

The window is a transparent separation of self from other, internal from external, private from public. The window is a frame that contains and maintains these redundant constructed symmetries. A frame is a tool that contains the parameters of the perceptible and maintains the intake of the sensible. A frame is a tool that posits possession, protective and projective, of a sovereign I.

Lots of life happens within the window, literally, and when without the window, within the habit of the window, metaphorically. We carry the frame like the tool that it is.

Opening the window literally is a choice, as in, to let the air in, to let the voice in, to peer out, to shout out, or a violation, as in, shattered open, pried open, peered into, pressed into. By choice or by violation, opening the window risks the friction of being in relation. The seal breaks and the frame floods with all that exceeds it.

Opening the window metaphorically is neither a choice nor a violation but an inevitable glitch, infinitely flickering. In reaction we intervene, to patch the seal, to steady the frame, to sort the excess. We try to close and fail to close the window, lurching forward with what aligns with our narration and stumbling over what disorganizes it.

The friction of being in relation registers across the highest and lowest registers of consciousness. Reaction mimics in scale. An off odor causes a peripheral shudder, an anticipated passing causes a shy crossing, an unanticipated repulse causes a guilty collapse. Onwards in the imperceptible direction, onwards in the perceptible direction. The scale of forgotten to unforgettable.

Relation and reaction are conditioned and compelled. World-infrastructure and self-infrastructure are co-constructive. Recursive norms reinforce what is sensible, defensible, and dispensable, turning the regulation of reception into intuition, reaction accessed most readily. It is a challenge to disrupt what becomes intuition, a challenge with inevitable and infinite chance at each instance of disruption registered.

Disruption is often registered. The challenge is not to attune to those disturbances that are recorded as seismic events, but to those that are swept as inconsiderable shifts, and to attend to all scales as grounds of responsibility - the responsibility of being in relation.

If a painting is a window, it is both open and closed. It remains open because it is inherently indeterminate, each encounter with it distinct. It remains closed because it is enduringly fixed, always as it is. Both open and closed, without the risk or relief of opening or closing, a painting is a window to rehabilitate receptivity.

If blinking is ongoing opening to take in, closing to keep out, ordinarily unconsciously, consciously only out of the ordinary, then “eyelidding” is self-conscious of the ordinary opening and closing. “Eyelidding” is a sequence of paintings that rattle at the edges of the window.

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This text is written in reflection upon and with gratitude to Lauren Berlant’s “On the Inconvenience of Other People”, Judith Butler’s “Giving an Account of Oneself”, and Thomas Keenan’s “Windows: of vulnerability”.