

The Snake Charmer

Label Me Fearful

Fear is autoimmunity, the protector turned into the oppressor.

What is fear, exactly? *The driving force of every existence.* I dare you to look closely at your life and find any aspect of it that *isn't* driven by some form of fear. Just because we get good at lying to ourselves, and pretending that fear doesn't exist, that fearlessness comes from *forsaking* fear, doesn't mean that it isn't there, dictating our thoughts and actions. For it may well be the truth that the forsaking of fear and what it's telling us means forsaking *ourselves*. Jung's famous line on the drives of the subconscious is actually about the fear that forever dwells within the psyche and the ego, operating with or without our awareness: "Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate." Without facing fear, every life becomes a reaction to it, gradually turning that life into illusion and defeat. Of course, the defeated don't *call* it defeat, but define it as something else, like 'reality,' in order to accept it. Thus the illusion.

In fact, taken to its furthest extent, one can make the argument that most *thought* is driven by fear. What don't I know? What do I need to figure out? What do I need to have in order to feel complete? We're like flies forever caught in webs of thought pertaining to the need to feel safe, secure, and in a position to thrive and pursue purpose and happiness. In this context, *not thinking*, what one may call meditation, becomes a courageous act. For it takes courage to refuse to be driven by fearful thought, in which we loosen our gripping fears and seek the faith that we'll be guided by The Way, by God, through Nature, intuition, and what can be called providence. And yet, the modern world sells us a constancy of fear in order that the unsustainable profits that it depends upon may continue. So it is that any propensity for fear that's innate to us is constantly exacerbated by endless marketing: *Fear not having this thing!*

I've known people who are so fearful, and so afraid of facing that fear and the truth to which it may lead, that they spend their entire lives pretending that it doesn't exist, such that the buried fear just keeps compounding until it becomes the predator, and they its prey. Consciously deciding that fear is the reality that they'll never escape, or subconsciously acquiescing to its constancy, they create a self-reducing fortification against it: *the maladaptation of victimization*. When the victimization defense against fear embeds itself deeply enough into our psyche and ego, into our trauma and self-conception, it becomes our projection point, reflected back as our

reality. This is, of course, the same as confirmation bias, and in this case, it's sickening. Because when a person comes to depend upon perpetuating the identity of the victim, interpreting everything that they experience through that limiting lens, *that's* when they become the victim. Every time I have thoughts of being a victim, my heart screams: NO! That self-defense is a lie!

At its best, psychology is about facing your fear as directly as possible, so as to gain enough perspective upon it to separate yourself from it; for you to see, with as much clarity as possible, that you and it are not the same; to disentangle yourself from it so as to save yourself from the victimization of constantly acting upon fear without even knowing it, pretending it's not there. This is why, as I've written elsewhere, the best psychologist is The Golden Teacher. Cubensis is far better than any human psychologist, because it produces no dependency, requires no patronage, and yet, by spurring the consciousness to vibrate at a higher frequency, every false, fixed idea we have about ourselves and the world becomes jarred loose, unable to cling to that frequency. Because of this, we gain unparalleled insight into our psyche and our egos and every falsely fixed and finite definition that we enforce upon the world and ourselves. This is the perspective, the disintegration and separation between ourselves and everything we've come to believe, that grants us the ability to distinguish between what we most essentially are and everything that the ego, psyche, and society at large has conditioned us to *believe* that we are.

At its worst, psychology is about hiding from fear, and pretending like you need the services and concealing and numbing agents of the psychiatrist in order to keep fear at bay, where it belongs. But it doesn't belong at bay; for you sail upon it whether you know it or not, and pretending like it's at bay is like being imperiled by storms you can't see. For every fear is an opportunity; a lesson in disguise. And the lesson that every fear has in common is that liberation from fear comes not by running from it and pretending that it doesn't exist, not by keeping it out there, at bay, but by harnessing its imperiling force, turning it into an equal and opposite empowerment.

While attempting to possess perfect control over fear, true fearlessness, is a fool's errand, gaining perspective upon it, understanding why it exists and what it means and what it's telling you, and thereby turning it into a motivation rather than something to run from, is the truth it offers. Burying your head in the sand doesn't stop the tide from coming in. Watching the tide doesn't stop it either, but it grants you clues as to the forces that cause it, and how to harness them. Without this, you can live your entire life being slammed by waves you never saw coming. For I find that most people's lives are dominated by fear, and usually without them knowing it. Most people's lives are *reactionary*, rather than proactive. Everything becomes an endless, interconnected string of defenses, insulations and false assurances that the fear is out at sea; that walls have been erected that will prevent any erosion of their impenetrable fortification. Take your head out of the sand and watch the tide, however, and you may well find a way to turn the destructive power of the sea into an ally. And it starts with one act: *acknowledgement*.

Let me tell you a secret about fear, and about what and whom we fear: when you acknowledge it and show it the love and respect that it deserves, it can't help but acknowledge and love and respect you in turn. This is how the illusive enemy is revealed to be the secret ally, whether fear itself or those whom, and that which, become enemies *because* of fear. I suspect it's a lot like becoming a snake charmer: turning terror into power. Most run, and would prefer to believe that the serpent isn't there in the first place. I've known many such serpents, and they all comfortably slip in and out of any skin that they can hide behind, then shed it, changing skins when caught, so as to pretend to have been something else all along. But you only learn the art of the serpent by facing and learning from them. Running from them, or simply condemning them, only empowers them, and disempowers you in turn. But when you stand your ground and face the snake, the power you'd given the snake through your fear becomes *your* power. Where once its venom was its weapon, now the antivenom is *your* weapon. I suspect that this is the secret of Dionysus: *Knowing the serpent turns their killing capacity into your saving capacity.*

I've heard every form of denial when it comes to fear. Every tough guy that I've ever known feigns fearlessness constantly, buttressing themselves against it by telling their egos lies, and by refusing to listen to their psyches. They're like perpetually terrified children telling themselves how cool they are all of the time just to avoid the fear that they may, in fact, be as vulnerable as everyone else. For ignoring the psyche and lying to the ego is like building a tower that can only topple, for all of it, no matter how soaring or seemingly grand, is built upon the unsustainable lie. For what's psyche but the mind's rooting into the body? The psyche is the storehouse and slave to all trauma, the defender of everything imperiling the body. And the roots of psyche are intertwined with the ego. For what's ego but the mind's awareness of itself? That is, the mind creates ideas of itself in order to defend itself from the risks, from the fears, of every form of uncertainty. Ego is the storehouse and slave to every vulnerable idea we have about ourselves. And so ego and psyche are twin elements of the self-defense born from living with ongoing risk.

We all just want to feel safe, loved and accepted for who and what we are, without needing to lie about who and what we are, or, in my case, without needing to buy into the false realities sold by society in order to be accepted by that society and live safely within it, as myself. When I look honestly at my life, refusing to lie, with the eyes of humble truth, I see fear everywhere. I've *always* been subject to it; puppeted by it. I fear never being read. I fear never being loved. I fear never having my purpose recognized by anyone or anything. I fear that my mother and father will never understand or accept me. I fear that they and the rest of my family will forever see my writing as some pathetic convergence of a naïve pipe dream, a negative attitude and the inability to accept and integrate with 'reality.' I fear that I'll never escape the tragic feeling that I don't deserve my life, because I can't afford it. I fear that I'll always be poor and unsupported in the purpose that God has whispered through my heart for as long as I can remember, since my twenties. I fear that I'll forever be under the duress of being forced to choose between living in a society built by lies that few can see, and fitting into a position and organization in which I not

only *don't* fit, but which will require that I pretend to fit and not see the lies for the sake of profits, or else that I continue to retreat from the false reality we're taught is the only reality, and spend my life here, in the redwoods, where I write these lines, unloved, poor, alone, *yet triumphant*. For what can be more triumphant than not giving into the walls slowly closing in around me, imperiling me with every fear, and yet failing to live up to some fake form of myself?

In contemplating my fear, and everything to which those fears are tied, I find an undeniable overlap exists between what we falsely separate between psychological healing and spiritual practice (every separation thought to be absolute, rather than relative, is ultimately a lie, itself based upon fear... I'm coming to that). It's about the painful deconstruction that comes before every reconstruction. It's about letting go of what we *think* that we know about the world and ourselves; everything we white-knuckle cling to for dear, fearful life. *At least I know THAT about myself*, we tell ourselves. At least I know what I am, and what the world is. And so we live lives of illusion. We are, all of us, in Plato's cave, projecting what we believe that we know onto the perceivable surface of our realities, and what's reflected back to us (*from what we ourselves project*) we call 'the truth.' Projectors, reflections, mirrors, through the looking glass... These images and their metaphorical implications keep revisiting me, telling me they're not done with me. They whisper to me that holiness is learning how to *unlabel* everything. They say that truth is about *not* projecting anything, thus seeing what's essentially there, uninvented, undefinable.

Risking repetition, I'll repeat a truth that many a sage has sat on, reverberating in their minds: *If you label something, you can't truly know it*. When you label, you see only the label, not the thing itself. The label, the narrowing, reducing language, the definition capturing the pretense of truth, is the invisible lie that you wrap around everything you apply it to, concealing its truth. There's no truth in the label, except one as thin as the label itself. Everything returns to perhaps my favorite line ever uttered, by one of my favorite authors, Oscar Wilde: "To define is to limit." And this truth runs through another of my favorite lines, repeated throughout my writing just like Wilde's, because it hits near the uncomfortable home that 'civilization' is ruled by illusion: "All of science is a reduction of multiplicity into identity." One Source of energy, condensing into embodied matter, taking endless forms, accumulating, growing outwards from that Source, called 'cell division,' and yet, secretly, *never being divided from that Source, always being of it*.

That last quote is from Huxley, who borrowed it from someone else. Taken together, these two lines perfectly allude to the incalculable cost of forming beliefs around the limits of language, all in order to assuage our fears. For that's ultimately what definition is: *an effect of fear*. And an injustice. For consider the fact that definitions *always* do an injustice to those and that whom, and to which, they're applied. Because defining anyone and anything *always* denies them the truth and justice of being anything that contradicts that definition. Labels fix a false truth in the mind, which are then projected onto the truth, which are reflected back as the sham of truth.

Why is labeling based upon fear? Because, when we're honest with ourselves, we find that the reason that we're compelled to label, define and pretend to possess the truth about anyone or anything is because we fear it, or them. By labeling everything 'out there,' including every possible threat and competitor, we deceive ourselves into believing that they actually *are* that reduced thing; we deceive ourselves into believing that they're so small and harmless as to fit into a box. And by believing we've boxed them in, we believe we have more control over them, thus assuaging our fears, even though, ironically, the only thing we've boxed in is our own mind.

If we can capture and control something with words, we can tell ourselves it's no longer a threat. And we're all committing this injustice against everyone constantly, *including ourselves*. And the more separate, different and 'other' that something or someone seems to be from us, the more desperate this defining, labeling and boxing becomes. This is the building of the boundary, the walling ourselves off from every perceived threat. Again, *this* is the driving force of most existences, of every existence that *hasn't* faced and acknowledged its fears; a constancy of both conscious and subconscious self-protective, self-fulfilling prophecy. And anything and anyone violating our controlling definitions, anyone denying our illusion of knowledge and control, is *immediately* perceived by the at-risk psyche and ego as a threat to be torn down. Over and over again does this phenomenon rear its ugly head. It is, in fact, the cause of every wrong that every person commits against every other person: *the attacking of perceived threat*.

So it is that we build ourselves into our lies and constantly stay vigilant to every threat that comes knocking at our drawbridges, all in order to feel safe, and all in reaction to unfaced fears. In so doing, we never really know anyone or anything except for those we let our drawbridges down for, so to speak, and we tend only to do that when we feel like they *aren't* a threat, even when those people and things that challenge us the most are what we *should* be letting in. For the key to all growth and healing is to face that which frightens us, spurring growth, ultimately forcing us to relinquish the sense that we're absolutely other than anyone, leading us to the shared truth within everyone and everything. For nothing and no one may be seen in its purest, truest state whilst kept outside of our boundaries, boxed into false definitions, limited by language. And, tragically, the greater the fear, the greater the tendency to keep raising the walls.

Only with the walls down, with bridges crossing every moat, so to speak, may the truth win out. For the truth, the realest Reality, is *spiritual* in nature. Before we fix it with narrowing, reducing definitions, everything and everyone is a unique amalgamation of the same Source of all energy. This is an allusion to the secret teaching of the double-slit experiment: only by observing light as something, as being a fixed thing, does the light reduce itself into being a particle. Belief is the boundary, the collapsing of all possibility into a 'reality' that we turn into our guard against fear. In so doing we deny who and what they are and what we are, having erected a lie between us.

This secret metaphysical truth, that all things are forms of one thing, and that *this* is God, is a unifying truth so powerful that, when it finally takes over from fear, the world will remake itself.

And this one core spiritual truth of universally-shared identity, the non-identity of ultimate indistinction, is impossible to see through all the walls and labels that fear erects and adheres. And there's no aspect of human existence that isn't overruled and reduced by this causal chain: fear: definition: self-deception: dividing walls: hiding underlying truth: denying the truth as love. What greater compliment may be paid a person than to love them? *None*. For love is only truly evoked when the purest essence of who and what we love is truly known. This is our holy unity.

As a preceding paragraph attests, I'm as guilty of being governed by fear's causal chain as most. Alas, my awareness of its existence grants me some power over it, the first step in my liberation. When the oversized truck goes rumbling by me with the American Flag pridefully flown behind it and Trump stickers glued to its back bumper, I sense anger arise, for, to me, the truck represents the lies by which we're oppressively ruled: the lie of there being but one form of patriotism, the careless fealty to whomever currently controls government, concealing the greater form of patriotism as fealty to the best interests of the people as a whole; the lie of American supremacy taught to us from our first Pledge of Allegiance concealing the truth that there's no such thing as the best country, for every country and culture has inestimable value to offer us; the lie that a person's worth is based upon money, possession and extraction rather than how much value they add to life; the lie of freedom being a one-way street concealing the fact that *positive* freedom means being protected from evil. I fear the continuation of such overlording lies, that the egomaniacal, wanna-be emperors of the world will maintain their demagogic dominance, and this makes me angry, the fear thence turning the truck driver into a threat, which, ironically, is *exactly* how the demagogues rule me: *keeping him outside my fence*.

Thus, even as my defensive reflex is to contemptuously define the truck driver as 'conservative,' with other disparaging pejoratives often added, of course, I remind myself that it's my fear that drives the definition that drives the self-deception, and the unjust reduction of what he is by stuffing him into that definition, denying his right to be everything that doesn't fit inside that constraining box. And I'm aware that it's *his* fear that causes his conservatism, for conservatism is, largely like the religion with which it tends to overlap, *based upon enhancing and exploiting fear*. Moreover, I'm aware that my defining him as a conservative conceals the fuller truth of him, including the fact that his heart and my heart are one. For whatever is in a person's mind, that's their illusion of truth that's being projected onto Reality, reflected back as *their* reality. And I'm doing the same applying the label 'conservative,' a judgment that, however true, yet conceals the greater truth of those to whom it's applied, denies them the potential to be more than such a definition, and, perhaps most importantly, denies our underlying brotherhood. So it is that the guiding light shines through the exercise of facing my fears, when I find maxims like:

Refraining from definition is the courage required to keep The Truth from collapsing into The Lie.

What horror, what a paltry state of being would ensue if, indeed, we *could* reduce the truth of anyone or anything to words. Not even those most certain of their definitions would want that.

Can you imagine such a world, a world in which the constantly unfixed energy, the holy heart of all Being coursing through and enlivening every relatively independent being, were voided with words? Can you imagine if you could *actually* capture and control anything with a label? Yes, fear presses us to define and to limit so that we may limit the extent to which that fear may assail us. And yet, for anything to collapse into the reduced form of knowledge contained in our definition of it would be to make it the unreal reality that we concoct and enforce with words.

That's the fantasy. The fantasy *isn't* the 'idealistic' seeing of the pure potential in anyone or anything. The fantasy isn't in the knowledge that anyone can become what their hearts and minds lead them into becoming, and that what we are is undefinable, immensely complex and ever-changing. That's the innate truth of everything which the so-called realists and rationalists and scientists dictate to be the fantasy when, in truth, what *they're* peddling is the true fantasy: selling the illusion that anything may be perfectly defined; that *anything* may be placed into a box of words that contains anything other than the *illusive approximation* of the thing. It's like saying that there's no difference between the name of a person and the person themselves, or between the person and their profession, or some diagnosis of a person and that person, or any other label that may be applied. Every label that we stick to anyone occludes our sight of them.

I'll never forget the first lesson of working in mental health: never make the unjust mistake of reducing the patients to their diagnosis, as if such a stigmatizing term is the totality of that exceedingly complex person. It's never: *he's a schizophrenic*, it's: *he suffers from schizophrenia*. And yet, the science of mental health always reduces the truth of the person to a diagnosis. Yes, this is arguably necessary for treatment, just as all language is necessary for its ability to cite something specific. But that's exactly the problem: we then act like we've made an absolute ID.

The dominant modern paradigms that sell themselves as the answers to everything are, in fact, like snapshots of surface-level perceptions; the denial of everything that isn't immediately, readily perceivable, as if the world and the myriad interconnections constituting its interbeing is but a set of lifeless objects disconnected from one another, evolving entirely by random accident, when, in fact, 'random' is an illusion that simply means: I don't understand the causality, so I'm going to pretend like there isn't one. Science and rationalism and realism and all their definitions and classifications and labels are essentially reductions of the irreducible.

Science seems to have forgotten what it actually is: the gradual revelation of interconnection so intertwined that separation is an illusion, and that what science is *actually* doing is gradually *disproving* its own self-defended predicates of absolute definition, classification and control. Ironically, science has become truth only in the sense that it measures the data that it can about something and condenses that something into the truth, conflating the observable with the totality of the thing. This is like losing its own instruments, and what they revealed. It's like forgetting that the telescope leads to the expansion of the universe and the microscope leads to the expansion of the inner-verse, *not* because they created new realities of endless expansion

and multiplicity of the energy Source, but because they revealed that it was there the entire time, driving everything, and that everything within it is an inseparable aspect of it, and that to label anything as though it isn't of The Everything is to craft a clever lie for the sake of the sense of control, *all out of the fear of not possessing control*. The cat's only in the box in *belief*, for the truth is always that which sheds any limitations of its labeling, forever flying free of every cage.

Maybe the pursuit of truth, and the justice to which it leads, is the Jesus on the cross quality common to *every* life. Maybe that's because the truth is undefinable and uncontrollable, and yet every profit comes from falsely defining and pretending to control it. Maybe the pursuit of truth requires a fearless refusal to buy into every false form of truth, which itself entails immense sacrifice. I know this sacrifice as well as anyone; well, as well as anyone whom has yet to surrender their final breath to it, at least. Long has my life been about *resistance*; about refusing to give into an endless string of demands made upon me, every one of which involves buying into some false form of the truth so that I can sell it, and sell myself out through it.

Everything that everyone that I know bids me to do that's against my nature and the truth that I'm constantly sensing and yet shall never be fool enough to believe that I've perfectly defined, every belief and action and profession and joining and giving into that which I know to be untrue... for *all* of it do I constantly pay the price. And that's why the lies win, of course: because the cost of refusing to call them the truth is too great in a society that profits from the lie. Yea, sure, this is the land of the free, so you're free to deny all the lies until you get ground into dust by refusing to participate in the deception. So the fear that the lies represent continue, for the simple reason that we continue to be commanded by them, and all those whom sell them, because we fear the cost of facing them. So it is that we've sold ourselves, and God, in order to feel safe. And yet, only by hanging on the cross and refusing to renounce the God that lives in all of us, binding everything into One, refusing to be absolutely divided, may we eventually prevail.

When I mention to my buddy Randy that I've been thinking about fear a lot lately, because it's revelatory, and ties into most everything, a conversation ensues, including the end of this paper:

"I don't think love is driven by any form of fear. We can either react out of fear or choose to act out of love. I have an inkling that if we truly love something or someone, we won't fear to lose it or them, because our love can't be taken away. Only the object of our love can be taken away."

"That's true. Love is always there. It never leaves. It's God, ever present. Yet those people and things that portal us into its depths *can* be lost. So we don't lose love, but our access to it. We must never forget that what those portals deliver us to is the essence of us and *can't* be lost. The people, places and things that we love are the access points to the everlasting within us. So while we can't help but fear losing what we love, we shouldn't confuse this with losing love itself. Despair and depression come from believing that love belongs to something in particular."