never be so thankful to have had the opportunity to do so, but life is no fantasy, and I am assuming, the culmination of traumas and cons being the result of moving to a new world helped lead me astray from the right paths when it came to myself and especially my education. Now this “stray” path does not really mean anything serious, nor I have any stories of being, I guess you can call a delinquent. It just means I have strayed into a path who I didn’t really want to be and my lack of awareness of what really mattered, in this case, education.

I was always a boy who really liked school, I’ve always had an ideal version of it in my imagination. I had scholars and philosophers in mind when it came to school and have always admired how wise they were. “How could they know so many things” I would tell myself. I learned about Albert Einstein through I book I bought from one of those scholastic book fairs and was introduced to physics and chemistry. This was in elementary school, and I had no idea what I was doing, but I wanted to be just like Einstein

and created mathematical equations that had no meaning nor made any sense. My interest in animals expanded even more so, as the educational books about them in the United States are much more in depth and numerous. This version of me persisted throughout my elementary years up until the end of middle school. Highschool is when I believe I strayed away from education, myself and where I created my own allegorical cave about life. There is not one specific event that changed it all, but I believe a culmination and a lack of awareness to the traumas that were building up in my psyche. Living in a new environment, I believe also had a great effect on my parents which resulted in them being stuck in the mentality to constantly monitor me and my sister. I understand now what they were going through, but younger me did not have the capacity to understand that. We were sheltered and lacked experiences a normal high school kid would go through. In addition to going through puberty and that human need to constantly fit in, this affected my confidence in all aspects of my life. I grew passive, my curiosity diminished and my interests for learning and reading slowly faded away; along with that, a hatred for school. I don’t remember anything I’ve learned from high school, mainly because I didn’t even try. I did not study for the tests, nor did any homework or projects. And if I did, it would be superficial work at best. I did not learn anything about education from high school, all I learned was how to do work in the easiest way I can get a passing grade, rather than putting my focus in one work and giving it my all. The problem with that notion is that it not only effects on how you learn things, but it seeps into all aspects of your life. There’s no focus and no discipline.

It took a few years for me to finally get out of that rut or should I say state of mind. And since it was so ingrained on me, it is something almost as if a habit, a default mode if you will. So, it is still a working progress. But I am digressing, what I learned through my experience is education is more than our school system. It is a life long process that never really ends, and I think the education system is an integral part of, is at the least, it introduces society the fundamentals self-education.