

“One makes the book one is able to. This ‘making’ always aims at ‘making more.’

None could reduce the possible.”

-Edmond Jabes-

Remarking Mark Remarking

“I recall only a solitary march toward I don’t know what kind of writing, a slow, hesitant march delayed indefinitely by the intimate conviction, from time to time reaffirmed, that ...in any event ...writing is futile...”

thus one can create it out of whole cloth, without fear or restraint, since it has no other justification than in and of itself...A kind of writing, in other words, that would be self-generating.

I have looked for it everywhere”

-Marcel Benabou-

*“Language is what gets us where we want to go...
and prevents us from getting there”*

-Samuel Beckett-

“Thoughts of shipwreck, but also of haven...”

The place of language is language...

I went to the word

to make it my gesture.

I went,

and I am going.”

-Edmond Jabes-

Mark had found his voice. A kind of melancholy, plaintive one. It circled stuff interminably. Whispered and wandered around. He'd come to like his name.

His head was full of thoughts. Thoughts that behaved like swirling water, replete with undertows. Thoughts like dust raised by raindrops. Like powder snow at night.

Things percolate and move mistily. Indefinable, almost impressions, almost unnoticeable weather.

Thus he marked his own context: foreground-background-landscape-subject. Almost blank. Or over-filled. Like an atmospheric system, some elaborate mechanism or perpetual-motion machine humming quietly in its place, its workings hard to decipher, difficult to dismantle or repair, it just goes on.

For instance, just now, Mark's mind is troubling an idea that what he perceived of himself in his present being was probably some long accrual of an unknown living entity existing by some limited and specific energy source – shaped, concocted, constructed and moved, *invented* as it were, by whatever had ever happened in what he'd been trained to call his "past," along with the opening and openness of all possible "futures" – the nuts, bolts, wires and fuel; performances and emissions, surfaces and frames, meticulously manufacturing this specific form and substance complete with some content and exhaust – Mark Riley, *now*.

"Now was," the oxymoron of inherited language around the relative concept of human time bothered Mark. And yet seemed exactly the case to him: "Now" always "was," "Is" always "almost." The teetering present of movement having no palpable term. At least that he was aware of. Alas.

He mumbles it: "now. now. now. now." Then shouts it, whispers, wondering if it matches.

"I am here" he thinks. There is music, sunlight, books and pages, and he belongs to his body. Yet still he feels more like a zone or a field than a subject or object. A strange cloud of shifting perceptions and malleable registers, constantly importing/exporting, an odd and dusty exchange with variable borders between. Many imperceptibles.

Mark appreciates the good fortune of his name. Of all the words his family might have aimed in his direction, that they chose one sufficiently flexible and adequate to his ever-metamorphosing sense of himself, he found very lucky indeed. "Mark." No one properly named themselves (or others) words like "sign" or "I," "swarm" or "subject," the synonyms he often preferred for personhood. Being human. A propensity for tags and categories, when, as far as he could tell, we were all simply successions of "I's" with useful pronouns.

However, he could actually conceive of and *feel* himself as a mark or system of markings. As if someone called “paint” or “compose.” “Sketchy” or “imagining perceiver.” Mark *was* a marker; there was no doubt about that. From early youth he’d left marks on his world – sounds, messes, drawings and words.

Through time, he would come to puzzle marking itself. A voracious student and reader, Mark had come to think humans well documented indeed. This cognition fostered a kind of destiny in his identity – to go after any and every experience and subject he found un-re-markable, that which had scant or insufficient representation in signs or gestures or speech.

Mark sought to mark the ineffable and fleeting. Those realms of experience not readily translatable, the searching for words, moans and sighs and grimaces. That which seemed always to leave a remainder, unmarked. Mark would mark the un-marked with a necessity that the coexistence and correlation, involving as it logically *must*, **himself**, would accomplish the “Mark”-ing lack.

He finds these experiences everywhere. Emotions, perceptions, knowledge and actions seem suffused with un-Marked areas. Sounds as well as the notoriously nonverbal, nontextual Silence (does it even exist? Or is it purely and absolutely abstraction? he pondered) offered themselves to be Marked. Thoughts and dreams, sensations and incoherent babble – the lack of adequate marks came to seem ubiquitous and infinite, both compelling and overwhelming to him.

With all the existing marks and documents – the words and events and artifacts of human history – how could there really be so very many insufficiently remarked territories of existence?!

Science, Mark understood, with a world as vast and seemingly endless in its providence of detail and information. *In-formation* equally bewildering – how does it all interact and effect, or develop? Which propelled the perpetual craving to envelop and understand, attempt comprehension – to incorporate and represent to ourselves each new moment – our philosophies, religions and arts.

Nevertheless, what of we, ourselves? Mark asked. Is our range of feeling and activity really so varied between persons, places and times that *human* experience of engaging and failing to survive our lives really calls for further markings and reflections?

It did, in fact, seem so. As closely matched and reciprocal as other human marks mated to his own, there was always some difference. And extremely hard to qualify. This dissimilarity of the similar – really all one takes note of – that continuous liminal activity...*between*. Between Mark and all things un-marked-by-Mark, not yet acquired or understood, not created by him, requiring his interpretation, apperception,

and yet...

what could make Mark’s marks distinct? Unique? Of any value or usefulness to others and his surround?

Here Mark could not say. His everywhere seemed utterly stuffed with unmarked and perhaps un-Markable territories, with import and mysteries (to him), and yet it was not new human territory, or occasions?! Things like loving and pleasure, parenting and nature, thinking and feeling – in fact, the entirety of being *has* been signified by other human beings, as far as he could tell, yet every moment Mark encountered had an aspect of un-Markedness somehow.

Until he'd mark it himself.

Perhaps this is the crux, for each of us, he thought. Everyone a Mark, a Sign, a Gesture, a continuum of I's – and until we individually make our marks our existence remains, remains un-re-Marked for *us*, even while retaining and remarking all other Marks and marks we encounter in encountering?

Mark ached to re-mark all this. His thoughts swirling like slow water, like dust raised up by rain in small bursts, like powdery snow flustered in the night. His confusion with time and space and naming. His marked sense of things not yet Marked, circling interminably.