

For Manguel to begin his book with the history of himself as a reader was, I thought, a very creative introduction to his textbook-like review of reading. One great way to capture a reader is to tell the author's own experience with his topic in his own life, and for something as simple as reading could almost be boring, but in this case I thought the opposite. I felt one of the best examples Manguel used to describe his realization of what reading brought to him as a boy was when he was reading about STDs in his father's library. On page 12, Manguel as a boy recounts being alone and reading an article about gonorrhoea and says,

"For a moment I was terrified that he would notice what I was reading, but then I realized that no one—not even my father, sitting barely a few steps away—could enter my reading-space, could make out what I was being lewdly told by the book I held in my hands, and that nothing except my own will could enable anyone else to know. The small miracle was a silent one, known only to myself."

The use of the words "reading-space" seems so simple to me, but at the same time makes me see how simple something as reading can also give a person such power over another. One should also note how he sees this as a miracle, small, but yet a miracle. That, to me, shows how Manguel truly does respect and love the art of reading. It is a powerful gift to be able to read. It allows one to not only gain information about a subject, as Manguel did, but also to also be able to transport one's self to another place.

In Nicole Wiesenbahn's response to "My Journey as a Reader," I felt that she was able to grasp what Manguel was trying to get across in his beginning chapter as well. When she describes reading with the words "power" and "control" is right on point. She further goes on to say that one of her favorite things about reading "is that it can be created anywhere." Both of her examples of places where one can bring a book—"on the bleak metro" and a "crowded doctor's waiting room" are explained nicely with very descriptive adjectives as well.

To interpret a text as a reader is just as Maggie Razzouk calls "a blessing in [her] eyes." One of the chapters in Manguel's book discussed interpretation of the text and the use of memory many years ago. One of the stories he includes is about the god Thoth of Egypt and how he offers the King of Egypt his people the ability to read. The point the king makes on page 58 says, "If men learn this...it will only implement forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they will rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer within themselves, but by means of external marks." I think Manguel as well as one of the discussions we had in class pertains to this quote very well. Manguel is trying to show another point of view to how reading can effect our world. It could potentially cause people to become lazy and not as prudent in their lives as they are now. Professor Nanian said that he was alarmed by the amount of some of the things we can and can not remember in today's world. People who can remember the 2000+ lines of *Hamlet* are remarkable individuals. There are others out there however that does not use their memory to their full advantage, in school and everyday life. Reading brings people through many journeys of life. Only through interpretation though, can one have the chance to recount these journeys, just as Manguel has in his book.