


Mythical Seductions & Diversions:

A Dialogue, With Fear

- **B. Maria Kumar & R. Michael Fisher**

India & Canada

[Note: The authors, Kumar (India) and Fisher (Canada) have been in dialogue on the topic of fear and fearlessness for over two years. Their first book together (with Desh Subba from Nepal, now living in Hong Kong) originated from a series of email dialogues, then published on the Fearlessness Movement blog, which were initiated by Fisher; see *Fear, Law and Criminology: Critical Issues in Applying the Philosophy of Fearism*, Xlibris 2018]

“Human beings all around are suffering from problems, troubles and even arrogance. The combination of all those problems, worries and arrogance is turning into a fear.” I pondered over her philosophical thought for a long time. But I could never figure it out. -Desh Subba (2015, p. 30)

RMF (R. Michael Fisher): Of late, I have been interested in asking critical questions about the best ways to shape future forms of fearology and fearism (*a la* Desh Subba *et al.*). In other words, if we are to create this global specialized study of fear (and fearlessness) that is ‘new,’ as we claim it is, what knowledge bases and varied modalities of consciousness, knowing and thinking and methodologies ought we draw upon to shape this study? Surely, the most obvious knowledge bases are Philosophy and Psychology disciplines—especially, we often draw upon the psychology of fear. However, I’ve been critical that the latter is too often dominating our fear imaginary, especially in the Western and “scientific” rationalist traditions for the last 100+ years. Some have said that current history is unfolding uniquely as a “Psychological Age” quite different than most of human history. This emphasis on psychology and its informing our understanding of ourselves and so much about how we understand reality and history, etc. has an upside and downside.

I’m thinking about the Psychological Age as explanatory, with its earlier historical roots in W. Enlightenment’s Age of Reason, as well, in that it was driven by and dominated by the need to conquer myth and superstition, explaining them away by this new paradigm and method of Reason plus Science. Rationality as the supposed new modality of knowledge that would take humanity out of the so-called ‘Dark Ages’ into the Light. Many thought that Reason was (is) the answer to overcoming fear in our historical past. Some Western Enlightenment critics, for e.g., like Friedrich Nietzsche, Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud and especially the archetypal psychologist

James Hillman (1977), in *Re-visioning Psychology*, in contemporary times have said that “soul” has been lost in the way modern psychology has developed and he argues that myth(ology) needs to be re-introduced into contemporary psychology in order to make our psychology discipline(s) healthier. I won’t jump into that now in detail but perhaps we can talk about this as our dialogue here progresses.

So, Maria, I have noticed you use at times mythic stories to complement your own writing, publishing and teaching. I’ve often wondered why you do that and wanted to give you space in our dialogue to explore that with me as an inquiry and as a place to understand your reasons for this mythic interest. I am curious to pursue an introductory discussion on the nature and role of myth(ology), the mythological imaginary and mythological psychology, if you will, and how these may contribute to more than only a scientific reason-based rationalism approach to fearology and fearism—and, contribute ultimately, as a holistic-integral approach in order to help us better understand and apply fear management on this planet. Of note, I have observed Desh Subba has not pursued as the forefront of his inquiry into fearism as analysis, the mythological dimension. Have you noticed this? He defines fearism as it “refers to the interpretation, analysis, application, investigation, research on the issue of fear or thesis, antithesis, and synthesis of fear” (Subba 2014, p. 331). This sounds to me like a very rationalistic analytic tradition he brings to fear study, that is, a modernist and W. Enlightenment approach. I also know he likes to use “story,” e.g., *The Tribesman’s Journey to Fearless* novel and “poetics” in his work; but off the top, I cannot think of him directly using “myth(ology).” I’ve wondered why? I also noticed that the Nigerian fearologists, especially Michael Eneyo in his new book *Philosophy of Fear* had referred to the Efik myths and folklore in a section in his book (Eneyo, 2018) as he is concerned about how to improve fear management in Africa. Interesting.

I think your recent book project in-progress Maria, *India, Nation of Fear and Prejudice: Race of the Third Kind*, co-authored with Desh Subba and myself, is a good example of applying a fearological perspective to the nation of India, its past, current and future development. Your notion of “Race of a Third Kind” in the sub-title is actually about a mythological theme from Ancient Greece, I believe. I have noticed you used mythic references also in your latest book with your daughter *The Youth Don’t Cry*, so now I am curious to find out why you see myth as so important.

So, I have two starting questions: (1) could you begin to tell me and our audience about all the ways in your writing projects so far that you have used myth and/or folk tales, etc.; provide us with concrete examples from your works and, (2) tell us about why you have done this and where your interest in myth(ology) began in your own autobiography and studies?

BMK (B. Maria Kumar): First, let me answer your second question about the “why” behind my interests. We in general, are brought up with do’s and don’ts as part of our socialisation process, during which parents, teachers and/or elders of the community educate, try to mould or shape us with the help of ethical fables, moral folk tales, etc. Mostly such stories are taken from traditional anecdotes, classical legends, ancient myths and/or religious sermons. Story telling makes a deep impact on our tender minds during childhood, which hardly withers away in due course once inculcation occurs. Depending upon the interest instilled or imbibed, children tend to get inclined further also to pursue listening to or learning more myths and legends.

It is a fact that mythical stories are woven in dramatic form via plots, imaginaries and imagination and fantasies. Dramatisation of the plots leaves readers affectively, cognitively and morally amazed, and at times awestruck.

“Myths are generally viewed by the people at first glance in such a manner that they are superstitious and fictional tales. True. But it is also true that myths, if not all but some, are discerning and stand by reason.” -B. Maria Kumar

RMF: And, at times terrified? Terrified humans are very susceptible to propaganda. Is there value in that kind of excitement through stories, myths, tales? There’s been a long debate in the West, at least, about the valuable and not-so-valuable uses and abuses of horrifying stories in the mythological and fairy tale genre, often rationalized as “morality” teaching, entertainment or “culture” or “fun” for bored life-styles. You may know, horrorology is very much a growth industry with many business ventures getting rich off of other people being made afraid. I think we as fearologists have to question this but also understand it critically as to its sources. I agree mythic genre literature and teachings may at times be useful in the evolution of human development.

BMK: Story-telling, poetics, reading, listening, performing, etc. can contribute to artistic, aesthetic appreciation and entertainment that also acts as means of relaxation as Edward Bellamy said, ‘If bread is the first necessity of life, recreation is a close second.’ And of course, certain ideas and deeper meanings and truths underlying myths, will also enlighten minds to employ or make use of in artistic, cultural and intellectual pursuits. That is, they advance the human potential.

The fact that I tried off and on to incorporate Greek or Roman mythical characters in my writings dates back to my student days. Stories with novelty or some unique background not only make an interesting read but also broaden the mental base for reception and quest of knowledge. One important beneficial aspect of learning from myths and legends is enhancement of vocabulary and language. Lera Boroditsky found in her research that words and language shape our thought processes. Apart from that, new terms, nomenclature and characters narrated in myths create new images and new ideas in our minds. They also help in explaining things in a more elaborate and interesting way. It was one of the factors that the scientists relied on mythological characters to a considerable extent to name their discoveries and inventions.

RMF: Can you give a few examples of how scientists have used myth for this naming and explaining their discoveries?

BMK: Yes, in a way, we can say that the understanding of myths and legends enriched scientific terminology as well as paved the way for the development of technology. The Renaissance, as the medieval cultural resurgence of Europe, laid foundations for the Industrial revolution. Renaissance focused on re-integrating parts of the cultures of Ancient Greece and Roman Empire. Michael Angelo excelled in painting and sculpture, portraying mythical gods and

goddesses as a theme. Armed with the ideas of flying Pegasus and wax-winged Daedalus, Leonardo da Vinci envisaged the first drawing of an aeroplane. Niccolò Machiavelli took ideas from gods' ways of controlling the mortal world and conceived fear-based rulership in his masterpiece, *The Prince*.

RMF: I have seen off and on postmodern critiques of “science” and “scientism” as ideology where critics have said that science is not all “facts” and “the truth” because it is self-claiming to be only “objective” reality that it describes. Some have argued, science discourse is another form of narrative truth-telling and use of metaphors, disguised myths, more than it is only “facts” and that that truth-telling with subjective interpretation, and its own historicity, some go as far to call it mythological or even mystical. This view sees science as a cultural product just like myths—a continuum of ways of knowing and creating knowledge and teaching and enculturation. Science, albeit, universal, is just the latest version of myths, they argue. I think there is some truth in that critique. I think this raises an interesting point in the Fear Studies discourses. Because today I have noticed that the “science of fear,” e.g., neurobiology of fear, and neuro-psychology of fear, are near completely dominating the current imaginary of fear. Not a good thing, if we are trying to achieve a holistic-integral view of fear and its management and transformation. Something seems insidiously left out of scientific discourse re: fear. I want to reclaim what is being lost, at least as a fearologist.

Less radical critiques have said the same about reason itself as necessarily and inevitably embedded in an ancient mythic memory system, and historical colorings and dramatisations, that comes from magic tracings of human culture and myths, etc. Point being, humans never likely can fully escape the primal mythological consciousness and stories and their influences, a point the eminent mythologist Joseph Campbell and the psychoanalyst Carl Jung made in their work over their life-times. And James Hillman, the contemporary archetypal depth psychoanalyst, is adamant that psychotherapy will only be truly effective when we get out of the dominating “humanism” of W. Enlightenment soul-denying interpretations of contemporary psychology and include the soul-psychology of the “gods” and “goddesses” of old that still work through us via archetypes and dreams, stories, literature, etc.—that is, an archetypal mythic psychology. Ken Wilber, the integral psychological theorist, argues the “mythic” deep structure of consciousness is foundational ontologically and ontogenetically in the development of human consciousness itself. Myth(ology) has a place, a role, and is essential to healthy human functioning. Of course, mythic consciousness and its stories can also be, under certain conditions and twists in development, oppressive and pathological and mis-guide human activity. But so can rational consciousness. I think transrational consciousness is the way to go where we include and transcend all the developmental levels of humanity and culture, including the magical, mythical pre-rational, with the later rational, post-trans-rational.

I have called all this pre-rational emphasis and critiques of these thinkers above as involving trance, altered states, dream, imagination, intuition, artistic processes and ultimately a deep connectivity with our ancient past, ‘living ancestor beings,’ and “stories” as the modality of the arational. The arational being just as important, arguably, as the rational in fear management/education. Anyways, there’s a lot to learn about this dimension for modern humans. Certainly, contemporary Indigenous peoples have long known this connectivity and are quite at ease to blend magic-myth-science-arts in their traditional wisdom teachings. Since modernism’s birth in

the post-Renaissance especially, there's been a fragmentation and dissociation between these diverse realms of knowing and myth often with religion got attacked by modern science and philosophy and psychology—to the point where “myth” is now a negative term as if meaning “false” truths and reality. I know you are speaking about something different than that view and connotation of myth.

BMK: It is true that the word myth in common parlance is nowadays used for a false notion. I would like to say that the generalisation of all mythical stories in the like manner may not hold to be of reasonable nature as the mathematician Kurt Gödel once said, “All generalisations, with possible exception of this one, are false.” The veracity of reason underlying a myth or any assumption for that matter, depends upon the contextual specifics of various situations. The space scientists first called Pluto, named after the Roman god of netherworld, a planet and with the advancement of space sciences later, it is no more considered part of the solar planetary family. Conversely, it is also possible that a theory which is rendered false now may turn out to be revalidated as true in future as happened many times in the scientific history of the world.

Here what I would like to stress is that the reason, no doubt, is very fundamental but at the same time, we have to take into consideration the reasonable ideas associated with a concept irrespective of the fact that there is *prima facie* reason which may be malevolent in that context or pseudoscience yet benevolent in that context because human life is not solely based on reason for its overall fulfilment.

RMF: Yes, that's for sure!

BMK: Any thought in the mind, rational or irrational, which is alarming can upset the physiology of the body to the extent of causing a stroke or depression. When there's a logical mind, so is there an emotional heart. In a holistic perspective, ideas that promote the good are essential requirements despite the fact whether they emerge from scientific inventions or from fictional myths and legends. The end of every human endeavour ought to be *summum bonum*, the highest good of humanity. Reason that is truth is useless if it results in destruction. The romantic poet William Blake said, “A truth that is told with bad intent beats all the lies you can invent.”

Sometimes, dreams which we can't infer as truth-based are pleasant and some are nightmarish. Though Freud interpreted dreams as the expressions of the unconscious mind, many scientists feel that there's no rational basis behind the theory.

RMF: Freud is an interesting example of someone working in the ‘invisible’ realm of mind(s), unconscious, healing and the body—all together; and he was very interested in dreams, images, magic, myth, metaphors, art, the arational—but, unfortunately, he was a product of his time and gender, as he obsessively tried to turn subtle and unexplainable psychic phenomena into only scientific empirical bases, with laws. No rational analysis that tries to prove there is no rational basis behind the theories of Freud, is going to really prove anything, and least will they understand what Freud was actually doing with clients in the psychoanalytic intimate relational process. As a practicing therapist for decades, I know intimately that therapy work is not rational alone or can it be measured to fit rational standards of truth. I am sure if the rational-scientific researchers are ever to study my fearology work, they'd likely have a field day of attacking it as

mostly undefendable nonsense, from a rational empiricist, that is biased, view they would take.

BMK: Yes Michael! Therapy is both a science and an art. For diagnostic purpose, it is the science to study disease but for treatment, it dons the role of art while healing. August Kekulé, a 19th century German scientist attributed the cause of his discovering the ring structure of benzene to his dreams. One day he dreamt of atoms, dancing around, linking to one another in a snake like fashion and finally biting its own tail. He woke up immediately, drew the sketch and declared the cyclical structure of benzene. His dream idea made him famous and he would have won a Nobel prize in chemistry had he not died prior to the commencement of Nobel prizes. Three of his students became Nobel laureates in later years.

Thus, the external story of a myth may be a concocted fiction but its inner essence may be a subset of reason, based on reasonable ideas. This is possible at least with some myths and legends. Recently, I read Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar's article in the newspaper *The Times of India* on the necessity of being resistant to temptations. Often, the elected sovereign governments tend to succumb to the whims of unscrupulous political allies despite knowing full well that the decision would contribute to the destruction of the national economy and/or environmental safety etc. Such a tricky instance was very meaningfully ideated by him in reference to the episode of Odysseus' encounter with the enchanting diabolical sirens in Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus while on his return voyage ordered his sailors to plug their ears so as not to be able to hear the seductive songs of enticing sirens and got himself tied up to the ship mast so that he also couldn't go to them. Swaminathan likened the mythical idea to the ideal character of a sovereign government so as to resist itself successfully the dubious temptations of vested interests.

Because today I have noticed that the “science of fear,” e.g., neurobiology of fear, and neuro-psychology of fear, are near completely dominating the current imaginary of fear. Not a good thing. -R. Michael Fisher

RMF: Yes, that's an interesting story of how there is potential in mythic wisdom we've all inherited or may tap into today; but as you seem to be saying, there are some myths with more and some with less wisdom and insight for us to tap. We have to be discerning and experiment with using myths in diverse ways. There is no one simple application of them that fits all contexts, as you say.

BMK: As regards your first question, I will make a mention of certain concrete examples where mythical characters and concepts were used. Regarding the title of the latest book *India, a Nation of Fear and Prejudice: Race of the Third Kind*, with Fisher and Subba, I would like to clarify that the equation between the upper castes (or laterals as referred to in the book) and the backward and lower castes (or literals) alludes to that of Zeno's tortoise and Achilles. Though the numerically strong literals comprising the vast majority of the Indian population with the largest vote bank and potential to seize political power like the mighty athlete Achilles, they stand nowhere in comparison to power-control authority of minority laterals, represented as the winged tortoise. Here, the wings of tortoise denote special privileges such as born status, landed property, ascribed higher rank in social hierarchy etc. Such privilege enables the laterals to fly

past the literals thereby creating a huge gulf of inequality between the two. Zeno's paradox has stirred logical contradictions through the ages, and serves as a live mystery which is so incomprehensible for drawing solutions. It is here in this context that I have not only added the second race as a possible alternative to Zeno's original first one but also created the third titular race with the incorporation of Achilles and tortoise as metaphors for the literals and the laterals respectively.

These three races differ qualitatively from one another in terms of logic and observed reality, between which the fundamental paradox lies. In the first race, Zeno upheld the logic of infinite number of gaps between tortoise and Achilles and adjudicated in favour of the privileged tortoise. In the second race, there was no Zeno for logical interception, hence Achilles overtook tortoise and observed reality reigned. In the third race, as is evidently applicable in contemporary India, neither logic nor observed reality seems to be winning. The democratic election process is generally conducive to the winning of the majority of the people in a logical sense; but the fact is that the literals, despite their numerical strength of majority are not able to seize political power through an electoral vote. Constitutional safeguards and legal empowerment provided to literals in the post-independence era should have uplifted them; but observed reality is that they are still the sufferers at the hands of the socially privileged minority laterals. Because, struggle for survival is the deciding factor.

RMF: Maria, I hear you saying that reason and myth, non-fiction and fiction, are narratives of complementary potential, not as necessarily oppositional? I think your "mythical facts" presumption, which sounds like an oxymoron or paradoxical, is interesting phrasing.

BMK: Yes. Myths hide some facts of wisdom and unveil scientific phenomena of nature which the primitive humans interpreted in their own ways when neither science nor language was developed in those days. Hence I would like to say that neither all that is mythical is irrational nor all that is irrational is mythical.

RMF: I agree. I think that is why we need the category arational, as distinct from but related to irrational.

BMK: Many of the mythical facts, and their imaginative fluidity and creativity, might be of scientific, social, environmental or economic nature, which may amount to hypotheses to be tested. Tested throughout living experience, some could stand and some couldn't. Historically, there are a few mythical characters and concepts that made a sense of logic and reason for their continued relevance in the realms of biology, physical chemistry, geography, law etc.

Flora is the goddess of flowers and Faunus the god of woods, hence flora and fauna becomes a collective name for plants and animals. Hermaphroditus in Greek mythology is the offspring of Hermes and Aphrodite, who has both male and female bodies intertwined, never to part. Representing wholeness. Both the sexes are fused into one. When modern biologists discovered certain organisms like earthworms have male and female reproductive organs on one body, they called such organisms as hermaphrodites because the mythical character had already been in currency and no new nomenclature was required to be coined. Atlas, the mythological Titan used to carry the world on his shoulders. Flemish geographer Mercator gave the term atlas to the

collection of maps of the nations. Volcano is a lava emitting mountain. Its name comes from Vulcan, the Greek god of fire who used to live on Mount Etna. Tantalum is a rare metal that was named after Tantalus, who wronged the gods and was punished with the impossibility of drinking water though he was always immersed in water. Tantalum the metal when kept in water never corrodes. Niobium is another rare metal which is always found with tantalum in its ores. And Niobe was the daughter of Tantalus. Greek myths left impact not only on science and arts but also on law. There are many other examples. (See Appendix 1)

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RMF: Interesting history of the mythic-science connection, the pre-rational and rational worlds creating together. But I have to ask how you as an Eastern person from India, make sense of the ancient myths before Greek? Why focus on Greek myths, and is that a good thing? I know in your publications you use pre-Greek myths at times.

BMK: Yes. We know that the proliferation of Greek and Roman mythologies since at least the Medieval era had reached other parts of the world and Shakespeare, Milton, Keats and others used those characters in their English poems. In the same way, the western mythological literature reached the easterners and they also experimented in their artistic endeavours, of course besides using their own local mythological characters generously.

RMF: I'd like us to look briefly at the way "fear" and its management today can potentially be informed in useful ways by myth(ology) and ancient narratives that guided humanity. It's a device that asserts and inscribes a larger, if not mythic, meaning to fear and gives it a grandeur status, symbolically, and keeps it a mystery—even, keeps it beyond human knowing to some degree. I think that's a healthy attitude to take towards this powerful subject.

BMK: True. In psychology, the Oedipus Complex refers to the male child's largely unconscious feelings of desire for his mother. Oedipus was actually a king in Greek mythology who unknowingly killed his father and slept with his mother. Freud interpreted that this myth was created to give vent to the repressed desires and fears. In other words, such unconscious feelings and fears were already existing in human minds, hence the stories were woven in thematic expressions.

RMF: And such stories were therapeutic. Fears and desires. These are the components of the affective sphere, often below consciousness. Therapeutically, myths in this sense offer what is called a 'third object' or 'displacement object' of relational exchange in the symbolic modality, externalized from the direct personal psyche and its limitations to manage painful experience—that is, fearful if not terrifying experience—existential and/or psychological as in relationships with parents. This offers a mythic culturally-induced buffer object for also the entire collective psyche—e.g., the tribe. In other words, such stories externalize very painful taboos set inside the psyche through socialization processes but which the psyche itself and the 'normal' institutions that created the taboos do not want to confront literally—do not want to feel internally. Myths

tapped into the Shadow in that Jungian sense. This is intriguing as I have long been searching for a *cultural therapia* of theory and practice or praxis. Incorporating the mythic and arational dimensions are essential.

BMK: Similarly, certain uncontrollable drunken behaviour is termed as Dionysian Frenzy because the Greek wine god Dionysius was already portrayed in the myths as the one who, accompanied by women, used to roam the woods in an uncontrollable trance like demeanour.

RMF: Exactly, the mythic is used to name and point to the arational trance-like and/or irrational.

BMK: Albert Camus, in his book , *The Myth of Sisyphus*, talks of Sisyphus who was punished eternally to roll a rock up a mountain only to have it roll it down as soon he pushed it laboriously to the top. Camus interpreted that Sisyphus character, structure and narrative, in a metaphorical way, thus signifying the existential human struggle against the meaninglessness of life. At least, that's one existential explanation. Suffering and tragedy are often the basis of many myths.

As you hinted at how mythology could forge a scientific reason-based rationalism approach to fearology and fearism, I would like to opine that there were thinkers who propounded their schools of thought on those lines. One example is that of Niccolò Machiavelli, a Renaissance realist, who referred to Theseus, a mythical hero in his work. He exhorted that Theseus could not have shown his ability had he not found the Athenians dispersed. It was that opportunity that made him fortunate and famous. While advising the king on how to keep his power secure, Machiavelli said, "It is much safer to be feared than loved." Because, as he explained, people will be less likely to conspire against someone they fear than they love.

RMF: Interesting, as I have read several books on leadership and fear over the years, and Machiavelli is often talked about as having a particular ideology of fear management and politics, some of those ideas as useful and some not so useful. I am not a Machiavellian myself but I can see the attraction. I just didn't know the roots of that thinking go back to interpreting Theseus.

What a lot of people don't know about my own work, which only now and then draws on mythology, is that back in the mid-1990s I developed a theory of fear or 'Fear' to be more precise, that circulated upon the ontological and ontogenetic mythological figurations of *Phobos* and *Thanatos*. That's a long story, but if you search my history of thought on the Love vs. Fear archetypal patterning that I found almost universal across all the major religions of the world through time and still a relevant 'theodicy' itself, much like Good vs. Evil stories—that, I found Wilber's articulation of Eros-Agape as the generative healthy 'Love' side of evolutionary motivation and drive as a compelling kosmology and that when they are not functioning well, for various reasons, then *Eros* is taken over, more or less by *Phobos* and *Agape* by *Thanatos*. This mythological rendering, in part, also is philosophically quite sophisticated in Wilber's developmental and evolutionary integral theory (Fisher, 1997).

Often I say to people, it won't be useful to only imagine "fear" or 'fear' in a simple rational and scientific or psychological imaginary, because Fear has roots going way back in our history and in the incomprehensible domains of unknowing. Which you spoke about as well re: the

mythological dimension. Such a perspective makes me write Fear with capitals like the gods and goddesses often were and are written in capital letters to somewhat personify them and work with them as a 'third object' in a *therapia* project of reclamation and integration of fears and desires over the ages—back into the dark unconscious of our past in history and culture but also back to our own developmental unconscious in the womb and some even say back into karmic cycles. That's another angle re: past lives, etc. But I think there's lots of complexity here re: fear, Fear and that's the point of our discussion. Does this make sense to you? Do you ever think of using fear as Fear with capitals? Would Fear be a more soulful and holistic expression in your mind, in light of our discussion?

BMK: Yes Michael! Four Arrows and you (Jacobs, 1998; Fisher, 2018) used a capital Fear to distinguish it from individualistic fear. Capitalised Fear, as my understanding goes, is used to refer to certain distinct feelings from a long-time primal world and/or a large scale impact phenomena, for example, saying like the whole continent was in the grip of Fear during World War. On the other hand, small case fear can be used for individual anxieties and concrete everyday fears of the present. I feel that that the usage of capitalised Fear will conform to general agreement in such specific circumstances or in respect of certain epochs of history; like we call the period of panic and riots during the French Revolution as Great Fear (capitalised).

RMF: The 1798 French Revolution- some historians call the "Reign of Terror" with capital 'T'. Today we have the phenomenon "culture of fear" but those critics never use "Culture of Fear" or "culture of Fear" which I would prefer because of the scale and historicity of the phenomena. I use 'Fear' Project and do so because of the reasons you mention above. I think capitalized versions of terms gives also room for the unknown and mysterious in their essence, in the sense they are above and beyond what we humans and our language, words, concepts can fully embrace—e.g., God is a good example, or Love, and now I propose Fear also is of this categorical transcendent quality or macro-order of being. What if Fear was, in some sense, seen as a being (or Being)? I think this is a point that Osinakachi Akuma Kalu, a young fearologist from Nigeria (Kalu, 2017), tends to make in his fearontology musings (see this issue *IJFS*). But, I don't want to go into that here and distract us, and I'm sure you have more to say...

BMK: In the same manner, capitalised God and small case god were and are used to make differentiation in the meanings and feelings the people normally attribute. We observe that the capitalised God is used mostly by the theists who do it with reverence and respect. Theists consequently use small case gods and goddesses in reference to Greek deities. It is then supposed that the Greek pantheon is fictional and the capitalised God of current religions is true God. It is a kind of faith involved in usage of language accordingly. Interestingly there was also a famous archaeologist named Heinrich Schliemann who claimed to have excavated the mythical Troy and felt confused at his death bed whether to pray to the God of Bible or to the god of Olympus.

When the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus propounded binomial nomenclature as a species classification system for evolutionary mapping, the same sort of understanding was intended. Each plant, bestowed upon a scientific name, has two parts in its name; the first one showing which genus it belongs to and the second part is species name. The same method was followed for the animal kingdom too, including humans. Binomial names like *Homo sapiens*, *Homo neanderthalensis*, *Homo erectus* etc. have the first name capitalised but the second (species)

name is in small case thereby meaning that the genus is of a larger order in nature, encompassing a variety of species within it, whereas species is a set of individuals having similar characteristics but the subset is of a smaller order in scope.

RMF: What about a philosophy of fearism (*a la* Subba) as it is shaping itself?

BMK: At one juncture above you said that Desh Subba has not put fearism to any sort of analysis under the mythological dimension but defined it's work in terms of mostly modernist rational interpretations, etc. What I mean to say is that Subba interprets in a different manner from what Freud interpreted, for example, dreams or myths expressing the hidden and unfulfilled or unvented desires or fears. That way, myths could be viewed as expressions of something inexplicable like abstract art. Some writers manifest their unconscious feelings through myths and folklore, some sculptors in their ready-made or kinetic objects or some painters in their abstract forms of art.

RMF: For sure, I know this as an artist myself. I think there is more than unconscious feelings alone being transmitted in abstract art, or abstract ideas. One might push our fear imaginary to even think of when we speak of Fear, we may be speaking for Fear itself and/or channeling the energy, patterns, and feelings of Fear itself. Now, that would really challenge the rational and scientific explanations for what "fear" is and isn't. I am attempting to get us thinking from a consciousness beyond dualism as separation of subject vs. object as if they don't interact and influence each other—or even in some cases they fuse in a nondualism sense. Maybe we, you and I, are at some point(s) dialoguing with Fear, not merely talking about fear.

And, it's right here, where in our discussion Maria you can see that with including myths, arts and sciences, morality, politics and history and so on, there ought to be no limitation on the discipline and types of knowledges we draw up in order to better understand fear and how to manage it. We are inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary in our approach.

The artistic part of me, and the mythic part of me, is now swelling in this conversation to think that probably Fear itself is not manageable and our relationship with Fear ought not to be put under only that rational-management and scientific perspective of analysis. I attempt in my work to use 'fear' with the (') marks, or even 'Fear'—because intuitively from the beginning, with my postmodernist tendency, I wanted the (') marks to indicate a deconstruction of the common and habitual definitions, ideas, meanings of fear. I started that epistemological move or strategy because I felt the data on fear that is mostly available and readily consumed by us as contemporary peoples is "tainted" already—it is reductive and epistemologically flawed because of this dualism/reductionism in the rationalist-management agenda.

That said, I also think a notion of fear management/ education is pragmatic too. So, I am appreciating the mythic dimension in our conversation because it connects and reconfigures, at least somewhat, our fear imaginaries to expand and keep expanding and to keep an attitude of "I don't know it all" when it comes to the topic of fear or anything else for that matter. This makes the dialogue educative in my view. It makes it potent for emancipation as well. I'm not interested in repeating over and over the same knowledge basis for fear and fear management that there is so much of out there in the world today. Fearology and fearism carry the possibility of new ways

of knowing fear, 'fear' and Fear and 'Fear.' And, likewise, dialectically that applies also to fearlessness, 'fearlessness' and 'Fearlessness.'

Appendix 1 : Myths Applied

The myth of Scylla and Charybdis is a striking example of the concept of larger good. Odysseus and his men have to sail through a demonic strait between the six headed monster Scylla on one side and the huge whirlpool called Charybdis on the other side of the strait. Odysseus steers closer to Scylla than to Charybdis because it is better to lose six men than a whole ship. In the same spirit, an illustration of a ship captain has been stated as general exception to legal penalty under section-81 of Indian Penal Code, 1860. Modern Euro currency that features the myth of Zeus and Europa seeks to connect the modern Europe to ancient culture of Greece. The American military usage of Nike Missile Project takes after Nike, the mythical goddess of victory. Trojans , a computer hacking methodology is named after the wooden Trojan Horse in which Achilles, the hero of *The Iliad* and his men concealed themselves to attack Troy.

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