
Education, Theology and Fear: Two Priests and a Fearologist in Dialogue



R. Michael Fisher, Emmett Coyne, Terry Biddington

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Technical Paper No. 61

In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute

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Education, Theology and Fear: Two Priests and a Fearologist in Dialogue

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The following dialogue between Emmett Coyne (author and retired Catholic priest living in Florida), Terry Biddington (author and Anglican-Episcopalian priest living in Manchester, UK) and R. Michael Fisher (author and fearologist & educator living in Carbondale, IL) was initiated by Fisher and completed through online written exchanges in early 2016.

Michael (M): In some ways, our whole dialogue can be summed up in the claim of the great philosopher Martha Nussbaum, from her recent book: “Fear is implicated in most bad behavior in the area of religion.”¹ Okay, to get our dialogue going in a meaningful way for readers, let me start with some background context to my meeting with each of you. For Emmett, it was *via* an online exchange in late 2015 after reading your book *Theology of Fear*.² Although we have very different backgrounds, I immediately felt the presence of an ally.

Terry (T): Michael, you and I first met when I came to America in 2011 to speak about diverse multi-faith spaces that are appearing in public spaces, like airports, workplaces, college campuses, etc. I arrived in Carbondale, IL, where you arranged for me to speak at the amazing Gaia House Interfaith Center, where you were volunteering at the time. We spent a wonderful evening talking about the overlaps between your work as a fearologist and the journey I had begun with the first book—*Risk-Shaped Discipleship*—of now a series of three books³ exploring how religious belief, doctrine and fear-making are bound up together by risk and how we variously conceive risk, and variously live into it as part of a dynamic faith. I met

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Emmett as he emailed me in early 2016, and realized we had a triangulated connection with you, Michael.

M: It's my pleasure meeting clergy as open and 'out of the box' as you two. As an inveterate fearologist and educator, my serious hobby is globally searching for the most interesting and boring thinkers, writers and teachers on the topic of fear. After analysis I like locating their ideas into some kind of systematic arrangements or theories—as I did, for example, in my first major book *The World's Fearlessness Teachings*, so that we can synthesize their best wisdom and discard their worst or incomplete and outdated advice. In Emmett's case, I'm sure as a priest for 50 years serving the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), you've seen more than your share of outdated advice in regard to religious education.

Emmett (E): Oh, that's for sure. The catechism of fundamental teachings leaves a lot to be desired—an unhealthy theology of fear. But I'll return to that later. I didn't mean to interrupt your introduction.

M: No problem, Emmett. I think you and I have strong parallel journeys in and out of the major institutions of socialization. Professionally, your path, similar to Terry's, has specifically been one of the role of an ordained priest within the Church, which is by far one the oldest historical structures in the West, which systematically disperses the basic moral education of values, beliefs and social taboos.

E: Taboos for sure. There is a long legacy of study of a theology and the-odicy of Good and Evil.... God and the Devil... Heaven and Hell...

M: And, analogously, what I'm very interested in studying is the relationship of Love and Fear as universal fundamental bipolar ethical referents. But that's getting ahead of ourselves.

E: Sure, and what is your path? It seems to be your role is within Education in general. And both the Church and Education have this powerful role as arms of the State. That's where things get messy, power-skewed, and can be downright pathological. We need an exorcism of the worst sides of these social institutions, don't you think? I mean it has been sometimes painful to look at my biography as a Christian: baptized, initiated, ordained; and how I was, regretfully, part of passing on fear with religion, rather than liberation from it.

T: I can relate in part Emmett, yet, on the other hand simultaneously, I've been trying to highlight and critique the impact of fear on shaping orthodox belief—and, not surprisingly being virtually totally ignored.

M: I am glad you both were able to see the complicated, if not contradictory roles you play.

E: In retrospect, I saw it later than I should have. Better late than never. Such, unfortunately, was not the case with many of my peers.

M: It's a precarious journey and I'm guessing you didn't have a lot of support to challenge and rebel against the Church. Institutional fear-conditioning can be very deep and unconscious—very traumatic, actually. We never know when we will de-institutionalize our minds, 'wake up' one day, and re-evaluate everything we believe and have been doing based on those beliefs and values.

T: The churches have so much riding on maintaining the status quo. And those biblical texts that do illustrate people 'waking up'—for example, Acts 10 and 11 where Peter experiences the moving of the mental furniture in his brain so as to arrive at a fresh perception, a stepping out of the box, an epiphany or gestalt—well, such experiences, unfortunately today, are routinely and shallowly interpreted to only have significance for people "back then in bible days" and not for us today. They often contend: "For Jesus has given us the answer. There are no more questions. There can be no fear. If only we believe hard enough." The relationship between fear and the formation of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim belief systems is not even recognized. We don't really have a systematic conscious and emancipatory theology of fear.

E: I think that's a good point to remember in this conversation, is that there is a predominant unconscious oppressive theology of fear operating as I have written about.

M: Same goes for in Education. Myself and some others criticize the pedagogy of fear, again, largely unconscious and taken as 'normal.' There isn't really a systematic and emancipatory field of study called pedagogy of fear.

In terms of religion, it seems a good number of modern and postmodern historians, anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers and psychologists of the secular camps, at least, have noticed—and, tend to dismiss the value of

religion today because of this close interweaving with oppressive fear in its cosmology and theological teachings and taboos. So-called atheist progressives, Sam Harris, with Richard Dawkins and others are on that track.

E: I suppose there is a place for taboos. The issue is how ethical are they and what means are they put into our heads and hearts. We can criticize religion in the West but it's more important to understand it and how can we work to improve it. Hypocrisy, disconnect, and contradictions in the Church and my own life as one of its salaried agents, is similar to what Frantz Fanon, the black African-French liberation psychiatrist, called "cognitive dissonance." He refers to it as a tension between two conflicting beliefs, thoughts and perspectives. He wrote, "Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong. When they are presented with evidence that works against that belief, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable..."⁴

As I mentioned in my book, analogously, many of the Founding Fathers were in cognitive dissonance with proclaiming equality and yet personally maintaining slaves. Jesus chided his disciples: "Why are you afraid?" and "Be not afraid." And scripture highlights the contradiction between fear and love. "Perfect love casts out fear." John Paul II was fond of quoting: "Be not afraid" but he didn't exorcise fear from Roman theology and catechisms.

T: Right. And neither did the Protestant and Anglican churches, while in conscious revolt against so much perceived 'systemic wrong' in the RC church. They did not manage to discern the problem and unhealthy theology of fear either.

M: That applies to some of the Fathers of the Church and of America. Arguably, beneath hypocrisy as a behavior is an invisible terror; even if one is only feeling an edge of noticeable discomfort or anxiety because of the threat to one's core beliefs, values, religion.

T: For instance in a recent trip to preach in a down-town church in Manchester, I was asked that if I were invited to return, "Would you mind not preaching the Gospel, as it scares people."

E: Right, let's all stay comfortable and deny what Jesus' life and teachings were all about! Later, neurobiologists and cognitivist scientists have undertaken empirical studies to prove what Fanon was talking about. This is al-

ways one of the main barriers to liberation from one's rigid... as you call it Michael, fear-conditioning.

M: That is, fear-conditioning that is marketed to us, the people, under the guise of "learning" or "education" or "socialization" or even "love" that is supposed to be good for us. Look, I may not use the word exorcism, as you do Emmett, but I get what you mean. I would probably use the word healing or transforming the evil and fear-conditioning with it. So, Education is the profession I chose in my late 20s after a few others. Sometimes I regret I went that route because it can be a stifling institution to work within. It's weird because I really hated the K-12 schooling I received.

T: Schooling is, if you look deep enough, typically the product of institutionalized political agendas that have themselves been shaped by state-sponsored fearism.

E: You likely felt indoctrinated, not educated? Part of my awakening to the crucial role of the fear element in Roman theology was the result of studying Paulo Freire, author of *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. I know he was greatly influenced by Liberation Theology movements in Latin America.

T: Currently, I'm working with some enlightened colleagues in one of the Manchester universities to introduce some course material in the schools of education and business. The aim is to help students discern the need for paradigm shifts in their thinking, and the university's teaching in order to help people critique and lay aside the conventional modes of thinking that they received as part of their, as you guys say, K-12 education. The institutional resistance is terrific! They seem unable to shift tradition, even when I cite the likes of the Education as Transformation Program based until recently at Wellesley College Boston, where so much has already been achieved by Board Members and other educators involved in the program.⁵ Even with these very creative and insightful writers at the leading-edge of education, there is still, bizarrely to my mind, no mention of the role and impact of fear on human lives and learning.

M: That has also been my experience. Freire, is one of my favorite inspirational classics in the field of Education and he brings fear into his work and holds the existential depth that I find often lacking in transformation educators today. I think Freire's critical pedagogy is a 'catechism' for true transformative and emancipatory education.

E: Freire enlightened me of how much conventional “education” in general, and specifically the Roman system, was essentially indoctrination.

M: Precisely. We could also call it propaganda, for the most part. Although, in my K-12 experience, I didn’t have the reflective critical consciousness or Freirean educators to help me to know what I was experiencing, other than I didn’t like it. I recently published an article on Freire’s “radical love” notion for an education journal.⁶ I re-read Freire’s *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), after many years it lay on my shelf, and to my amazement I found his opening quote relevant to my project. As you know, Freire was big on “*teaching as an act of love*,” yet, the second sentence of the Preface in his book he remarks that in his training courses he taught and observed for years, the biggest danger of critical consciousness is people’s “own fear of freedom”—of which many deny and will even present “themselves as defenders of freedom.” His interpretation of that is because an authentic critical and liberating consciousness “threatens to place the status quo in question, [and] it thereby seems to constitute a threat to freedom itself”—by which the latter is no authentic freedom but rather a compromising substitute.⁷ Freire did not call this denial of his course participants “cognitive dissonance” but that’s what it seems to be describing. I have seen this in my work in helping people to heal and liberate themselves as well. I concluded my article claiming that Freire’s opening text and pedagogy is more about a radical fear as inhibitor to freedom, than his work is about a radical love—and as educators we better study fear carefully rather than going around thinking we can be radically loving and that will be good enough.

T: Radical love is too risky, even for the people who say they believe in it.

E: Interesting point. Michael, in your own K-12 experience, you, like most everyone, didn’t feel free. You know, I came to realize eventually that “Most Catholics, like Jews and Muslims, were born into their religion and indoctrinated while young with answers to questions they weren’t asking.”⁸

M: That’s a great way to put it Emmett. Anyways, besides playing in rock bands and having wild fun, I was a serious conservationist and environmentalist in my youth; after all it was the so-called revolutionary ‘60-70s. It seemed that if there was to be radical change and transformation in the world to stop the dangerous global warming trend caused by air pollution, predicted by scientists in the early 1960s, along with all the other ecological crises, one has to critically examine what is going on in what we teach our children in their relationship to the environment and one another. It

boils down to a kind of new moral and/or values education that's required. Now, I'll declare I come at this from a non-religious standpoint with no one faith commitment, but more a secular inquiry; although, I consider myself a spiritual person. There's a lot of institutional Christianity in my biographic story that has significantly influenced me as well.

E: I agree, we need a radical shift of consciousness. Though younger than I, you evidently awoke earlier. So carry on Michael.

M: Okay. Of all the problems one could take on in this world to make it a better place, since 1989 I have taken on what I call the Fear Problem and offer an ever-evolving "Credo of Fearlessness" to counter it.⁹ I'm fascinated by topics like the architecture of fear, anthropology of fear, criminology of fear, biology of fear, ecology of fear, geography of fear, psychology of fear, sociology of fear, philosophy of fear, theology of fear, etc. I use an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach to inquire into the nature and role of fear in shaping human behavior, institutions, societies and history itself. I found your provocative and interesting book recently on Amazon.com, *The Theology of Fear*, which to my surprise is one of a handful of books on that specific topic, none of which I had read. It did not take long to see that you and I have a lot of common serious interests regarding fear, some of which I have written in the Amazon book review for your wise book.¹⁰ As a priest and social justice activist, you focus primarily on a critique of Roman Catholicism as an "Empire in Drag: Reinforcing the Reign of Fear."¹¹ I love that label.

T: The Empire is trenchantly critiqued by the late Marcella Althaus-Reid, a radical postcolonial liberation theologian in her celebrated writings.¹² She calls for the creation of an "indecent theology" to counterbalance the religious "polite hermeneutic," as Brueggemann¹³ called it, of all that "must be decent" about the church's theology and ethical praxis.

M: Freire and Althaus-Reid perhaps, a good combination, carry on a prophetic tradition of calling out how fear unnecessarily controls us all—more than it should—for Freire the "fear of freedom" among the oppressed and for Althaus-Reid, she wrote, "... Christian gods are ... the products of sexual fears."¹⁴ She names the theological perversions in the domain of sexuality, gender and politics in the churches, and analogously, I see it as theological perversion in the domain of fearuality¹⁵ that is at stake in this dialogue.

Fear seems to be at the root of all our worst problems of which destructive conflict, violence, abuse and wars is most obvious; if you recall Thomas

Merton's wise declaration: "At the root of all war is fear." Merton (1915-1968) seems to not have been well listened to by the masses or leaders in the Church or elsewhere. Reading his passages in *New Seeds of Contemplation* (1972), he laments of a plague of fear that is not restricted to fear of each other but a "fear of *everything*," which stifles human healthy growth and progress. He astutely observed that this pervasive force of fear stops us from being able to trust and love our own self.¹⁶ In other writing, Merton supportively quoted Pope John XXIII (1881-1963) for having the right idea that the "Law of Fear" may be one law of nature and humankind but it is not the only law nor method to live by; rather, one must remember that "one of the profound requirements of nature is this: ... it is not fear that should reign but love."¹⁷

E: I've read much Merton but don't recall what you highlight here from his writings. I appreciate your underscoring his thought here as it resonates where I've evolved.

M: There are kindred spirits out there, albeit few, in the Church and in Education. You Emmett and Terry, and I, and Merton, and perhaps John Paul XXIII, are not talking about some simple measurable psychological "fear factor" influencing human behavior—rather, our conceptualization revolves around a profound and insidious "Fear Problem," that has deep roots in our Western cosmology, theology and philosophy—and, it is killing us.

T: Catherine Keller, in her amazing *Face of the Deep*, suggests, in appropriate feminist theological critique, the location of this 'primal-become-now-cultural' fear in what she calls *tehomophobia*:¹⁸ the neurotic fear of the swirling potent oceanic depths out of which all life naturally evolves (Gen 1:2)—but which has become denied by main-stream Christian orthodoxy with its creation of an *ex nihilo* doctrine whereby God creates 'from nothing.' Because being 'all powerful', as we imagine/desire, he doesn't need the messiness of hands wet and dirty with pre-existent material. Paraphrasing Keller, the constant theological iteration of *ex nihilo* maintains the fear of the wet matter/'mater' and forever leaves us unreconciled to our real fleshy beginnings—and thus, eternally afraid of life on earth.

M: Terry, that reminds me of the great battle over the nature and role of what psychoanalyst Brach Ettinger calls the m/other¹⁹—the mater, matter, matrix of the womb as a borderspace, a place and metaphor for the female, feminine, 'woman' that we all need to better re-integrate in the West and our religions—the latter, that tend to border on a mis-placed "spiritual"

misogyny—as, fear of matter, flesh, earth and so on. We’ve gotta find a way out of this ‘Fear’ Matrix construction toward a ‘Love’ Matrix that Ettinger reminds us is always there as matrixial reality alongside phallic reality, always parallel, never lost, only forgotten *via* repression.

Emmett would you share how you came to recognize the “fear problem” in your experience and study of religion, particularly your own modern Catholicism and how you have been criticized by the gate-keepers of RCC.

E: First, let me say that I have a long-standing skepticism of Roman theology uttered from the hierarchy downward.

M: I’m not surprised.

E: I think... my father, with only three years of formal schooling in Ireland, indirectly affected me regarding my critical attitude. He would say: “A Jew gets ahead because he asks questions.” I took that as a positive, to ask questions which was especially problematic in my 21 years of Catholic schooling. Unfortunately, I had to suppress open questioning of authorities. There was an old adage, when entering the seminary: “Keep your mouth shut and your bowels open!”

M: Likewise, I also have troubles with Educational policy makers, curriculum designers, administrators, and teachers in general. The whole Education System is a State-sponsored system of oppression, as far as I am concerned. Oh, it has some good features [smile]. Emmett, I don’t think we can authentically analyze and talk about the Church or Education without talking about The State-Military-Church-Political-Scientific-Legal-Technological-Educational-Capitalist Complex. “The Complex,” or “Matrix of Domination,”²⁰ for short. They work to reinforce each other despite the cognitive dissonance, and thus ignore alternative views and ways of doing things... it keeps the oppressive *status quo* in place as ‘normal’ and ‘natural.’

T: The ongoing education reforms of the Conservative government in Britain are all focused on reinforcing a white Western islander mentality that denies otherness in all its forms. Similar, unfortunately, to your Donald Trump, who appears to replicate this mass fear of the other in his 2016 political campaign speeches.

E: Such rhetoric of ‘normal’ and ‘natural’ keeps the discourse characteristically, unfree!

M: Don't get me going off on that critique.

E: "The Complex," or whatever we call it, is a context we need so we don't just blame people for being "stupid" individually for falling into the trap—because it is not a personal system—it's systemic oppression and that goes beyond individuals—it's about whole cultures. I wrote in my book: "A culture of fear drives people to think and act irrationally."²¹ RCC "historically has been in the hands of an elite group... and members were expected to swallow whole what has handed to them... filtered by the hierarchy."²²

T: Exactly!

M: So glad you brought in the "culture of fear" concept, my own expertise, in your book and this dialogue. That is a construct and reality that is crucial to our entire project of understanding oppression and liberation today. We'll return to that later, when I offer some suggestions about curriculum.

E: Secondly, let me say that the negative criticism I have received for my views on RCC and its mis-use of a pedagogy of fear in catechism(s) and overall culture of fear operations, is nothing compared to what so many have suffered under in their resistance to the oppressive side of RCC throughout its history. And many, are still suffering today. Unfortunately, similar traits seem to surface in Islamic religion, where dissent can be met with by brutal means enacted by authorities.

M: I appreciate the Dedication you start your book with as an acknowledgment of a servant woman buried alive as a supposed heretic in the 16th century, and a dissenting schoolteacher in the Catholic school systems of the day in Spain in the 19th century, and many others in general "who tragically received death, not abundant life, which subjects to the dark side of the Roman Catholic Church."²³

E: Several persons excoriated me for writing *Theology of Fear* when retired. Why did I not do it earlier? And not when it was more safe? Actually, I don't think it safe even now as hierarchs have not been pleased. Fortunately, to live in this time one can only be chastised, usually, more subtly than flagrantly. Today, they're afraid of negative public press.

Another reason it took a long time to process the theology to which I was exposed and see what needed to be exorcised. At the end of my book, I

publicly dissent on only two issues with the RCC. The relevant one to our discussion is to deny a belief in a devil that is personal, or a stand alone entity. Currently, I am horrified Pope Francis has been constantly publicly promoting the devil! In his recent trip to Mexico, he pontificated: "You cannot dialogue with the devil because he will always win." Yikes! He uttered this before some 300,000 largely poor with probably zero to minimal formal education background.

Regrettably, this is hard to listen to as a Catholic myself. Unfortunately, simple and sincere people will likely swallow this uncritically because the Pope said it. And he must know the Truth and what's Right. Since becoming Pope, Francis has consistently referenced the devil, providing universal p.r. for someone/something, which I believe is an extension of a perverted mind. With the recent death of the American Supreme Court Judge Scalia, it was reported in the press how indoctrinated he was, despite having a brilliant mind in other areas. Scalia once used an interview to underscore his belief in the existence of the Devil, whose latest maneuver, he said, "is getting people not to believe in him or in God."

T: It's pure C. S. Lewis. You know his *Screwtape Letters*? Suddenly, they are more popular than ever with young Christians over here!

M: Perverted, maybe, but definitely a defensive projection of a fear-based mind or consciousness—suffering with dualism as a paradigm or model which always needs a clear-cut opposite binary structure in order to justify its own location and privilege—that is, on the 'right' side—call it God's right-hand side or whatever the case. Secularist ideologues can make the same fear-based dualistic categories to prop themselves up as morally superior, and as offering the only credible way out of 'hell' or ignorance. Nearly everybody falls into this trap, at one time or another when facing cognitive dissonance—that is, terror, in being threatened by a different knowledge perspective, worldview, religion, culture or race, or gender or class, than their own.

E: Rather than reinforcing devil talk, he should be the chief exorcist to eliminate it altogether.

M: I'm sure Thomas Merton, if he were alive, would back you up on that one.

E: But not Thomas More, for whom Scalia had a great affection. I think More and Merton are fault lines in how RCs view the world. You know,

one might even tolerate devil talk if it were clearly invoked as only a metaphor.

M: In my study of Luther's teaching on fear, at one point he pretty much says what Pope Francis is still teaching: "He [devil] delights in making hearts afraid, cowardly and dejected.... [T]he devil intimidates without any reason."²⁴ Be it metaphor, personification of a basic psychological process, clearly the 'devil' signifies non-reason, an emotion that is often painful and scary in itself—fear.

E: But not for Francis, and as you say, not for Luther either; the devil is a real entity, a person! There is an evangelical hymn, "What a friend we have in Jesus." Today, the "devil" might be hymning "What a friend I have in Francis!" The devil is the personification of fear, or at least for Pope Francis.

T: And, to my mind, that personification, has taught people that fear is outside themselves, not a part of themselves. Thus, they're taught they need to be protected from fear—rather, than allowing people to come to grips with the way fear really affects their thinking/worldviews/ethics.

M: To cite Luther (paraphrasing Christ) on that point: "The voice by which you are to recognize Me, as sheep recognize their true shepherd, is the voice that says, 'Be unafraid and undaunted.'"²⁵ In contemporary language, every cause needs a "poster child" for advertisement. I remember well the scene in Michael Moore's academy-award winning documentary film *Bowling for Columbine* (2002), which is all about the "culture of fear" in America after 9/11 especially. He was interviewing the dark-shadowed song-writer/performer Marilyn Manson. Moore asked him why people were so afraid of him compared to being afraid of the President of the USA, G. W. Bush Jr., who at the time was readying to go to war on Iraq and then Afghanistan. Manson replied: "Because, I am their poster boy for fear."

E: The Devil is the poster entity for Fear, alright. This remains solid Roman Catholic teaching as the devil is featured prominently in the current catechism(s). Eventually, I became dismayed that the RCC was spiritually abusing children in putting notions of the devil, hell and fear into young hearts and minds. Despite the current spotlight on the physical and sexual abuse of children in the RCC, a spotlight needs to be focused on the spiritual abuse of children. Devil, hell, fear are difficult concepts to process. A child simply lacks the reflective critical skills to respond when they are

inflicted by indoctrination.

M: Indeed. Our children lack the fearlessness capacities to withstand other people's fear—especially, when it is fear-projected on to them by adults they are supposed to trust, respect, and even love.

E: I'd like to hear more how to teach fearlessness to children.

T: Me too!

M: For sure. Emmett, it's a serious problem, just as I was unable to be critical of what was happening to me in the Education System K-12 that I came through with a lot of scars. I resisted the System, but not always in the most intelligent and informed ways. I'm sure you did as well. I believe Education *via* a toxic pedagogy of fear can spiritually abuse children. And I am not alone in that critique. But this is not a topic educators or parents supporting the System like to address, believe you me. I like to cite a very wise and soul-sensitive spiritual educator that influences my teaching and writing, Dr. Robert Sardello, who wrote a book, pre-9/11, on the ubiquitous increasing dangerous rate of fear and its consequences: "The central spiritual task of our time is working with fear.... Besides showing up as individual psychological difficulties, we now have to contend with this destructive force as a cultural phenomenon that touches us all, more deeply and significantly than we might ever imagine..."²⁶

E: Good quote.

M: I think it is very true, as Sardello argued, that we as a species have not fully come to awareness, although it is beginning, of the overwhelming and mostly negative impact excessive fear has had and is still having. We have to re-imagine fear, I argue, with my colleague Desh Subba from Nepal, in our new book, through a new philosophy of fearism.²⁷ So, I think your challenge Emmett, regarding the old imagination of fear in theology, that is, in Christianity at least, is on the right track of us all learning a new relationship to fear—which I call a 21st century fear management/education. We are way behind in our thinking about fear or radical fear, and we need good critiques like yours, and Terry's, across all domains of our societies, to begin the liberation path on the right the foot again.

T: Behind, indeed, Michael—despite the fact that "Do not be afraid" and its other versions, like "Fear not!" are a consistent biblical pedagogical theme. There's some disconnect there in terms of actual positive effects.

M: Yes, these biblical prescriptions are something that really need critical examination much closer, in context with a 21st century world, so as to include a lot of new knowledge about fear and how to best manage it. I am interested in integrating these traditions but also transcending them.

E: Interesting Michael. I especially like your language and framing of “fear management” as it was something new to me in reading your work.

While I can't pin point a year when I sensed fear had thoroughly infiltrated Catholic theology and practice, you mentioned in your writing that 1989 was a pivotal year in putting your finger on the Fear Problem.

M: Yes, you're right, it was a complete life-changer. I co-founded the In Search of Fearlessness Project to counter the ever-increasing 'Fear' Project on the planet. I also think 1989, more or less, was some kind of historical global turning point, with major events like the student massacre in China's Tiananmen Square, the falling of the Berlin Wall and folding of the Soviet Union ending formally the terrorizing Cold War, etc.

E: Was there a personal specific eureka moment, an epiphany? People do have such events. That's about 27 years of awareness for you. I can't match that! What happened?

M: The long story behind that transformation of myself and woman intimate partner at the time is worth a book. The short the story is, we fell in love like never before, went deep, and had mystical experiences of an all-encompassing transpersonal love in the World, in the Cosmos, and in our Beingness. We sat there in the dark with a small glimmering candle, right after a passionate sexual engagement, and looked in each others' soft and wet eyes, barely knowing each other a few months in late 1989 through a university graduate course, and I said to her: “What gets in the way of this quality of Love for others?” She took less than a few seconds, and I as well, and synchronously as if minds, hearts and mouths were One, we uttered breathlessly in rhythm: “Fear. That's what gets in the way.” Filled with a compassion for all beings flooding through me, I lead the next response: “Then, let's begin the In Search of Fearlessness Project.” I don't recall all the details now, but it was momentous how that was the touching of souls, and a linkage with what is referred to by some mystics as the World Soul—and, we were on our soul's purpose. There was some kind of experiential healing and passing through the gates. A metaphor, perhaps but there was no turning back. I used to joke that it was a birthing of a new

“soul child.” This was a parental responsibility on a whole new level.

E: Sounds amazing.

M: Yeah, and it was also very natural and ordinary to take this on in the moment of the experience. I felt called to this vocation, even if I didn't have a voice tell me to do it. I felt the lightning bolt, to use that metaphorical language. The project calling was not about creating a business to make money. It was not about being heroes. It was simple and right. It was what you would do. There'd be no copyright of In Search of Fearlessness Project, no franchises to be dreamed of. But it was intended as a global movement and revolutionary seed, and I would have loved if it would have planted and blossomed like MacDonalds's corporation, but rather a non-profit organization—across the globe. I envisioned a Fearlessness Center in every major city on the planet. I still do. That project in Calgary, Alberta, Canada did manifest for eight years, but it dissolved incredibly quickly as well. That's another long story. The archives of that whole experience are in my journals and other documents stored in three large plastic containers in the old musty garage outside the door right now, from where I am typing.

The potency of my own transformation is not at all describable in this description. It is beyond words and logic. Deep transformations, and yes I would call it an epiphany, a *metanoia* and change of heart, are never all pretty and caring and loving. In fact, my experience is that when you suddenly move forward so far ahead of the 'norm' social consciousness of society through your new found vision and experience, and you put that out into the regular world as a “teaching” or prophecy, there's an enormous resistance and backlash that will come at you like a tsunami. Some call that resistance evil. I don't deny there may be such a force. Call it oppression. In simple terms, it was the 'Fear' Project, which felt threatened and kicked-back, ultimately destroying my lover's and partner's commitment to our intimate relationship and In Search of Fearlessness Project. It came through a massive and unexpected, at the time, emotional and spiritual betrayal within the next seven months after the epiphany.

With immense grief, still 27 years later, I look back and wonder if maybe she never had the epiphany like I had or it wasn't as deep and transformative. It didn't seem to take for her. She was quite a bit younger and less experienced in such mystical experiences and healing of the quality that what went on during that night of the epiphany and for several months after as the In Search of Fearlessness Project was finding its legs in this world.

Basically, it started to terrify her. It is worth mentioning that after I led the first workshop of personal growth under the sponsorship name of In Search of Fearlessness in our home, she had a dream that night that the devil, actually she said it was Lucifer, visited her in our basement where the workshop had taken place and threatened to kill her and I with lightening bolts. It was only a dream but it really freaked her out, and she wasn't even raised officially Christian.

E: The “devil” fear gets around, if you live in the Western world, Christian, or not.

M: For sure. It was like a wild mood swing took over and she reached out to another man for her safety, sex, and distance from me and a path of true freedom—echoes of Paulo Freire’s experience that I cited above.

Like a rubber band stretched too far, it snapped back and this woman dissociated from everything, like it never happened. All she wanted was to be ‘normal’ again and have her old friends and life. She wanted to go back. I was devastated like never before because I had not fallen in love to that depth with anyone, or anything and doubt that I will do so for the rest of my life. And look, comparatively, I had been previously married and had two lovely children, girls, and I thought I was deeply in love with them. But this love, and compassion, was of a spiritual soul dimension that blew me apart and the loss of that equally so, and even more so. I know what it is to be “born again” as the religious traditions speak of it and I know the “death of the ego” that goes with it. I also well know, why the great souls on this planet, like a Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., who tapped into the World Soul and a liberation path, and then try to bring it to manifest in this world, or like a Jesus Christ—their fate is the same—they get assassinated. It’s both a material assassination if you are a significant threat in the real political world—which I was not back then or am not now; it is also a spiritual assassination, if you will.

Many have said in the years I was in academia studying fear and fearlessness that: “Michael, it sure is great you are trying to solve this critical problem of fear on such a grand global scale; but you know it will lead to career suicide.” They were right. No university would hire me. I can recall more than a few kind colleagues uttering this sentiment, more or less, in words—or, more likely I just picked it up in their looks at me when I would share my work with them in seminars, lectures or conference presentations. Luckily, so far, Emmett, you are one who has not been in the slightest afraid for me, nor with what I am doing with this project. My current wife,

daughter of Lutheran minister, who came on the scene near after the tragedy of betrayal, has turned out to be a most faithful and devoted partner, who knew In Search of Fearlessness Project would be central to our lives. We've been married in a growing creative relationship for most of the last 25 years.

E: You must have done something right in picking her.

M: Actually, no. She picked me. Generally, my picking women to pursue... well... is questionable.

E: I understand.

M: Emmett, I appreciate that non-fear-based understanding, a lot. I'm sure you are still skeptical at times as we share and as you read my work. My wife is also at times. And like with her, I don't receive your skepticism in the energy of anything undermining or destructive. That's great even though I wish there was no skepticism at all but only passion for the cause. I think critical and healthy skepticism can, in balanced dosage, really help us too, and help the work I am still doing with the fear and fearlessness theme. I teach the path of fearlessness as foundational to liberation. I am not by any means the first to do so. I have a lot to learn about how to do that well. So, even the great tragedy with my lover and soul-mate in 1989-90, is an opportunity to learn from. On my better days, I don't resent it at all. I blame no one. That said, the experience of epiphany and betrayal took its great toll on me, beyond a doubt. I gave myself a soul name after it all, when I was writing a lot of poetry for my therapy during the loss—it was 'Many Broken Hearts.' The long story is, this betrayal was not my first or worst 'burning' to take its toll and challenge me to heal, grow and transform and face the Real—face the Fear—the, way it is. I guess in summary, when I think about it—and, thanks for asking—the biggest events that have transformed me are all in intimate partnerships with women. Perhaps that is my karma.

Does that basically answer your question? Does this all make any sense to you? Did either of you ever have an epiphany that put you into a born-again state?

T: I remember, many years ago, when I was in my early 20s. I met a very elderly Quaker woman. She asked me if I'd ever been afraid. Surprised by her query, my response was to say that I didn't recall ever being afraid. We spoke together for a very long time. Her words had a huge impact. Now

30+ years later I can honestly say I struggle to discern the exact impact of fear on my life. Sure, I get anxious about my loved ones when we are apart but I can't think what I fear. Certainly, I've never been afraid of another person or belief system. In that precious conversation she said I was destined to be a prophet. Now, this brings up some embarrassment. We Brits don't do self-revelation easily, or at all. It was sort of an epiphany but in a different way than you describe, Michael.

Anyhow, that's why both your work fascinates and encourages me. For I believe that your efforts to excavate the roots of fear in human societies, institutions and thinking will ultimately be of great benefit to us all. We need urgently to address the role fear plays in our world, the way it silently manipulates all our efforts to make a difference, create a sense of global kinship and usher in a new fear-less stage of humanity. I dare to believe that we are, each of us prophets—speaking, inconvenient truth and pointing to the presence of the real evil in our world: fear.

E: No. I'm rather prosaic. Seems to me what you described is indeed an epiphany experience. In the Christian biblical epiphany, wise men, magi, are following a light, not quite knowing where it will bring them. The scriptures claim the star stood still over where Jesus lay. No star stands still. So we know it is a story to make a point. Their life journey led them to enlightenment. Yet it disrupted their lives, nonetheless, and they had to return by a different route, as the epiphany was both an uplifting and upsetting experience.

M: I think that is all part of the path of fearlessness, religious or secular, what some might call living a prophetic life. One is bound to get into trouble a lot.

T: Aha.

E: I'd like to hear more how to teach fearlessness to children. Somehow, somewhere it is happening. Purely by chance I viewed an Indian film, *Siddarth*.²⁸ I practically fell out of my chair when I heard young children at a school assembly in India chanting in unison: "And live without fear so that we may smile until our last breath!" How, and who got that into the curriculum? Imagine that in American school assemblies?

M: I wish!

E: I suppose you've thought about this a lot. Can you summarize how

you'd design a course on fearlessness for young children? Is it even possible?

M: You mean possible in North America? Europe? Yes, but with great difficulty.

E: Why do think so?

M: It has historical roots. My research shows that the East, in general, coming from Africa and the Ancient south East as we know it today, there is, in general, a much greater ancient wisdom in their religion, theology, philosophy, regarding fear as a major distortion of Spirit and Life, when we live by the Law of Fear. I cited, as did Merton, the wisdom of Pope John XXIII that we acknowledge such a Law of Fear motivating human beings but that it is not the only path to go, and the opposite direction is a Law of Love. My research across a global history of cultures and ways of thinking or worldviews reveals a universal validation of this basic ethical imperative between choosing Love over choosing Fear. My own hypothesis is that few will ever attain “perfect love” to dissolve all fear (e.g., 1 John 4:18), because fear has transformed to a new hyper-real species²⁹ of ‘fear’ of which the biblical teachings for one are not competent to manage or transform.

T: Agreed. I see it all around the world—every night on our TV screens and in the mouths of our politicians.

E: Hyper-real species of fear? Care to explain....

M: Not really here, as this dialogue is long enough and it is a complex explanation but readers can read more about it in my articles and books. Hint: it is a culturally-modified ‘fear’—analogous, if you will with genetically-modified organisms. It’s a different ‘beast’ than what we normally think of as fear as an emotion or feeling.

E: So even with a universal ethical recognition that we ought to follow the Law of Love and not the Law of Fear... what’s happened?

M: Good question. There’s no easy one answer, but I would argue, as a Westerner, that we in the West have missed a key aspect to creating a good quality fear management/ education, and the secret is “fearlessness.” I basically would create a curriculum in Western schools, with increasing complexity from K to 12 and beyond, that started with a fear management theory that develops the view that we are born in Love, we fall into Fear,

and we have to work and learn and heal and transform—as part of development and evolution—along a path of fearlessness on the way back to Love. That’s very over-simplified.

E: As a Christian, I see the same pattern in catholic theology.

T: Yes, I see it too.

M: Oh, yeah, for sure. What I would not support in developing a curriculum, like an awful lot of W. religious education, is that we are fated to suffering after the Fall (i.e., original sin) and we never really recover—until we get to Heaven with the “perfect love” of God at our side. That’s a metaphor, but to take it as more than that only leads to a worldview and theology based on what Fr. Matthew Fox called “Fall/Redemption spirituality”—and, that’s arguably fear-based all the way. I won’t get into that long critique; but to say that Fox astutely offers a growth-based, in contrast to a deficit-based, transformative compassion-based Creation-centered spirituality,³⁰ more in line with liberation conceptions in the East—with fearlessness—and, with Indigenous worldviews—that is, not one of a constant sin and decline on earth after Eden and the Fall.

T: Agreed.

M: According to one theological scholar, there is something universal in ethics called the “gift of fearlessness” tradition in Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism,³¹ for starters. That is likely where the curriculum came from in the movie *Siddarth* that you watched. Unfortunately, there is no equivalent explicit ethic, philosophy and/or pedagogy in the Western world that I know of; although I am still searching for hints that it does exist in the Western world too. I have dubbed it historically, East and West, as the global “Fearlessness Movement.”³² But I think you are asking about something more concrete and practical for young children specifically in the Western school systems, aren’t you?

T: There’s some wonderful feminist thinkers, who talk of a new global touch-based ethic. In brief, they suggest: our ethics and ethical decision-making should be based on our willingness to connect/touch the lives of those we meet as they are inescapably entwined and interdependent within our ever shrinking world. And when we connect/touch we can together engage the fear that separates us, and potentially transform it into fearlessness.

M: Indeed, a most basic curriculum, that is, healthy pedagogy of fear or fear education, is one where every child gets a chance to learn the four major responses to threat/danger. They traditionally have been called (1) fight or (2) flight. The fear-response, you remember that? Then a few theorists added (3) freeze. So far, all of these are not very conducive to a relational paradigm; rather, they are all focused on individual fear-responses, and no doubt have some partial truth. Yet, feminist investigators³³ I discovered a few years ago were starting to say that accepted knowledge is highly dubious and skewed toward a masculinist or phallic perspective. In short, they showed that there is a fourth fear-response and they labeled it “tend and befriend.” In other words, when in fear we have a fourth ‘choice’ and that is to touch/attend and gather together to both cope and heal through the fearful experiences of life. That’s what social species do. I add to the list of fear-responses that the path of fearlessness is a fifth option and it is deeply in synch with a relational, if not feminist, paradigm, where vulnerability and intimacy and connectivity are essential to true freedom from excessive fear and fear-mongering. Big topic.

T: Great. Those five choices, five fear-responses, ought to be basic ethical teaching in all schools.

M: I agree. There’s so much to talk about what today would constitute a good “fear education,” analogous to say a good “sex education,” and you can bet that if it were discussed, be it in dialogues on theology or pedagogy, it would be controversial as hell.

E: Yes, maybe that is best to address more details in another dialogue with you later.

M: I think so. I tread into this territory cautiously because it is such a vast topic Emmett. I have written about it exhaustively for decades. So not to repeat all that, I think the most important theological implication here is that we have to recognize the critique you and Terry and others have made—that, much of the W. religious traditions are based on a largely unconscious and unhealthy theology/pedagogy of fear—for e.g., Fall/Redemption theme. This teaches the ethical imperative that one should have a ‘virtuous’ fear of God in order to be good and be saved. This positions authorities ethically unquestionable, relative to children, as those who ought to be feared—at least, to some degree. I have called this the oppression of adultism mixed with toxic-fearism and authoritarianism.

E: Similarly, in the hierarchies of the Church.

M: Yes. The critical question is how much fear should that be, and how little, and when, etc? *Fear is power* and that can always be abused, which is exactly what you have pointed out in your book. I would not design a curriculum of 21st century fear management/ education along that authoritarian line. There are a whole number of other radical educators who also would align with a more fearlessness approach, for example from the free schools movement came A. S. Neill, and the spiritual philosophers like Rudolf Steiner and Jiddu Krishnamurti have traditionally written of *education beyond fear*. Now a days, even in the W. more educators are calling for “fear-free education zones,” “fearless schools,” “fearless leaders” and so on; but these latter initiatives are only superficial as they lack an in depth study of fear and fearlessness, of which I am continually pointing out in my critiques, because of my unique positioning from a philosophy of fearism and/or from a philosophy of fearlessness.³⁴ Rare is the educator today citing my work but there are a few exceptions. So, let me be more concrete about a suggestion.

One thing that is a powerful educational resource for young people is new media, film and TV. I would make sure we educators spend time analyzing these productions, past and present for how they do, or do not, critically advance “teaching” about everyday fear management. For adults, there are many films I would advise, especially ones that deal with the “Hell’ and ‘Heaven’ dichotomy in contemporary, humorous, and intelligent non-fear-based ways. My first pick is Albert Brooks’s 1991 comedy *Defending Your Life*. The scenes of “dead people” going to a place of limbo transition and having to defend their life based upon how much they let fear rule their life or not, are priceless and wise in terms of building an ethic for this planet. On a cruder base action film, for the younger set, there are other great ones like The Wachowski Brothers’s, *The Matrix* trilogy (1999-2003); yet, even much less complex than that, there are new films like *The List*, which are horrifying and yet attractive to many, especially guys. In this film the protagonist at one point, under a lot of conflict and ethical tension says emphatically: “You can’t build a world on fear!”

Such a statement might stir up a worthwhile conversation about whether or not a “fearless society” is possible... or a good thing? How would we define that? What would it look like?³⁵ To be blunt, it would be a developmental curriculum *from fear to fearless*. It takes time and learning, healing, and transformation. It requires disciplined practices and good critical literacy to be skillfully able to recognize fear and ‘fear’ and its toxic uses and abuses. It takes an “integral spirituality” perspective as well, much like

what the philosopher Ken Wilber has offered, where the churches and all religions envision and promote a curricular “conveyor belt” of consciousness development from child, to adolescent to adult, and then another three or four stages of post-adult development, meaning post-conventional development.³⁶ I think all three of us would agree, we’ve had enough of religious education experience and programs that reinforce a kind of human immaturity in relation to spiritual development.

So back to a few select movie narratives. These are good curriculum prompts from popular culture that serve for open questioning and dialogue in classrooms—where the simple *status quo* notions of fear are brought forward but they are also examined critically in a healthy caring way—where teachers facilitate discussion of fear and fearlessness in more complex ways than usual. Of course, teachers need some training in fearlessness, of which I have written some articles and guides for them.³⁷

T: Excellent. Thank you Michael!

E: In my book I quoted from the movie *Star Wars*. Yoda, at the Jedi Council, once said: “Fear is the path to the Dark Side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering. I sense much fear in you.”³⁸

M: A great wisdom quote, of which I have read, more or less, similar versions of in speeches by great liberation leaders, such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi. Thich Nhat Hanh. It is amazing how many people do not have a clue that fear (i.e., the Law of Fear) is the ultimate driver of the entire cycle of violence in all its forms, including oppression itself. Children ought to be learning about this cycle from the earliest stages. They need a critical literacy, and alternatives.

E: Like peace education?

M: Yeah, and more than that; but that would take us off on a much longer conversation.

E: It seems to me that there’s not going to be the drive to change the way we are from fear to fearlessness, in the W. world where you and I live—unless, we come to ask seriously whether we want a “fearless society.” What reasons would we give for not wanting it? That would be interesting.

T: Thanks guys, for seeding my Easter sermon!

M: If I were to walk into a school or school board meeting, or church or church board meeting, and asked that question... what if?

E: If they didn't want to talk about it because it is foolish to them...

M: Or, they are afraid to talk about it....

E: Then what? Okay, let's save that discussion for another time. Thanks Michael for this provocative engagement.

M: Thank you Emmett and Terry. I look forward to more.

End Notes:

¹ Quotation from Nussbaum, M. C. (2012). *The new religious intolerance: Overcoming the politics of fear in an anxious age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 21.

² Coyne, E. (2012). *The theology of fear*. Author-published.

³ Biddington, T. (2010). *Risk-shaped discipleship: On going deeper into the life of God*. San José, CA: Resource Publications, Inc.; Biddington, T. (2013). *Risk-shaped ministry: On going out to the people of God*. San José, CA: Resource Publications, Inc.; Biddington, T. (2014). *Risk-shaped preaching: Preaching outside the box*. San José, CA: Resource Publications, Inc.

⁴ Quotation from Coyne (2012), 29.

⁵ Examples: Kazanjian, V., and Laurence, P. (Eds.) (2000). *Education as transformation: Religious pluralism, spirituality and a new vision for higher education in America*. NY: Peter Lang; Awbrey, S. et al. (Eds.) (2006). *Integrative learning and action: A call to wholeness*. NY: Peter Lang; Daloz Parks, S., Parks Daloz, L. A., Keen, C. H., and Keen, J. P. (1996). *Common fire: Leading lives of commitment in a complex world*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

⁶ Fisher, R. M. (in press). Radical love—is it radical enough? *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*.

⁷ Quotations from Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. [Trans. by M. B. Ramos]. New York: A Continuum Book/The Seabury Press, 19-21.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁹ For articulation of the Fear Problem see most any of Fisher's publications on-line (Google Search), of which his most systematic work is his book. See Fisher, R. M. (2010). *The world's fearlessness teachings: A critical integral approach to fear management/education for the 21st century*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America. The global "Fear Problem" is discussed in Chapter Two and his "Credo of Fearlessness" (p. 39, e.n. 6).

¹⁰ Fisher, R. M. (2015). Confession in the face of fear equals wisdom. [Book review: of Fr. Emmett Coyne's, *The Theology of Fear*, 2012]. Retrieved from http://www.amazon.com/The-Theology-Fear-Emmett-Coyne/product-reviews/1468015648/ref=cm_cr_dp_see_all_btm?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1&sortBy=recent

¹¹ Op. cit., Coyne, 61.

¹² For example, see Althaus-Reid, M. (2011). *From feminist theology to indecent theology*. London: SCM Press.

¹³ See Brueggemann, W. (1984). *The message of the Psalms: A theological commentary*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 16.

¹⁴ Althaus-Reid, M. (2001). *Indecent theology: Theological perversions in sex, gender and politics*. NY: Routledge, 82.

¹⁵ See Fisher, R. M. (2013). Making fearuality more sexy: Intersections with Foucault. Technical Paper No. 45. Carbondale, IL: In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.

¹⁶ Quotations from Merton, T. (1972). *New seeds of contemplation*. New York, NY: New Directions, 112.

¹⁷ Quotations by Pope John XXIII, cited and paraphrased by Merton. Merton, T. (1971). "Faith and violence," in *Thomas Merton on peace*. G. C. Zahn (Ed.). New York, NY: McCall, 189.

¹⁸ Keller, C. (2003). *The face of the deep: A theology of becoming*. NY: Routledge.

¹⁹ See Ettinger, B. (2010). (M)other re-spect: Maternal subjectivity, the ready-made mother monster and the ethics of respecting. *Studies in the Maternal*, 2(1). Retrieved from http://mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/back_issues /issue_three/mother-respect.html

²⁰ See the notion of the Military-Industrial-State Complex at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military-industrial_complex and, see Patricia Hill Collin's concept of intersecting oppressions as a Matrix of Domination at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matrix_of_domination

²¹ Op. cit., Coyne, 252.

²² Op. cit., Coyne, 267.

²³ Op. cit., Coyne, 2. The woman is Anna Utenhove; the schoolteacher, Cayetano Ripoli, as Coyne documents: "was the last victim of the Spanish Inquisition, in 1826, for refusing to take his pupils to mass and substituting *Praise Be to God* for *Ave Maria* in school prayers.... Also, priests John Hus, Giordano Bruno, and numerous 'other Christs' executed because of their dissent.... And, heroic persons such as Ben Salmon (American) and Franz Jägerstätter (Austrian), both ordinary Catholics, dissenters against war, unsupported by their Church...".

²⁴ Quotation from Luther, M. (1961). *Luther's works, vol. 24: Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, chapters 14-16*. J. Pelikan (Ed.). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publication House, 14.

²⁵ Ibid., 16.

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- ²⁶ See Sardello, R. (1999). *Freeing the soul from fear*. NY: Putnam Penguin, viii, xii,
- ²⁷ See Fisher, R. M., and Subba, D. (2016). *Philosophy of fearism: A first East-West dialogue*. Australia: Xlibris.
- ²⁸ This 2013 movie has info. at <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2932606/>
- ²⁹ Michael borrows this from McLaren, P. (1995). Pedagogies of dissent and transformation: A dialogue with Kris Gutierrez. In P. McLaren (Ed.), *Critical pedagogy and predatory culture: Oppositional politics in a postmodern era*. NY: Routledge, 148.
- ³⁰ See for example, Fox, M. (1986). *Original blessing: A primer in creation spirituality presented in four paths, twenty-six themes, and two questions*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co.
- ³¹ See for example, Heim, M. (2004). *Theories of the gift in south Asia: Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain reflections on dāna*. New York: Routledge.
- ³² See a description in Fisher and Subba (2016), 12-16; also on Wikipedia (written by Michael): http://wpedia.goo.ne.jp/enwiki/User:Fear_educator/sandbox. Also, see the ning Michael co-founded at <http://fearlessnessmovement.ning.com>
- ³³ Thanks to E. VanderWeil for introducing Michael this work; see Taylor, S. E., Klein, L. C., Lewis, B. P., Gruenewald, T. L. & et. al. (2000). Biobehavioral responses to stress in females: Tend-and-befriend, not fight-or-flight. *Psychological Review*, 107(3), 411-29.
- ³⁴ One of the best summaries of Fisher's critique is Chapter Four in Fisher (2010).
- ³⁵ See for example, Fisher, R. M. (2012). Do we really want a fearless society? Technical Paper No. 40. Carbondale, IL: In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute. Also see Subba (2014), 301.
- ³⁶ See Wilber, K. (2015). Ken Wilber/Introduction to Integral Spirituality. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4jcxxJ_0ok
- ³⁷ For example, Fisher, R. M. (2011). A critique of critical thinking: Towards a critical integral pedagogy of fearlessness. *NUML: Journal of Critical Inquiry*, 9(2), 92-164.
- ³⁸ Op. cit., Coyne, 227.