



## Dis-eased

**John Ralph Tuccitto**

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*Dis-eased is a work rich in yearning as it works toward its singular creative expressions.*

*Dis-eased* by John Ralph Tuccitto is an intriguing volume that combines a personal memoir with a treatise on the use of technology in today's society.

Tuccitto is a user experience designer, engaged in a type of work that seeks to enhance the interactions between humans and computers, making them more pleasurable and accessible. As the autobiographical portions of *Dis-eased* reveal, he also has bipolar disorder.

In this complex book, these two facets of the author's life come together, paired with examples of his intricate artwork. This intertwining of topics and methods becomes a way to explore the intersections of technology and mental health when it comes to living a meaningful life.

The book begins with an in-depth graphic organizer that lays out the myriad ways the volume can be read. In flow-chart style, readers are encouraged to "choose their own adventure" by starting and completing the text with their choice of three beginnings and endings.

Throughout, the book also offers asides that instruct or suggest where readers could go next in the volume, depending on how they received the content of the just-read section. It is evident from these moments that Tuccitto is intensely aware of the fact that not all of what he has written here will be easily digested.

Indeed, there is an overarching pessimism pervading the text that many may be unwilling or unable to work through. This is especially true of material that dissects the use of technology in modern society. As the book itself implies, it is nearly impossible for people to see their reliance on screens and useful interface designs objectively—or even at all.

As such, some of what the book has to say may fall on deaf ears, as it is difficult to see a problem when users continually experience feedback that reinforces their behavior with technology.

It is Tuccitto's willingness to be vulnerable and honest about his work and his mental illness, however, that helps to make it clear that something important is being said here. There is undeniable truth in the book's declarations around humanity's "mutual insanity," and in its discussion of thinking "inside the box," which is thought provoking and original.

The book's language is dense. Though sections are brief, each paragraph is packed with thick sentences that don't always connect in conventional ways. Those who have worked in jobs similar to the author's and those who have faced similar health challenges will likely find the text the most accessible.

Alongside its bevy of plainspoken moments, there is an interesting lyricism to the language and tone of *Dis-eased*. It is a work rich in yearning as it works towards its singular creative expressions.

MARGARET FEDDER (October 24, 2017)

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