

FrameWork 5/26

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To Become a Reader

One is, of course, born with frames.

Hartman says that as the 19th century tipped into the 20th, W.E.B. Du Bois formulated a sociological table, and in the light of sociology, unmarried “alive otherwise” women appeared quite detrimental to the familial unit. In the light of literature, it was a different story. They became women of possibility, and Du Bois learnt to acknowledge that. Du Bois became a different reader over time.

How does one receive instruction

From water? What can water shift? I am at the altar of river, in reverence of an entity so separate from my urban gear-hands, but one that I hope will honour me with readership. I learn that one is invited into readings through the generosity of others, and we receive these invitations

and how are you a formidable / respectful / not arrogant guest?

I strain to read. I strain to consume a history and ask if it is mine.

Why does it matter if it is mine or not? Who wants to consume the secrets of water, and why engage in the hubris of translation?

I strain to understand, and have to discard or disengage or set fire to disciplinary understandings, the 180 degree rule in cinema where the line is imagined to be the restorer of order

But a line can be the whole universe. It really depends on the reader. The water says: can you catch me in reverence? Will you learn your lessons and submit to my depth? Will you revise your laws and formulations in my company? What good will your revisions do to me? Who is in conversation with water?

There is no conversation to be had. Listening is reading. The water asks: Have you thought about reading as something that *you* do? That you do *alone*?

When I become a reader of the sea, I learn you are invited into readings through the generosity of others, and you receive these invitations

and how are you a formidable / respectful / not arrogant guest?

Reading is a house, reading is a prayer, reading is not for conviction, reading is for sensing
reading is for helping someone build a house
reading should not be demolition
reading should be attentive to demolition

FrameWork 5/26

reading is not literal
reading is not fated to a page
reading is superimposition
reading is breathing heavily against a projection
reading is taking
reading is greedy
reading is learning to let go of the greed

and how are you a formidable / respectful / not arrogant guest?

reading is nauseous
reading can also be reversed
reading can also be severed

How immediate can the reader become?

If I move to the projection, I am still rooted here, in the art gallery, separating me from the water through a frame, and a projection,
If I insert my hand into the projection, I realize that I can do material violence to the image and so proximity can be violent.
If I was there on the shore, on the boat, I would have read a different smell.

Sometimes you are only reader from the nearest possible distance.

And then the complete reader would be God, both outside and inside the subject -

So then the polemics of God come into the paradigm of reading - and the curious case of why they chose the first words to come out of angel to be READ? It was so forceful I believe it sent the prophet into shock. So reading can be quite shocking. To force the body to lead, or to yearn the body into leading/reading

The prophet did not have knowledge of letters, and the first divine reading for him did not involve the mechanics of literacy, it was a command that could be fulfilled through repetition, and the text did not appear in writing until years later, so reading is first and foremost divine repetition -

to repeat the world in the way you know and the way you don't know - to repeat the world / word
in your mouth -
and how are you a formidable / respectful / not arrogant guest?

Reading is a reaching
reading is a wishing,
to wish for Phyllis Wheatley's mother like Alice Walker did
and ask her: who mothered this mother? Reading is mothering, birthing into the world

What is the difference between a reader and viewer?

FrameWork 5/26

A viewer is a position of visibility, and the reader animates a corpus of text, and the text/image, viewer-reader, is what is conjured in front of the river who speaks, text/image/audio viewer-reader-hearer, what is common between the organs of reception? Reception is a gift of receiving, the realm of transmission where one can choose to repeat or distort, and violence can be both

the violence on water turns into violence of water, and a misreading can have dire consequences on history and memory -

and how are you a formidable / respectful / not arrogant guest?

Reading does for memory the act of retrieval
reading is a family home suddenly rushing back to the paraphernalia of the cerebral
reading is a gathering
reading is holding
reading is transforming

I don't know how to not be a fearful reader sometimes
the scare alive and well in my spine, because, like many others, I think that,

home can be a shark

no one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark you only run for the border when you see the whole city running as well ("Home", Warsan Shire)

And not-home can be a shark, so what can you do, really, except learn how to swim quite desperately. Not to mention that you can be the shark for someone else! (There is an inscription of settler-hood around a home border.)

Shark-homes have many teeth.
Shark-homes have poems nested in their crevices.
Shark-homes can be sweet with memory.

Reading is a memory.
Reading is a memory stretched thin.
Reading is running away from a prime minister's speech.
Reading is refuge.
Reading is a shelter.
Reading between the lines is a magic trick.
Reading is running back to the river to think about migration.
Reading is a plea for mercy, another place to land.
Reading is wishing for the river to conjure you a home without sharks.

Reading is heartbreak of seeing reams of childhood nested between a home that has not settled
Amidst the shark-teeth, in a sea of blue, Mir and Haali and Akbar Allahabadi theorize relations of place/lessness and I am trying to understand the bearings that reading may give
Reading is a lonely parachute

FrameWork 5/26

Reading is lonely

Reading is resting alone against a wall, yellow against a sea of blue

Reading is knowing there is a method to this loneliness

Reading is finding

Reading is asking for a home

Reading is realizing not all guests are equal

and how are you a formidable / respectful / not arrogant guest?