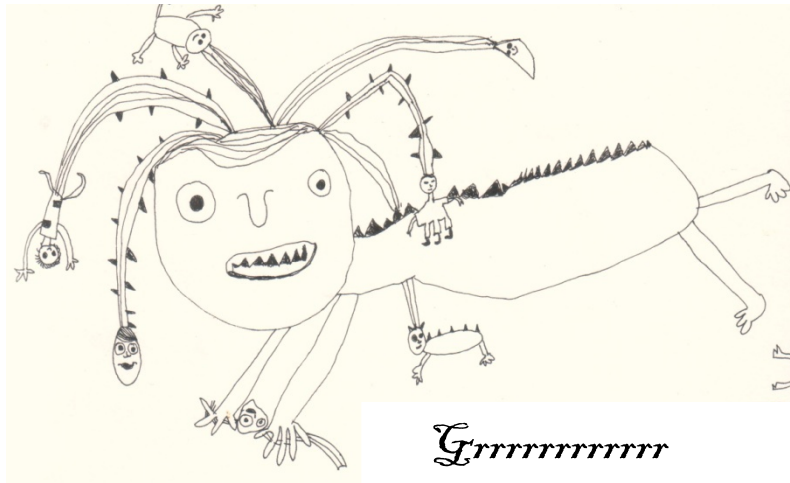


FEAR



Some children are born with a lack of the ability to feel pain. Ah, you might think, lucky kids, no pain no fear, but actually this condition is a disaster. They can't feel when they are hurt so they don't avoid danger. Nature needs pain and it needs fear. Without pain and fear there would be no life.

Saturn is the planet identified with fear and yet astrologers tell us that Saturn pays in gold. OK how does this work?

I fear being a fool so I work hard to be clever.

I fear not having enough money so I work hard to get a good job.

I fear being sick so I keep the house clean and I exercise my body.

I fear no one will like me so I learn good manners.

Fear of being found out in a lie keeps me honest.

You get the gist.

Saturn is the teacher, the responsible authority keeping the family operating efficiently; Saturn ensures we behave in a socially productive way, stick to the rules, stand in line and wait our turn.

Imagine a Saturn-less society one in which you just take whatever you want, or drive in whatever side of the road you feel like - Saturn calls taking what you want stealing, and driving on whatever side of the road you feel like, breaking the law. A Saturnless society simply wouldn't work; it would be a disaster. Perhaps this is why Saturn was said to rule the Golden Age.

So kids are taught the Saturn rules so they can fit in. But Saturn has a down side. That little voice that tells you that you are not good enough is Saturn and it can severely destroy Jupiter's natural confidence and we need confidence too. It's a delicate balance to get it right. Some people are born with too strong a Jupiter and some people are born with too strong a Saturn. On the whole people who live with these archetypes out of balance in their own psyches get used to handling them, but a transit can kick in with

someone who is not used to one of these energies out of sync and, then, if Saturn is the one who gets turned up high, it feels scary. Fear gets out of hand.

This is when we learn a very important lesson.

You see, we most of us grow up to be what Don Juan calls 'sassy immortals'. We have an inbuilt instinct for self-preservation. When we were helpless babies we screamed and someone responded. The fact we are alive at all proves my point. Had someone not responded to our needs we would never have survived. We might have bad memories of our childhood – our carers may have not been good enough, but nevertheless we wielded some hefty power on those around us. This was a power we took for granted. And it's not just us humans that feel this way, every little woodlouse, bird, bunny or hippopotamus feels the same. They are 'sassy immortals' too. What Don Juan is commenting on is that we feel SO IMPORTANT and SO POWERFUL that we act without due reverence for the enormity of that which gives us life. In short we are idiots.

That's the sassy bit – the immortal bit is simply the way it is as long as we are alive, and we ARE alive aren't we? How can it be any other way?

So, here is the 'wonder' that is you – you are a wonder aren't you? You are the centre of the universe – I am not joking – for you, you really are.

You wake up in the morning and you check out how you feel. You are now the carer for that helpless baby and you take this responsibility seriously – you don't even have to think about it – this baby is the biggest thing in your world. But take a step back, just one step, and you will see you are one of a billion living things on this planet waking up and experiencing this same feeling.

I am writing this on the seventh floor of a building. I look down on the world and I can see these little creatures about the size of ants. Some of them are just walking along, some of them are on bikes or in little dinky cars or buses or lorries, and I am aware every single one of them feels like the most important thing in the whole world. I can't see the little animals or insects down there, they are too small, but they will also be feeling exactly the same. We are mother nature's babies, she operates our unimaginably complicated physical world, and we are the babies of father heaven who is concerned with our complicated software, they are in constant attention, an attention we take for granted. We are tiny dependent parts of an unimaginably complicated system.

When we step out of this for just a minute we can see what Don Juan means by 'sassy immortals' can't we?

It's awesome and bit scary stepping back, like looking at our beautiful but vulnerable little planet from space is awesome, but this over-view lifts us out of our introspection. Suddenly we are not so sassy; we are participants in a magnificent production of breath-taking power. Don Juan calls us 'prisoners of

power', power beyond anything within our power to imagine. Some people call this power God, some people call this power 'fate', Don Juan simply called it power – you can call it what you like.

Right, this is where I get to the point.

Stop fighting. Give up, give in, give way: your fear is meaningless, it's ludicrous. Beyond a certain point, the point where you decide to throw yourself off a bridge into a deep gorge, you are either safe or you are not. It's not your call.

My favourite book in the Old Testament is Ecclesiastes. The speaker is this powerful and rich king. He has absolutely everything. He wants to please God but, oh dear, he works his guts out to please God and he watches his friends, who don't bother even trying, getting away with murder. God, he reckons, is simply unappreciative of his efforts. That's not fair is it?

So he thinks, and I am sure you can empathise with him on this, 'why bother'.

He gives up attempting to please God. He is rich and he is powerful and he can indulge every whim in the book – partying, pretty girls, you name it he can have it, but after a bit he is bored.

So what's next?

He decides to work, he puts his heart into his work. He creates gardens and his palace becomes the most famous palace in the world. But he is bothered by this thought. What happens when he dies? Who will get to enjoy his work – maybe an enemy will take over his palace, or his gardens will be destroyed by some moron with no sensitivity. 'Vanity, vanity, all is vanity', he wails.

Great king he may be but he can't see any purpose in life – nothing seems to matter.

OK this is where he gets smart. One day he's out hunting and there is this dead lion. He looks at this dead animal and he thinks– I would prefer to be a living dog than a dead lion - and it hits him. Yes, he is alive, wow! If that's all there is, it's enough. It's a great gift this life thing.

Then he wonders what insight is he going to leave for the next generation and he comes up with this strange turnabout – he says; 'Fear God'.

See, there's that word 'fear' again. Why after all his pondering and philosophising does he decide this is cool advice? He has already established that God doesn't seem to care one way or another. I think he is thinking the same as Don Juan – he has realised how VERY SMALL he is and how VERY BIG life is and there is nothing like a smattering of awe to put us into the right frame of mind so that we can let fate do its stuff without pitting ourselves against it in a battle we can't win.

So there you have it. Fate is boss. Only an idiot messes with this amazing production without a certain degree of trepidation.

The I Ching agrees. This is from the hexagram Shock.

SHOCK brings success.

SHOCK comes – oh! oh!

Laughing words – ha, ha!

The shock terrifies for a hundred miles,

And he does not let fall the sacrificial spoon and chalice.

This is the spirit that must animate leaders and rulers of men – a profound inner seriousness from which all outer terrors glance off harmlessly.

Thunder repeated: the image of SHOCK.

Thus in fear and trembling

The superior man sets his life in order

And examines himself.

The superior man is always filled with reverence at the manifestation of God (we can translate this as Nature, Fate – whatever you want to call it – Wilhelm was a Christian missionary so, like the speaker in Ecclesiastes, he called it God). He sets his life in order and searches his heart, lest it harbour any secret opposition to the will of God. Thus reverence is the foundation of true culture.'

There we have it once more. Secret opposition – that's what gets us into trouble. We need to experience fear and trembling to keep us in line. Stop fighting. Give up, give in and give way: your fear is meaningless. In the light of the power that is Nature/God/Fate/Life/The Universe your sassy self-indulgence is ludicrous.

Imagine that you are a baby being thrown up in the air. Babies laugh – they laugh because they trust they are safe, they will be caught - they know they are loved. Ha, ha, laughing words says the I Ching. OK, you might not be caught in the way you dream of but give up that sassy immortal way of looking and you will see that with your inevitably short-sighted way of looking at the world your dreams are very likely not really in anyone's – let alone your own - best interest.

So where have we got to? It seems that self-indulgent self-centred fear is a waste of time but the right sort of fear and trepidation is good.

Go ahead, fear and tremble, be afraid. You are right to be afraid, life is awesome.

Maybe we ought to remember that Saturn's partner in crime is Uranus; planet of sudden disruptive change ...

BOO!

Wow, scary.