



Obstruction

Nick Salvato

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Can a bout of laziness or a digressive spell actually open up paths to creativity and unexpected insights? In *Obstruction* Nick Salvato suggests that for those engaged in scholarly pursuits laziness, digressiveness, and related experiences can be paradoxically generative. Rather than being dismissed as hindrances, these obstructions are to be embraced, clung to, and reoriented. Analyzing an eclectic range of texts and figures, from the Greek Cynics and Denis Diderot to Dean Martin and the Web series *Drunk History*, Salvato finds value in five obstructions: embarrassment, laziness, slowness, cynicism, and digressiveness. Whether listening to Tori Amos's music as a way to think about embarrassment, linking the MTV series *Daria* to using cynicism to negotiate higher education's corporatized climate, or examining the affect of slowness in Kelly Reichardt's films, Salvato expands our conceptions of each obstruction and shows ways to transform them into useful provocations. With a unique, literary, and self-reflexive voice, Salvato demonstrates the importance of these debased obstructions and shows how they may support alternative modes of intellectual activity. In doing so, he impels us to rethink the very meanings of thinking, work, and value.

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