

## A PERCEPTION OF FEAR

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to refute Lars Svendsen's view of fear which is naturally social in nature. This means that fear is the result of socio-political construction related to two dimensions, the material dimension and the abstract dimension. In the material dimension, for example, fear of binding regulations or legal norms. While in the non-abstract dimension, for example, fear of the future which aims to anticipate it. In other words, fear is behavioral. In this paper, I reject Svendsen's view by reaffirming that fear is naturally personal. This means that fear is a product of the natural urges of the mind itself which are internal and vague. Internal in nature, because fear provides a kind of image or certain sound that directs the mind to do a certain action. While vague in nature because what is directed by the mind is something irrational and deviant. In other words, fear is a priori. The method I use is critical reading, namely, the texts are read first so that a complete understanding is obtained after that, I criticize the understanding to find opportunities for weaknesses and new readings. The results of this study are that fear is a part of the mind's instrument itself which is attached and difficult to separate from thinking activities so that it precedes any experience or sensation from the object of fear. In other words, fear is not an external structure that affects a person's mentality but rather an internal structure that affects the mentality.*

**Keywords:** *Fear; Social Construction; Mind Construction.*

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membantah pandangan Lars Svendsen tentang rasa takut yang secara alamiah bersifat sosial. Artinya, rasa takut merupakan hasil konstruksi sosial politik yang terkait dengan dua dimensi, yaitu dimensi material dan dimensi abstrak. Pada dimensi material misalnya, rasa takut terhadap peraturan atau norma hukum yang mengikat. Sedangkan pada dimensi nonabstrak misalnya, rasa takut terhadap masa depan yang bertujuan untuk mengantisipasi. Dengan kata lain, rasa takut bersifat perilaku. Dalam tulisan ini, saya menolak pandangan Svendsen dengan menegaskan kembali bahwa rasa takut secara alamiah bersifat personal. Artinya, rasa takut merupakan produk dari dorongan alamiah pikiran itu sendiri yang bersifat internal dan samar. Bersifat internal, karena rasa takut memberikan semacam gambaran atau bunyi tertentu yang mengarahkan pikiran untuk melakukan suatu tindakan tertentu. Sedangkan bersifat samar karena yang diarahkan oleh pikiran merupakan sesuatu yang tidak rasional dan menyimpang. Dengan kata lain, rasa takut bersifat apriori. Metode yang saya gunakan adalah *critical reading*, yaitu teks dibaca terlebih dahulu sehingga diperoleh pemahaman yang utuh setelah itu, saya mengkritisi pemahaman tersebut untuk mencari peluang kelemahan dan pembacaan baru. Hasil penelitian ini adalah bahwa rasa takut merupakan bagian dari instrumen pikiran itu sendiri yang melekat dan sulit dipisahkan dari aktivitas berpikir sehingga mendahului setiap pengalaman atau sensasi dari objek rasa takut. Dengan kata lain, rasa takut bukanlah struktur eksternal yang mempengaruhi mental seseorang melainkan struktur internal yang mempengaruhi mental seseorang.

**Kata Kunci:** Ketakutan; Konstruksi Sosial; Konstruksi Pikiran.

## Introduction

The discourse on the origin of ideas in the study of epistemology is important because it is part of the fundamental question about the process of how someone knows something. Therefore, I need to first clarify what is meant by an idea and the process of its emergence, both including the impulse in the mind and those related to its object. The assumption is that an idea as an impulse in the mind is not related to any sensation or impression stored as data in the mind. This means that sensation or impression does not refer to a particular experience object so that the two are not related to each other. In this context, the experience of objects also contributes significantly to the sensation or impression. In other words, through sensation or impression, the mind actually contributes significantly to getting ideas. Or it can also be said that sensation or impression is a copy of the ideas in the mind so that it can be printed in the mind. In this context, sensation or impression functions as a person's initial recognition of a particular object so that it produces a data. Meanwhile, ideas are a further understanding of these objects through mental activity which is first received through sensations or impressions.<sup>1</sup>

There are two types of fear that are the core of this research description,

namely, fear as a mental drive (a priori) and fear as an external construct (behavior). For me, fear is a mental drive with the assumption that the emergence of certain mental images in the mind instantly leads the mind to an unclear idea of fear and forces it to certain actions. For example, the idea of fear as a mental drive to face the audience when asked to give a lecture that later the condition of the audience will be like this or like that. In this condition, the idea of fear actually controls the mind which actually precedes the experience (lecture) so that, with the idea of fear, it forces the person to hasten the lecture material. On the other hand, when the mind is able to respond to the mental drive in the form of an unclear idea (lazy idea) in the mind with other clear ideas (ideas to optimize the lecture material), then the mental drive regarding fear will be slowly neutralized. As for fear as an external construct, the assumption is that there is something outside of oneself as a material entity whose existence is independent of the mind, but it determines the mind's response. For example, the barking of a dog that is responded to by the mind in the form of an idea that a dog bite is dangerous and needs to be avoided is an external construction. In this context, the idea of a dangerous dog bite is an entity outside of oneself (external object) which is then responded to as a clear idea of fear by the mind so that it becomes something that needs to be avoided. In other words, the external object outside of oneself which is then referred to as the entity is responded to by the mind in an "effect" that influences the self which can be considered as a clear idea construction.<sup>2</sup>

The problem that then arises regarding fear as a mental drive is the assumption that the idea of fear exists in the mind. The assumption is that everything thought and understood by the mind confirms that it is the object of the act of thinking. By making the mental drive the object of the act of thinking, therefore, it also confirms that as an entity it must exist in the mind. In this context, the mental drive as an existing mental entity is then better known as psychological mental objects. Fear as a psychological mental drive then becomes a certain condition within oneself that is related to self-ability in handling certain situations. It can also be said that fear as a mental drive is also a problem related to the pedagogical dimension that aims to rearrange the mind so that fear is part of the facts of life. In other words, in the psychological dimension, fear is part of "self-learning" in responding to life's problems so that the mind can interpret them positively. As "self-learning" or an educational aspect, the problem of fear can be faced along with a person's experience in overcoming the condition of fear. The key word is that the idea of fear and "experience" is a medium for someone to be able to go beyond it or be confined by

the medium. Precisely, in interacting with the impulse of fear, sometimes another impulse of thought appears in the head as if in the form of a “voice”, to surrender or submit to the impulse of fear itself. Consequently, for those who are trapped in that condition and submit to the impulse of their thoughts, then fear will control the mind because the encouragement of fear “leads” or directs the mind to follow certain actions.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, the problem that then arises from fear as an external construction that as an entity it is different from the subject and free from its intervention. In words, it assumes the existence of a certain structure outside the mind so that the mind responds from the structure that forms it. Benveniste emphasizes that the mind and reality are two parallel things even though language plays an important role in making the connection between the two explicit. According to him, the mind does not care which language is used to refer to reality. The reason is because language functions as a ‘container’ that makes it difficult to imagine that as a function it is empty of its contents (the reality referred to). Or rather the ‘content’ (reality) is free from its ‘container’ (language) into something that cannot be imagined with common sense.<sup>4</sup> In this context, reality is something that is separate from the subject who thinks about it and therefore, language becomes a “tool” to connect the two. Reality is therefore something that exists outside of oneself and at the same time becomes an object for oneself so that from it, something can be understood as this and that. Self-understanding of “fear” as reality in this study is through the role of sensory perception. Fear as an object of reality is therefore a reality that can be understood even though the object for oneself is a different entity and is separate from the subject’s reach.

From the two types of fear, namely fear as a mental impulse and fear as an external construction, it can also be said that there is a separation between two qualities of fear, namely subjective fear and objective fear. Internal fear is the affirmation of certain conditions as qualities that depend entirely on the mind. While objective fear is the affirmation of certain entities as qualities that are independent of the mind.<sup>5</sup> Ekternal fear assumes that there are qualities of fear outside of oneself that are “attached” to its object. In other words, the statement that: “I am afraid”, must refer to the object of fear as its reference that represents the content of the expression. The content of the statement of what is stated as the object of the discussion in the context is the real object of the reference of the proposition. Essentially, the content of the statement is a conception or proposition about the existence of the object that is true.<sup>6</sup> These two distinctions are typologies that I provide in general regarding the nature

of fear based on the dimensions of its emergence. These distinctions differ from Porges' typology that fear is divided into two, related to the external environment and the internal environment.<sup>7</sup>

I will try to describe examples of different cases of fear which will also provide a distinction of its theoretical abstraction. There are cases that refer to the object of experience directly. For example, fear of shark bites because of the experience of being bitten by a shark in the open ocean. In this example, the fear of shark bites and the open ocean is due to the result of the real experience itself. The second case, which does not refer to the object of experience directly. For example, fear of being bitten by a megalodon shark in the open ocean because it is based on the experience of watching a Megalodon movie in the cinema. In this example, the fear of shark bites and the open ocean is due to the result of the unreal experience itself. Both the first and second examples, I classify as cases of physiodimensional fear which means, fear is a mental symptom that can be drawn to physical reality in real terms, or in fantasy. The third case, which does not refer to any object of experience. For example, fear of torture after death based on theological revelation. In the example, the fear of death and torture is the result of narratives of faith that are adjusted to the fact of natural experience that in life there must be punishment and reward. In the last example, the fear of death and torture, I classify as a case of transdimensional fear.

Different from the previous examples, the example that I will present next concerns fear that refers to external causes that allow for the experience of fear itself. External fear is generally divided into three, namely concrete, virtual and abstract external fear. Concrete external fear, for example, is fear of a fierce teacher because of the assignment given and the tense learning method. While virtual external fear, for example, is fear of losing money because with the loss of the money, one cannot make payments which in reality, the money is valuable because it is virtual. This means that fear of losing money is not fear of losing the paper, but rather, fear of losing the nominal value. It means the same thing, when afraid of the balance in the m-banking or e-wallet application being lost, in which case, the object being feared is the result of abstraction in the form of numbers. Meanwhile, abstract fear is related to something that is the result of abstraction but it is much more principled. For example, fear of lying because it is related to certain norms that when violated, make the heart guilty. This means that the principles above are also the result of abstraction. In other words, there are various examples of fear that I have typologized so that they produce various concepts of fear.

The problem that then arises concerns the process of perception involving the direct and physical presence of objects. The first step is to clarify that during the perceiving process, the subject needs the object being perceived as a “reference”. This means that during the perceiving process, a man also determines the object of what he perceives as a direction for the activity he perceives. It is very difficult to imagine the process when someone perceives but he does not have the object of what he perceives. Even when someone is “daydreaming”, that activity still require an object as the content of an action. However, the objects of perception and “daydreaming”, both are an object for different actions. First, the object of perception is something that is clear both empirically and rational. For example, the act of perceiving a table as an object for perception. Or, the object for the act of perception is in the form of abstract mathematical calculation concepts. Second, the object of “daydreaming” is still related to something clear even though it is not related to thinking activities to find a way to solve a problem as part of the content of the mind. For example, the object of “daydreaming” is that wages and income do not increase but are not accompanied by an increase in business as an effort to solve the problem. Lastly, the object of “stunned” is something that is unclear and not related to reality or the problem and any resolution efforts that will be made.<sup>8</sup>

The next problems concerns is about the status of the relation between the observer and the object being observed as far as the relationship between the two is something that is mandatory or vice versa. To further explain the differences between the two, in my point of view, can be enter through a discourse regarding the differences between ontological realism and epistemological realism. The claim of ontological realism is about “what is” with the doctrine that the object known is real which is also related to beliefs about the existence of that object. The claim of epistemological realism is regarding the “cognitive object” of the mind which is mental with the doctrine that what is understood is real which then produces different ways.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the relation between the observer and the object being observed confirms the understanding of realism that the object being observed is real and must have an independent existence. In addition, the objects observed produce certain understandings in the mind that are mental in nature. In other words, what is said to be understanding is part of a psychological process. The problem that then arises is regarding the determination of certain criteria that can be said to be “something real” and “something non-real”.<sup>10</sup>

In a different context, an intentional relationship actually occurs between the observer and the object he observes. The assumption is that

the object determines the content of the observer's understanding in the form of psychological mental images. Further argumentation, that the object directs the mind, is first of all by assuming that there are two separate things, namely the object and the subject. This separation also means that there are two different loci, namely the object that is perceived and the subject that perceives. In these conditions, the perceived object actually determines and directs the subject's thoughts regarding a certain understanding as an idea. This idea is a property or attribution of the object being perceived, thereby negating the qualities inherent in the perceiving subject. Furthermore, there are two locus models, first, the locus of beliefs about objects like this and like that. Second, the existence of objects that are understood like this and like that. With these two differences in locus, it actually presupposes an understanding of the object in accordance with what is believed and in accordance with what is understood. For example, when someone perceives himself in front of the mirror that he believes he is handsome and attractive. Meanwhile, on the other hand, there are different people who look in the mirror and think they are mediocre but other people say otherwise. From these two different loci, there needs to be a supposition regarding "property" that supports to justify both the first locus and the second locus. The next step is to justify that the two loci are appropriate or compatible with the properties used to confirm both beliefs about the existence of the object and self-understanding about the object.<sup>11</sup>

Regardless of ideas originating from the encourage of a mind or ideas that come from the environment from experience, the nature of the mind is to think about something that includes "space" which is in the dimension of self-existence. Apart from that, the nature of the mind is related to aspects of life both past and present. Thinking about things past and present requires another mental instrument, namely memory, which functions to "restore" (throwback) or rearrange and bring back impressions that are scattered and have passed. What is returned is the content of the experience in the form of impressions regarding an experience or event to be presented again in the mind in the present as an ideas. In other words, the process of bringing back ideas about memories by the subject through their consciousness so that they also present the meaning of an event.<sup>12</sup> This remembering process also makes it seem as if the subject can "bring back" ideas related to certain impressions in the past. The function and process of thinking activities are therefore related to time and space which also corresponds to certain experiences. In other hand, the thinking process must be in a certain time and space and refer to experiences that



are interrelated between the two.<sup>13</sup>

### **Fear of External Conditions**

In this sub-chapter, I will briefly review but not leave out the important substance of Svendsen's view on fear. Referring to the introduction that Svendsen wrote in the book *Philosophy of Fear*, he asserts that fear is a culture that conditions a situation so that it takes away individual freedom. Quoting Svendsen's statement:

“A paradoxical trait of the culture of fear is that it emerges at a time when, by all accounts, we are living more securely than ever before in human history”.<sup>14</sup>

According to Svendsen, fear is not just something that someone just faces without any desire. That is, fear is also often something that someone must face voluntarily in an effort to go beyond the routine of everyday life. Therefore, in the book *Philosophy of Fear*, Svendsen expresses the purpose of writing the book as follows:

“I attempt in this book to unravel what kind of an emotion fear is, what role it plays in present-day culture and, not least, what political use is made of it”.<sup>15</sup>

Svendsen's philosophical approach is based on everyday culture that he reflects and captures as a phenomenon. In a different book, Svendsen reviews *Boredom and Meaning*, according to which the role of mass media is very important in spreading a person's interest in strange things that actually form awareness of boredom itself. In addition, the sudden rush to find entertainment actually shows a person's fear of the emptiness around them. This rush is a demand for satisfaction, and a lack of satisfaction so that the two are closely related. The stronger the individual's life becomes the center of public attention, the stronger the urge for meaning among the trivial things in his daily life. Svendsen's reason is because humans, several centuries ago, began to see themselves as individual beings who had to be aware of themselves so that everyday life seemed like a prison. Therefore, boredom is not related to actual needs but to desires. And this desire is a desire for sensory stimulation so that this stimulation becomes the only thing that is considered “interesting”.<sup>16</sup>

Svendsen then put forward a fairly sharp reason regarding the reason why someone really needs reality as a reality of life, namely, that in the reality of life, a drama of life actually takes place. In other words, in survival, someone projects himself into the future where something that is not yet known but becomes a “terminal” that must be passed. However, besides heading forward as a projection of oneself, survival also remains



based on the present as a basis for reality. Therefore, as a reality of life, quoting Svendsen, the future is a better key to the present than the past. However, to experience reality requires a moral attitude and responsibility, namely moral freedom to evaluate psychopathological conditions as a game. Furthermore, that moral freedom is to go further to experience fear that natural fear is not about death but our desire to calculate the most elegant parameters for death itself.<sup>17</sup> In other words, in my opinion, starting from reality actually confirms that boredom and fear are natural human experiences.

As an affirmation of my previous statement that boredom and fear are two things or conditions that humans experience in their lives that are interesting for Svendsen to analyze further. This means that fear and boredom are something external that determines a person so that it influences the way they think and act. Or rather, fear and boredom are something natural internal to humans themselves that is not related to the form of external conditioning (institutions or hegemony) for a person. However, what I need to emphasize is that how to think and act as fear involves the role of emotions according to Svendsen, for whom emotions are a habit. By making emotions a habit. Svendsen does not intend to completely eliminate the natural element of emotion. His goal is to emphasize that a person's emotional device can be formed. Emotions are not just something that is "given", but something that can be developed and changed. Habits in general for Svendsen can be described as responses that are obtained by someone that are usually not realized by people but can be realized. Therefore, habits are based on the repetition of an individual's ability.<sup>18</sup>

Svendsen asserts that habit is second nature. This assertion presupposes a very basic and clear habit in a person's relationship with reality. Habits include two binary oppositions, namely, physical habits and mental habits, and tying a knot in a certain way, trying to understand words in a certain way, and reacting emotionally to certain objects and situations can all be described as habits. Every person has many habits of which he is not aware, for the simple reason that consciousness is not usually directed to them. According to Svendsen, habits form more of a "background" for what is the target of consciousness. Habits determine what a person usually looks for in a certain type of situation. Habits select the objects that are the target of consciousness, either by habitually looking at them in a certain way or because they are for some reason inconsistent with habit. From this point of view, habits are conditions that make perception possible. But at the same time, habits narrow the scope of understanding because they

eliminate a number of certain phenomena that are considered irrelevant.<sup>19</sup>

Svendsen's hypothesis is that fear is a habitual process. With this hypothesis, Svendsen did not have in mind a strong and extraordinary fear, but rather what could be described as a fear of low intensity. Although, this habitual nature also applies to phobias to some extent. Quoting Svendsen, Psychologist Isaac Marks, who is one of the world's leading theorists in the field of fear and anxiety disorders, believes that many phobias are largely acquired. For example, the fearful behavior of a mother or father, for example, can be passed on to their children from their home environment. This condition argues for habituation and focus on potentially dangerous things in everything in reality. Therefore Svendsen distinguishes between fear as a general disposition and fear as an actual emotion. The person who is truly afraid of heights is not the one who stands trembling next to and close to the edge of the roof, but the one who will do anything to avoid any kind of high place. The assumption is that people who have a very deep fear of heights systematically do everything possible to avoid any situation where fear can manifest as a real emotion. A different case is precisely the condition of fear of falling from a ladder that is not too high which confirms that the feeling of fear is not always the same, varying not only in intensity but also in quality. Fear of heights is involved in an "internal battle of the self" so that it has a different quality from the fear of falling from a ladder that is not high. The difference lies in the quality of fear and its nature, namely as a long-term mental illness that is different from the fear of falling from a ladder as a direct and short-term physical injury.<sup>20</sup>

In the study of fear, citing Svendsen, the emotionally intense variant is the type that is most often emphasized. The type of fear that is dominant in a culture, as in the case mentioned above, is more of what can be called low-intensity fear, that is, fear that surrounds real life and forms the background of experience and interpretation of the world. This condition is a fear that is more of a mood than an emotion. This condition can also be called "distracted fear", that is, fear that is not directly confronted with a threatening object or because of previous exposure to it. This fear is rather a fear that manifests itself as a feeling of uncertainty, a feeling that there is a possibility of danger that can strike without warning and that the world is an unsafe place. Fear in this condition is therefore more part of a way of looking at the world, in which one's own vulnerability is considered above all else. In other words, in reality, fear has a direct impact on risk which reaffirms that everything is uncertain. In other words, what is really dangerous, where the danger comes from, and how dangerous it is are precisely uncertainties. That is, danger is a manifestation of fear itself as a

real situation and inherent in environment.<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, it is also very difficult to distinguish clearly between biological, physiological and social aspects of emotions. Also very difficult to distinguish clearly between biological, physiological and social aspects of emotions. Although emotions undoubtedly have a biological basis, it is clear that they are also shaped by individual experience and social norms. Emotions have an evolutionary, social and personal history, and to understand them more deeply it is necessary to take all three into account. Svendsen understands that emotions are not simply “natural” and immediate, they are also socially constructed. Norms about when it is appropriate to have and show certain emotions vary from culture to culture and also in relation to social status. The ability to learn language is another example of a universal human phenomenon and also has a biological basis, but semantic resources vary from culture to culture and from individual to individual. The same seems to be true for emotions. What a person fears, and how strong that fear is, depends on his or her conception of the world, what dangerous forces are in it and what possibilities one has to protect oneself from them. Therefore, a person’s knowledge and experience of emotions are inseparable from the social context in which they occur.<sup>22</sup>

Svendsen also criticizes Ponty’s distinction between natural and conventional levels of emotion. For Ponty, it is impossible to distinguish between “natural” and “conventional” levels of emotion and expression in humans, where “natural” and “conventional” emotions overlap without being clearly distinguished. For Svendsen, he believes that Merleau Ponty overstates the randomness of emotions and expressions, although Ponty has a point. Some emotions are quite similar in the way they are expressed physiologically. In studies where people were asked to identify other people’s emotions from photographs, most people were able to identify happy, sad, and angry faces, while far fewer were able to identify fearful faces, which were often mistaken for anger, remembrance, and surprise. These emotions are usually quite distinct when experienced subjectively, although it must be admitted that, for example, anger often contains an element of fear.<sup>23</sup> In my opinion, the natural level of fear is when fear is still pre-reflective and has not yet been directed at any object of anger (authentic). While the conventional level of fear is when fear has been directed at the object of anger that is situational by circumstances or mood.

According to Svendsen, the concept of risk is almost exclusively negative, with a few exceptions – such as in the stock market and extreme sports. More broadly, “risk” has become synonymous with “danger”. There is considerable disagreement about what kind of risk it is, whether it is

something objective or a social construct. There is an objective aspect to risk, just as there is an objective causal relationship, but there is also something more to risk than that, namely the subjective and social elements of risk. Furthermore, risk does not exist independently of the person affected by it. The probability of a particular event occurring can in many cases be calculated objectively, but risk is more than just the probability of a particular event occurring. The relevant concept of risk must also take into account the role that the event plays for the person affected, and this is not an objective relationship. Furthermore, for Svendsen, it is clear that any relationship with risk is socially situated. The discourse on risk is therefore a selection process in which one risk is given greater emphasis while others are neglected. The reason why certain forms of risk are emphasised at the expense of others is because they fit into a larger totality of conceptions, especially moral ones, which vary from culture to culture. There is no reason to believe that one's conception of risk is independent of the social context in which it is perceived.<sup>24</sup>

Humans in reality face a cycle of changing circumstances that lead to extreme changes. These inevitable changes are part of the material changes inherent in life. For example, the earth, air and water are increasingly polluted, that crime continues to increase, that food is increasingly full of dangerous additives and pollutants. This condition can be further imagined that humans are increasingly exposed to all kinds of dangers and that these dangers are becoming more frequent and more acute. Quoting Svendsen, in a survey in which people were asked to rate various potentially dangerous activities or objects, from jogging and cosmetics to terrorism and vaccines, only 25 were considered increasingly dangerous, while no less than 62 were considered increasingly dangerous, and 13 of them were very dangerous. Most risk analysis would claim that the level of danger in most of the phenomena included in the survey has actually decreased significantly. According to Svendsen, the results of the survey are not an anomaly at all but, on the contrary, are the prevailing perception among most people. This means that the role of public perception is important in facing greater risks today than before, and that conditions will get worse in the future. Svendsen believes that fear is also contagious, that is, if someone becomes afraid of something, the fear tends to spread to other people, who in turn spread it further into their social environment. Although there is initially no rational basis for the fear, many people are afraid of something that is felt massively. Thus, because fear is something external and behavioristic, it cannot be concluded that the phenomenon is something to be feared.<sup>25</sup>

In my opinion, by reading Svendsen, he provides two typologies of fear, namely basic fear and non-natural fear. Non-natural fear is fear related to perception and risk and the future as the object of fear. Its characteristic is that the object of fear is perceived negatively and conditioned continuously so that fear continues to be produced and forcibly associated with other events. Therefore, fear at its furthest point is related to attitudes and self-concerns that are conditioned by the environment that forms it and is conceptual. While natural fear is fear related to perception and psychological dangers as the object of fear. Its characteristic is that the object of fear is perceived as a real and short-term threat so that it needs to be avoided immediately.<sup>26</sup> In other words, basic fear is related to perception and danger that needs to be avoided immediately, while non-natural fear is related to perception and future concerns that need to be anticipated. Both basic fear and non-natural fear are external fears that condition the self.

### **Hyper Real, Ultra Real and Trance Real**

This sub-discussion emphasizes the idea of fear and the process of its emergence, both covering the urge in the mind and related to the object of fear itself. The assumption is that the idea of fear as an urge in the mind is closely related to sensations which are then stored as certain data. This means that sensations refer to certain ideas so that sensations and ideas are related to each other. In addition, experience also contributes significantly to the emergence of ideas in the mind. In other words, through sensations and experiences, the mind has an important contribution to getting ideas. Or it can also be said that through sensations and experiences ideas are also imprinted in the mind. Sensation in this context is a person's initial recognition of a certain object using their senses. While ideas are further understanding of these objects through the activity of the mind. Therefore, sensation is an activity that involves the senses so that it is descriptive of the object. As for ideas, they are activities that involve the mind such as abstraction, remembering, imagining and so on so that they are an understanding of the object. In other words, the mind is dualistic, that is, on the one hand it is passive but on the other hand it is active, thus confirming that the mind has its own activity after obtaining data that has been obtained from sensation.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, fear related to the object itself is something that is outside of oneself as an external reality. External reality means that there is a separation between the subject and the object so that the two are different. The assumption is that external objects such as the stars, moon or sun are entities as reality, not self-entities. However, these external objects can

be understood as ideas by the subject through the mind. In other words, external objects are entities outside of oneself while the self is another entity so that the two are not related to each other. Although the two are not related to each other, the external object can be understood by the subject through the mind in the form of ideas. For example, the process of “rotting” or decomposition of water hyacinth plants which have their own organic mechanisms apart from the existence of the self.<sup>28</sup> In the process of decomposing water hyacinth, it will produce organic materials such as nitrate and phosphate which can then enrich the nutrients in the water. In other words, it emphasizes the importance that external objects (material reality) have their own “world” without involving the existence of self.<sup>29</sup>

From the two types of fear, namely fear as a drive and fear as a reality, I will try to provide a relevant analogy. Fear as a drive assumes that there is something inside the self whose emergence is difficult to avoid so that its existence is attached to the self. For example, the idea of laziness or laziness as a drive or impulse within the self. In such conditions, the idea of laziness sometimes controls the self so that it is reluctant to do any action that leads to the loss of desire. In other words, if the self is able to respond to the idea of laziness in its mind with other ideas that are counter to it, the desire to do something will reappear. While fear as a reality assumes that there is something outside the self whose existence is separate from the mind or as an object for the mind. For example, the idea of a dangerous dog bite is an object for the mind that must be avoided. In this context, the idea of a dangerous dog bite is an entity outside the self which is then responded to so that it becomes something that needs to be avoided. In other words, the external object outside the self which is then referred to as the entity provides an “effect” that influences the self to act. This means that both the idea as a drive and the idea as a reality, both become reasons for the self to act and respond to it. In other words, fear as something in the mind and fear as something in the object can be distinguished and give rise to an action for oneself.<sup>30</sup>

Reanalyzing fear as a drive is therefore important by emphasizing that, as an entity, it exists. Thus, fear as a drive is psychologically a situation related to a decrease in self-ability in handling situations. Different from the psychological aspect on the other hand, fear as a drive is also a matter of education and re-educating the mind so that fear is part of the facts of life. In other words, fear is part of “self-learning” in responding to life’s problems so that the mind can interpret them positively. As “self-learning” or an educational aspect, the issue of fear can be faced along with a person’s experience in overcoming that fear. The keywords in this context are the

idea of fear and “experience” as steps for a person to overcome it or just let it be. In interacting with fear, sometimes a “voice” appears in a person’s head to give up or submit to the fear itself. Consequently, the person will live in fear because fear “leads” or directs the mind to follow certain actions. Explicitly, for someone who is surrounded by the idea of fear in his mind, then the idea of fear will dictate, regulate and control the mind so that the mind tends to direct to surrender and submit to the idea of fear. In this context, there is a “fight” within oneself to submit to the idea of fear or to fight it. If self-awareness has peaked and realizes that the idea of fear is destroying oneself, then at that time the idea of fear can be controlled by oneself.<sup>31</sup>

Further arguments about fear as an impulse are related to data and certain experiences within the subject. For someone who is “wrapped” into a box and then taken to a place and upon arriving at that place, he is still left in the box. In that context, what can be recognized by the mind of the person in the box is only the idea of “confusion”. Confusion in the sense of bringing, ideas cannot recognize external objects or situations as realities outside of themselves. Or worse, when the box is placed on the edge of a building at a sufficient height, the person still does not recognize external objects or situations outside of themselves as realities. In other words, in that context, the impulse of fear within oneself regarding the idea of “height” has not yet emerged. However, after the person is taken out of the box and all the barriers that block his senses are opened, he can recognize the situation and reality. In fact, the impulse regarding the idea of “fear” and the idea of “height” will immediately appear in his mind. From the argument of the person in the box, it can be asserted that the impulse regarding fear is closely related to a person’s senses of objects or realities outside of themselves.

While reanalyzing fear as reality is also important with the assumption that as an entity it is different from the subject and independent of its intervention. Benveniste emphasizes that mind and reality are two parallel things even though language plays an important role in making explicit the connection between the two. According to him, the mind does not care which language is used to refer to reality. Because as a ‘container’, it is difficult to imagine language as empty of its contents (the reality referred to). Or rather the “content” (reality) is independent of its “container” (language).<sup>32</sup> In other words, in this context, reality is something that is separate from the subject who thinks about it and therefore, language becomes a “tool” to connect the two. Reality is therefore something that exists outside of oneself and at the same time becomes an object for



oneself so that from it, something can be understood as this and that. Self-understanding of the reality of “fear” in this study is through the role of perception. Fear as an object is therefore a reality that can be understood even though the object is a different entity for oneself.

Further argument about fear as a reality is that it is an external object for perception so that the subject and object are two different entities. For example, for most people when crossing a cemetery at night alone, the idea of fear about the cemetery will appear in their heads. The cemetery in this context is a direct object for perception or as an external reality for the subject. As an external reality, a cemetery is a place where the body of a deceased person is buried. Objectively, the body of a living person and the body of a deceased person are other entities for the subject who perceives the two differences. Thus, the differences between the two become clear to the subject and are entities outside of themselves. While the cemetery itself is generally a large area of land with markers, either tombstones or mounds of earth that indicate that it is someone’s grave. In other words, for most people who cross a cemetery, the idea of fear will appear in their heads because the cemetery is a reality outside of themselves.

From the examples of fear and argumentation above, I provide three typologies, namely Hyper Fear, Ultra Fear and Trans Fear. I use these three terms spontaneously to refer to different case examples, along with the difference between fear as a mental impulse and fear as a reality. For that, allow me to provide different examples which I will then mark into the concepts that I have made earlier. For the first example, there is someone who is afraid of drowning in a swimming pool because it was previously preceded by the experience of drowning in a swimming pool. The idea of fear that appears in the head comes from a copy of a concrete experience that is stored deeply in memory so that the past memory is imprinted and projected into the person’s current experience. In my opinion, in line with Hume’s view that ideas are copies of vague impressions. Furthermore, I argue that memory is a copy of ideas that are much vaguer. This means that remembering is the same as storing a copy of a copy so that it moves away from direct and clear concrete experience. However, you need to be careful in categorizing memory. First, there are memories whose objects are events, sounds or texts so that they have their own characteristics from each other. In remembering events, capturing them with the sense of sight or sound so that what is stored is the association of the event as a non-material object. While in remembering sounds, capturing them with the sense of hearing only so that what is stored is the material acoustic side of the sound. As for remembering texts, capturing them with the sense of

sight so that what is stored is the visual and associative elements of the text.

The second example is someone who is afraid of drowning in a swimming pool even though he has never swum at all. The idea of fear that appears in the head does not come from a copy of any concrete experience that is stored deeply in the memory so that it does not have any past memories that are imprinted. Oddly enough, even though it does not have a Copy of the idea in the form of a memory, it has a picture of fear copied from other people's experiences that are projected into the person's current experience. In my opinion, a Copy of the idea in the form of a memory taken from other people's experiences or indirectly, is much more vague than one's own memory which comes from personal experience. The reason is, the indirect experience from other people does not represent any personal experience experienced directly by the person. In short, other people's experiences are not necessarily in accordance with one's own experience so that making it the only measure and assuming that it will apply the same and generally is a mistake. The reason is, each person has a different "readiness" (potential) with different concrete situations. By equating all experiences into one and making the only one as a measure, it is empirically unclear. That is, remembering or copying ideas from other people's indirect experiences is the same as keeping copies of Copies so that it distances itself from direct and clear concrete experience.

The third example is someone who is afraid of something that happens after death with the belief that there is life after death. The idea of fear about life after death is not obtained through direct or indirect experience, but rather obtained from theological information. This means that someone does not have direct access to experience life after death. Access in the sense of witnessing the event as a personal experience either directly or indirectly. If you watch a film that visualizes a picture of life after death, then in my opinion, it does not refer to any event that comes from authentic experience. Authentic in the sense that the filmmaker or the audience has never actually experienced the event of life after death directly. When the experience is given by someone who has experienced near-death, for example, then skeptically, the person who gave the testimony has not experienced life after death. The reason is, the person has experienced life before death again so that the basis for the occurrence of "cross-events" at a relatively simultaneous time is something strange. Therefore, the idea of fear about life after death does not come from any concrete experience. By copying the idea of fear in a memory that does not originate from any sensory experience, the idea becomes very vague and unrelated to the reality of any experience. The idea is eventually accepted as a belief rather

than as knowledge.

From the first example, I abstracted it into a concept that I termed hyper fear. The reason is because the experience of fear is still a copy of a concrete experience and event, although between the two, namely the copied and the copy, they correspond but are difficult to distinguish. This means that in this first typology, the idea of fear comes from direct experience but is over-generalized. As a result, the idea of fear is depicted in a material dimension that is blurry in the mind but has a fairly clear frightening impact. From the second example, I abstracted it into a concept that I termed ultra fear. The reason is because the experience of the event of fear does not come from any concrete experience or event so that between the copied and the copy there is no correspondence but can be distinguished. This means that in this second typology, the idea of fear comes from indirect experience but is rashly generalized. As a result, the idea of fear is depicted in a material dimension that is very blurry in the mind but still has a clear frightening impact. Meanwhile, from the third example, I abstracted it into a concept that I termed trans fear. The reason is because the experience of the event of fear does not come from any concrete experience or event so that, between what is copied (event or experience) and its copy (idea or memory) there is no correspondence and cannot be distinguished. It cannot be distinguished because between what is copied and its copy, its correspondence cannot be mediated empirically. This means that in this third typology, the idea of fear does not come from experience either directly or indirectly but is considered as a reality. As a result, the idea of fear is depicted in its material dimension very vaguely in the mind because it requires the help of visualization and imagination that are not compatible with the reality of authentic experience. However, it still has a frightening impact that is dark and light. Dark, for those who trace it through empirical validation and light for those who trace it through validation of belief.

## Conclusion

For the adherents of the Externalism perspective (fear of being a social construction), impressions are a way to test the limitations of reason with the method of observation and experience. This process leads to an attempt to test the clarity of ideas, although this method can never achieve a full and adequate conception so that it is limited to experience itself. The reason is because, anything that can be divided in limitations must consist of an infinite number of parts. Or rather, if it still sets limits to the number of parts, then it also sets limits to the possibilities. Therefore, impressions can

also be called ideas of the imagination insofar as they relate to the content of experience data in the mind. Furthermore, it does not take much effort to conclude that ideas formed from each finite quality cannot be divided into infinity. In addition, Hume refers to the distinction and separation that can be reduced to lower ideas that are truly simple and inseparable. By denying that the capacity of the mind is infinite, Hume also thought that it would end in the division of an idea. This means that it is impossible to escape from the conclusion that ideas for experience are limited so that the limitations of the limited cannot be made clear.<sup>33</sup> In my opinion, it is from the sensory data that is given that is then used as a structure that determines how the mind should respond. At its furthest point, I want to emphasize that objects are no longer neutral and correlated with the mind naturally but rather, they are the result of a construction that structures the mind.

Meanwhile, for adherents of the internalist view (fear as a construction of the mind), sensory perception is not related to the capacity of reason which has a different function, namely to think. Thinking therefore involves existence as long as I think.<sup>34</sup> In my opinion, the thinking I then affirms the existence of the thinking self that it exists as the thinking self and the self that has a body. This means that the thinking I and the thinking body are two different things so that by distinguishing the two, Descartes' view is included in the dualism school. In Meditation for example, Descartes first doubts the senses that can deceive then, the mind that can also be deceived by a cunning, powerful and clever devil (an evil genius supremely powerful and clever) as a source of truth and tries to deceive oneself. The review is in the first meditation things that can eliminate doubts so as to prove the existence of God and the difference between the soul and the body. The consequence is a strict separation of something related to the mind (*res cogitant*) and the body or object outside the self that has a different breadth from the mind (*res extenta*).<sup>35</sup> These consequences lead to the discovery of the cogito regarding innate ideas, namely the Ideas of Mind, Soul and God. For Descartes, innate ideas (*a priori*) are clear and distinct as a truth rather than ideas derived from experience.<sup>36</sup> In other words, it is interesting to explore the idea of fear as an innate (*a priori*) drive or as a reality that actually comes from the environment (behavior).

## **Endnotes**

1. Sensation or sensory impression is an activity that involves sensory experience so that it is descriptive of the object. Ideas are activities that involve the mind such as abstraction, remembering, imagining and so on so that they are an understanding of the object. In other words, the mind is dualistic, namely passive and active. This means that the mind has

- its own activity after experiencing certain sensations or sensory impressions that have been obtained from the object.
2. Rizky Yazid, *An Inquiry on Knowledge of Fear and Memory* (Yogyakarta: Mata Kata, 2023).
  3. For someone who is surrounded by thoughts of fear in their mind, the idea of fear will dictate, regulate and control the mind so that the mind tends to direct them to surrender and submit to that urge. In this context, a "fight" occurs within oneself to submit to the idea of fear or actually fight it. If self-awareness has peaked and realized that the idea of fear is destroying the self, then at that moment the idea of fear can be controlled by the mind. See, Sussan Jeffers, *Feel The Fear and Do It Anyway* (Jeffers Press, 1987), 11-12.
  4. Vicki Kirby, *Telling Flesh The Substance of the Corporeal* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 22.
  5. Yazid, *Knowledge of Fear*, 151.
  6. This theses assumption, refer to William P. Alston, *The Nature of Truth Classic and Contemporary Perspectives* (London: The MIT Press, 2001), 41.
  7. Stephen W. Porges, *The Polyvagal Theory Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-Regulation* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011).
  8. See, Yazid, *Knowledge of Fear*, 153.
  9. Tom Rockmore, *On Foundationalism A Strategy For Metaphysical Realism* (USA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 17.
  10. It is said to be "something real" as far as it relates to the scope or extent of the object which can be divided into two, "something real" abstractly and "something real" concretely. Yazid, *Knowledge of Fear*, 154.
  11. Roderick M. Chisholm, *The Foundations of Knowing* (USA: The University of Mennesota, 1982), 5.
  12. Thich Nhat, *Fear Essential Wisdom For Getting Through The Storm* (Harper Collins: Australia, 2000), 13.
  13. Yazid, *Knowledge of Fear*, 156.
  14. Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Fear*. Translated by Johns Irons (London: Reaktion Book, 2008), 7.
  15. Svendsen, *Fear*, 8.
  16. Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Boredom* (London: Reaktion Book, 2008), 82.
  17. Svendsen, *Boredom*, 83.
  18. Svendsen, *Fear*, 44-45.
  19. Svendsen, *Fear*, 44-45.
  20. Svendsen, *Fear*, 46.
  21. Svendsen, *Fear*, 49.
  22. Svendsen, *Fear*, 24.
  23. Svendsen, *Fear*, 23-24.
  24. Svendsen, *Fear*, 52.
  25. Svendsen, *Fear*, 15.
  26. Svendsen, *Fear*, 15.
  27. Yazid, *Knowledge of Fear*, 147.
  28. For further discussion, see Eko Juwianti, Churun Ain, et al. "Nitrate and Phosphate Content of Water in the Water Hyacinth Decomposition Process", *Journal of Maquares* 2, No. 4 (2013); 47.
  29. Yazid, *Knowledge of Fear*, 147.
  30. Yazid, *Knowledge of Fear*, 147.
  31. Sussan Jeffers, *Feel The Fear and Do It Anyway* (Jeffers Press, 1987), 11-12.
  32. Vicki Kirby, *Telling Flesh The Substance of the Corporeal* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 22.

33. David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature Part I The Understanding* (Copy Right By Jonathan Bennett), 17.
34. René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations*. Translated By Laurence J. Lafeur (USA: The Liberal Art Press, 1979), 4.
35. Descartes, *Meditations*, 62.
36. Descartes, *Meditation*, 70.

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