1

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Culture of 'Fear': Toxification of Landscape-Mindscape as Meta-context for Education in the 21ˢᵗ Century.

R. Michael Fisher,
Doctoral student, The University of British Columbia

ABSTRACT – The paper presents the view that opening up learning beyond school walls and age barriers, although a positive extension of human potential, has left the learners of this open learning to be exposed to the toxic meta-context of a *culture of 'fear'* with its attending violence/hurting that pervades the cultural landscape. Evidence is presented that challenges the current dominating W. psychological conception that 'fear' is a *"feeling/emotion"* and therefore is located only within the individual mindscape (psyche). This apolitically theorized 'fear' within mainstream psychology has led to a preoccupation with the hundreds of individuals' *"fears"* (*"phobias"*) and virtually no research on the phenomenon of 'fear' itself in a sociopolitical context. 'Fear' is recently being articulated in academic and popular literature as a social and political context. The author calls for a deconstructruction and reconstruction of 'education,' 'Love' and 'fear' as core aspects to understanding a new ethical base for education and its practitioners in the future. (contains 2 figures, References, Footnotes)

Introduction

'Education,' 'Love,' and 'Fear' as Political Constructs

> Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage. It cannot fear the analysis of reality, or, under pain of revealing itself as a farce, avoid creative [critical] discussion.   – Paulo Freire (1973, p. 38)

> When we discuss about fear and freedom we can imagine our education. We teach that life is hard, everything is difficult, everybody has to support his cross, we born guilty, we must trust in a God out of us in order to be saved and other silly things. How a person with this education can be fearless, creative and think to be free. We have to improve education in order to improve the mankind.

> -Elano R. Freire, Brazil (internet comm., 1996)

Culture, landscape and mindscape are the sites of politics, rebellion and struggle. 'Wherever two or more are gathered'—there is politics. Education, for me, always involves two or more people learning together. From a less controversial perspective, 'where two or more are gathered,' there is community and one may think of consensus, democracy and cooperation. Today, we hear the phrase "learning community" that extends and includes education that goes beyond school walls and age barriers. Some

futurist thinkers and adult educators have recognized the need to conceptualize a "learning society" (e.g., Wright, 1972; Boshier, 1980). Sounds good.

Reflecting back on my own first important transformation, as a Canadian 27 years old, I remember opening my mind to learning in the late 1970's and early 80's. I recall the tremendously exciting discoveries of the Eastern religious philosophies, "new" quantum physics, neurosciences, and consciousness reseach findings about the operation of the brain-mind and the cosmos as an ecological whole. Marilyn Ferguson (1980, p. 282) predicted an "Aquarian conspiracy" of a New Age whree people would realize "If we are not learning and teaching we are not awake and alive. Learning is not only like health, it is health." However, she, along with other radical critics of traditional education approaches, like E. F. Schumacher and Ivan Illich, delivered us the shocking message of our self-creating *pedogenic illness* that our school systems were creating. Ferguson asked, "Is it possible that our authoritarian, achievement-geared, fear-inducing, clock-watching schools have helped set us up for the illness of our choice?" (p. 283). I often think that crime, war and all types of violence/hurting are indeed an "illness of our choice." One cannot ignore the deep disturbing conflict of conscience, if not terror, that has carved a signature into the cultural mindscape in the past year with the news of the two mass-killing episodes, led by middle school-aged young people in the United States, turning school yards and lunchrooms into blood-spattered landscapes of 'fear' and politics. I become enraged with mass media and a cool collected male superintendent of one of these school districts, who reports on North American radio a week later that, "All the holes in the walls have been filled and freshly painted, the damaged chairs removed, and when the children return to school on Monday there will be no signs to be seen." End of the news clip—next...! A sanitized physical landscape mocks the cultural mindscape in an act of decontextualized speech acts that are equally dangerous and toxifying as any automatic gun in the hands of desperate revolutionaries barely past puberty. I pause, knowing there is no one human, nor one group, nor one deity to blame.

Youth rage, although dramatic, and not to be minimized for all those most closely involved, is a symptom waiting to happen for a much larger core dis-ease that continuously breeds below the surface of the commons. Our nice middle class notions of a "learning community" and "learning society" are shattered and revealed as mere ideals, worthy to envision, but insufficient on their own if they assume that there is only cooperative community spirit and not a struggle for power and a voice from the marginalized and hurting.

Learning is not value-neutral nor apolitical. As we have extended the learning available to us and our young people, we are confronted with learning in contexts of global dynamics which our traditional schooling 20 years ago never usually included. It is the psychosocial and political context of our times that has potential to pollute culture, landscape and mindscape and learners are, in some ways, the more susceptible to imbibe the toxic aspects of an extended educational world, than those who minimize, devalue or undervalue lifelong learning/education. I feel ethically committed to challenge adults, parents and educators of everykind to look at the context of education from both the cooperative and community-building perspective but also from the political side of

conflict and dis-ease that learners are now exposed to, in this extended open learning society we've created.

Liberal progressivist, often indistinguishable today from conservativist, notions of learning are heavily influenced by W. psychology. This influence informs us that learning takes place within the individual mindscape and thus, appears harmless enough. As a neophyte studying adult education, I've witnessed the Knowlesian self-directed learning 'andragogical consensus' (Welton, 1995) in our field is in constant ideological battle with critical and radical adult educators, who want education and learning returned to a context of social and political philosophy, or even further, as constructs equivalent to a "social movement" within which adult education is historically rooted (e.g., Lindeman, 1926/61; cf. Holford, 1995). It seems prosaic almost, to remind ourselves as educators that all education is embedded in a political context (*a la* Freire, Giroux, hooks). Perhaps, not often enough, do we think of the implications of reframing 'education' as a political construct itself. Despite the importance of extending context to social and political domains, I have great reservations that educators promoting this have the expertise or wisdom about how to better inform and promote the essential skills and meta-skills (cf. Mindell, 1993, 1995) our learners require in the cultural mindscape, in order to handle the increasing complexity of the 'fear' and conflict-filled power struggles of living in the political reality of our times and communities. But that line of argumentation would get us off our topic at-hand. A deconstruction and eventual reconstruction of 'education' is called for, especially in light of the emerging awareness of living in the meta-context of a *culture of 'fear'* and *risk-society*, the latter, which receive the focus of attention in this paper.

'Fear' is also a political construct (Corradi et al., 1992; Massumi, 1993). In this paper, I explore the locating of 'fear' into domains or value spheres that go beyond seeing 'fear' as merely situated in the value sphere of individual mindscape (psyche). The paper takes a critical humanist perspective on the hegemony of the current conceptualization of 'fear' as an "emotion or feeling" which is consistently found as the "official" definition in every English dictionary, encyclopedia, medical manual, introductory psychology textbook and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) program handbook in schools and community programs for young people. I suspect, that most other Euro-colonized languages and cultures around the world, have, in post-modern times, a similar Westernized version. Education, therefore, has been contextualized within this dominant official knowledge about 'fear.' I propose that evidence is rapidly accumulating, particularly in the past 10 years, which suggests this official view of 'fear' is at least inadequate to the reality of our times, and more probably, is actually distorted and a barrier to our ability to deal with 'fear' in a healthy and liberating way.

The late Bruno Bettelheim, a critically important contributor to the pschology of the imagination and education, knew deeply the scars and terror wrought by world wars and anti-Semitism. When he wrote *Love is Not Enough* (1950), I believe he was calling for a renewed conceptualization that 'Love' as a "feeling or emotion" is not adequate to the challenges of a world still ridden with violence and suffering. The psychological construction of 'Love' within the mindscape value sphere had to encompass more of the

cultural sociopolitical landscape of human experience. My own research on 'fear' led to a curious finding in the literature from around the world and through time. <u>One cannot be in 'Love' and also in 'fear'</u>.[1] To think otherwise is denial, illusion or false consciousness.

These terms 'Love' and 'fear' were being used (in over 150 references collected) as mutually exclusive meta-contexts, or metaphysical constructs with wide application to social, political and ethical domains—and East-West, or North-South, the writings appear quite universal (see Fisher, 1998 in progress). In our own North American Judeo-Christian roots it is a prevalent understanding that there are "... only two basic emotions: <u>Love</u> and <u>Fear</u>. The Bible tells us that perfect love casts out fear" (Larson, 1990, p. ii). And dialectically, "Fear has cast out love" (W. S. Blunt, *The Love Sonnets of Proteus*, xxxvi). The Scottish personalist philosopher, MacMurray (1935, p. 58) referred to 'Love' and 'fear' as the two basic "principles" "... and you can divide men and women most fundamentally into two classes, those who are fear-determined and those who are love-determined" (the former being "dead souls"). New age spiritual leaders, of a more humanist-secular philosophy often write of two basic choices, "The most fundamental choice we must make is whether we will follow love or fear..." (Cohen, 1993, p. 390). Feminist writers Mascetti and Lorie (1995) wrote,

> Patriarchal ["dominator culture," cf. Eisler, 1987] replicative thought patterns are founded upon domination, aggression and fear, while the thoughts replicated for the creation of a partnership culture are based on equality, receptiveness, mutual concern and love. (p. 123)

Mutchler (1989) proposed that an entirely "new psychology" is required which is founded on the 'Love-'fear' premise ("Uni-bicentric Theorem," I call it in Fisher, 1998, 1998a). 'Education,' 'love,' and 'fear,' are political constructs and any reconstruction or transformation of education in the future, I believe, will be required to examine this relationship [I will save that work for my Ph.D. a few years down the road].

How Are We Dealing with 'Fear'?

> Gang violence, unemployment, rape.... The fear and feelings of helplessness these words create increases each time we hear them.
> - Johnson & Zipursky (1992, p. 1)

Political leader and authorities (like the police force) in Canada have been heard on CBC radio interviews in the past few years making remarks that have stuck with me: for e.g.,

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[1] As a matter of convention, the (') marks on the word *fear* and *Love* in this paper indicate the terms are being used in a non-conventional manner from the status quo official knowledge. The terms are under deconstruction and reconstruction, and this is a way to mark the terms. These marked terms are therefore most useful for the reader to suggest that no "fixed" or "official" definition or conceptualization exists on what these terms mean. This of course, does not deny each individual's own contextualized and construed meaning for these terms. My intention, is however, to go beyond mere interpretivist claims of conceptualization of both these terms. The use of *'fear'* with a small letter and *'Love'* with a capital letter has meaning within the constructed metaphysical ontological assumptions that lie behind the text, and are beyond the scope of discussion in this paper (see Fisher, 1997 for elaborations).

the Vancouver Chief of Police was asked about the problem of violence in the city and he said (paraphrasing), "It isn't the violence that is the real problem for the police force. It is peoples' fear of violence that is creating more enforcement problems that we don't have the resources to handle." The Hon. John Havelock, Alberta Justice Minister, recently (1998) reported on CKUA radio, that after tougher legislation again violence and more legal clout for the victims and society in general, he is pleased to announce statistics indicate "Crime is down." However, in the next breath, he reports that "Fear is up" and the governments' citizen response lines are bursting with complaining calls because people don't feel safe anymore and governments need to do something more about all the crime and violence. In the May 6, 1997 edition of the *Calgary Herald,* a male Alberta judge remarked: "A climate of fear has started to pervade this city at night."

Apparently 'fear' has the better of us in the West. Gavin de Becker (1997) wrote,

> No wonder Americans are scared to death. According to a new *USA Weekend* scientific poll, one in three adult Americans fears being a victim of violent crime. (New FBI statistics show one in 156 Americans was a victim of a violent crime last year, a 7 percent drop from the year before.

De Becker, a risk management consultant and author, also notes, from the poll, that 90 percent of Americans don't feel safer today than they did growing up. The apparently out-of-proportion 'fear' has led to what de Becker (and Furedi, 1997 in the U.K.) sees as a cultural problem of "unwarranted" 'fear,'

> In fact, anxiety [worry] kills more Americans each year than all the dangers named about (through high blood pressure, heart disease, depression and a myriad of other stress-related ailments). Fear is often more harmful than the outcome we dread.

Who is to define what is "warranted" and "unwarranted" when it comes to someone's experience of 'fear'? This assumption and implicit political evaluation by de Becker and Furedi is highly suggestive of oppressive practice itself. These authors are unaware in their writing of their positionality of privilege and hegemony (both white well-off professional males), in making these claims. Worse, they have no theory of 'fear' and tend to rely on W. psychological models for their conceptualizations of 'fear.' I'll return later in the paper to the problematic contextualization of today's W. society.

A Critical Psychology: Re-defining 'Fear' Within Integral Theory

For the past eight years of interest to know everything about 'fear,' I felt alone as an educator and therapeutic practitioner. Although, psychology had much to teach, I found it attempting to be value-neutral when it wasn't. I especially felt isolation in my research to attempt to study 'fear' in a critical and more insightful way that could challenge what I saw as inconsistencies and abuses in treatment of "fears" (phobias) of people in families, mental health and educational settings. Because 'fear' has been trapped in the hegemony

of traditional W. psychology, I was looking for critiques within that field. The early work of Foucault, Szasz, Laing and others, who were challenging the established hierarchies of who was to decide "what is mental illness and where should it be located—in mindscape or cultural political landscapes?" suited my critical bent, but it wasn't until this year that I stumbled onto the brand new (since 1993) branch of academic psychology called *critical psychology*; a specialty devoted to criticizing and changing the status quo practices of institutions and psychological theory and practice that are buttressed by W. traditional psychology norms. A psychology that, a Fox and Prilleltensky (1997, p. xiii) argue, does not often reflect upon and critique its own implicit unchallenged norms and basic assumptions.

Critical psychology sees critical reflection on itself as, "... crucial if psychology is to outgrow its political innocence and become a more enlightened and responsible participant in public life. Our goal was not just to grumble on the sidelines but to change the status quo" (Fox & Prilleltensky, 1997, p. xiii). The similarities of purpose with critical/radical education and critical psychology are obvious. What is evident, and important, is to see that critical/radical education (e.g., Lovett, 1988; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985; Aronowitz, 1993) is far ahead of critical psychology as an organized branch of critical reflection and social change. Yet, education in general, and critical/radical education specifically, have no theory of 'fear' either (the latter which became more interested in "power" as sociopolitical context for analysis of educational praxis and development); both of which have remained in a dependency on the W. psychological hegemonic discourses around 'fear.' A meta-radical change is required in educational thinking about 'fear.'

What is the state of knowledge about 'fear' today? What would be gained by a systematic study of the concept of 'fear' from the ancient religious traditions and popular folk cultures, to philosophy, to science with its investigations of neurophysiology and biology, to psychology, sociology, anthropology, political sciences through to theology and into cyberspace of the internet? These questions were stimulated by the *critical integral theory* approach to knowledge articulated by Wilber (1997). This theory has a long background of development within the field of transpersonal psychology and philosophy, by its most eminent spokesperson, Ken Wilber, an American theorist, whom I've been most inspired by to continue this study of 'fear.' Wilber's model encourages a full-spectrum (all levels, all quadrant) approach to knowledge—whereby, the investigator examines the various disciplines as all having their own valid approach to knowing the "whole" (see Wilber, 1995, 1996, 1998 for further elaboration) of any phenomenon. He challenges us to integrate the various schools of thought on any topic, and look for patterns and synthesis—not merely to heap information in an eclectic pile, but to critically examine the limitations of each discipline and epistemology, and to examine critically which disciplines are attempting to exclude other viewpoints (disciplines of knowing) and to colonize knowledge in one domain. W. psychology (steeped in scientism/positivism), for example, has tended to study 'fear' only from within its own domain of psychology and is not interested in being influenced by other domains of knowing about 'fear,' except perhaps the neurobiology of 'fear.' I am interested in an integral theory of 'fear' that has both depth and span.

A massive undertaking of a comparative analysis of 'fear' seems overwhelming. To some critics it seems hopelessly an inflated endeavor bordering on arrogance, as afterall, everybody knows what 'fear' is already. After eight years of research across disciplinary lines, comparing some of the knowledge humanity has accumulated about the nature and role of 'fear,' I (Fisher, 1997), critically concluded (in brief):

(1) there is no one definition of 'fear' but rather, a confused, often contradictory understanding both within and across disciplines,

(2) there is no systematic and/or critical theory of 'fear' with an explicit epistemology or ontology that includes an integral approach,

(3) the dominant systematic research on 'fear' is primarily done on laboratory animals, or on humans within a psychologically-centered behavioral, positivist, experimental research paradigm, with emphasis on applying the data to clinical treatment settings, business, or political organization—i.e., applying results of "how to control" or "how to eliminate" 'fear,'

(4) the applied research on 'fear' is very interested in all the "fears" (phobias) and less interested in knowing 'fear' as a pure research endeavor, i.e., more interested in control and manipulation [management] of 'fear' than in understanding it as a human experience and sociopolitical context (typical of what Habermas, 1984, and others, would call modernist instrumental reason),

(5) information both academically derived, and popularly written, on the nature and role of 'fear' is highly conflictual and contradictory in many areas (in particular, the *best* way to deal with it); many authors are recommending various techniques to cope with or eliminate 'fear' without defining 'fear,' and without acknowledging the complexity of the phenomenon (and without cautioning their reader that there are others writing on 'fear' who recommend different, if not contradictory, approaches than the one offered in this book),

(6) 'fear' has many masks, disguises, faces and shadows and is most difficult to see directly; yet, no systematic epistemology of 'fear' has been articulated.

[Note: Fisher (1998b) has documented in the *'Fear' Encyclopedia* a nomenclature consisting of 146 subspecies and 269 forms of 'fear' (not fears and phobias) used in the literature he's reviewed]

The most outstanding generalizable feature found in the literature that speaks about the 'Love'-'fear'- metaphysics, is that 'fear' is an agent of illusion, distortion, dissociation, and denial which prevents human beings from seeing reality and/or truth, oneself, and/or other as they really are. Perception is thereby altered by 'fear,' in what some authors would call a pathological way (very similar to Habermas's notion of what "power" and coercion in oppressive environments does in distorting human communicative action and exchange—cf. Hart, 1990). This important feature about the nature of 'fear' has to bring

researchers and educators to question our ways of knowing 'fear' (i.e., epistemology). This is particularly problematic in that Maslow (1966) in this study *The Psychology of Science*, concluded that science, as a way of knowing, was fundamentally "based on fear" and "deficiency-motivated" (i.e., not "anxiety-free interest") (cited in Rowan, 1981, pp. 85-86). Which is not surprising in a way, when several authors, studying the nature of mythic-based religions have concluded that they evolved and are primarily motivated by fear, anxiety and insecurity (Howells, 1962). How does one know 'fear' when the "tools" to examine 'fear' are 'fear'-based themselves? A similar problematic of epistemology was recently raised in adult education,

> To understand the notion of empowerment and emancipation, we
> must begin with an analysis of power. This leads immediately to
> a fundamental problem: if power dictates or produces truth [as
> pathological distortions, says Habermas], how do we recognize
> true statements about power? More fundamentally, is truth
> possible beyond power? (Inglis, 1997, p. 3)

The outcome of the epistemology problem, be it in knowing 'fear' or power, is that we as educators can glibly or enthusiastically speak about liberation, freedom, emancipatory education and so on, without really ever knowing what it is because we have not understood what it is not. We have not understood oppression that blocks liberation, or the unequal power that blocks empowerment, or the 'fear' that is a barrier to 'Love.' The purpose of this paper is not to further explore the nature and role of 'fear' or power but to turn now to the evidence of a *culture of fear* as meta-context for the educational enterprise. However, the diagram below is a suggested conceptual model (Figure 1) for future research into the knowing of what I call an *integral approach to the study of oppression*.

Integral Model of Oppression [Figure 1]

[In order to have the *best* and most complete understanding of the phenomenon of OPPRESSION and VIOLENCE, I suggest we begin with an integral approach which incorporates three major value spheres (it, I, We) identified in Wilber's Kosmology, with their concomitant concepts/phenomenon for study]

POWER (We)

'Fear' Pattern
Virus = FPV+

HURTING (I)   TOXIFICATION (It)
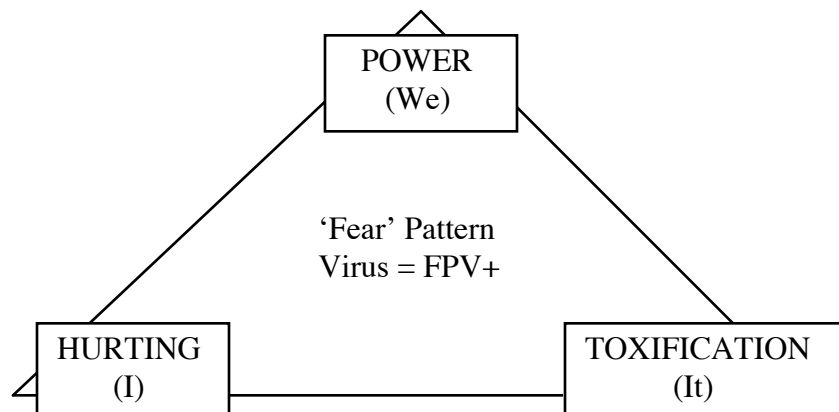
What Kind of Society Do We Live In?

If you want to get into conflict in a hurry, just tell someone what kind of society you think we live in. If I say it is a 'fear'-based society, there is certainly a thousand and one opinions that the society is something else, and that I'm focusing too much on the negative. Many would argue it is foolish to try to generalize and they don't want anyone preaching to them what kind of society it is we live in. They would argue it is subjective and an arbitrary decision anyone makes about their own experience in society. With respect for all the different opinions, views and local variations, there are a few generalizations I feel comfortable espousing about the nature of society today in the W. hemisphere (and I'd guess they are applicable to many places around the world).

The "Risk Society" and Culture of 'Fear'

German sociologist Ulrich Beck (1992) has made a significant challenge to the notion that we live in a postmodern society. Rather, his assessment is that we are shifting dramatically from an industrialized modernity to a "reflexive modernization." Jansen and van der Veen (1992, 1997) have discussed the important implications of Beck's work for adult education. Basically, the industrial modern "political spectrum," that has been with us as dominant for the past few hundred years, has focused on the conflictual tension between *capital* and *labor*. Marxist critical analysis, which underlies most critical and radical thinking in educational circles, focused on this conflict as the site of political struggle. Beck argues the political spectrum has changed in the culture and mindscape of the people in W. society. Today, the conflict is between *individualistic perspectives* and *collectivist perspectives* (or what I call the 'I-We' problem). Jansen and van der Veen (1997) wrote,

> 'Reflexive' here means that the conditions that initially facilitated the development of industrial society have become problematic in themselves. This results in what Beck calls a risk society. In industrial society, the central social issue was the (unequal) production and distribution of social wealth. The risk society is characterized by the inherent short-comings of modern institutions in the prevention and overcoming of *global life insecurity*. One of the main reasons for this comprehensive insecurity is the irreparable loss of the central political steering capabilities in the society *vis-a-vis* the all-embracing and pervasive effects of a globalized economy and revolutionary scientific and technological innovations. The traditional political institutions try to react but lack the power to plan or control effectively the social consequences of these deeply transforming economic and techno-scientific developments. This is not only true with respect to ecological risks but also with respect to issues of political legitimization, social cohesion and moral values. (p. 265)

Beck points to the paradox of the process of individualization which is dominating the communalization processes of society. On one hand individualization is liberating for

people as they are able to separate from the dysfunctional side of institutions, family patterns and the values and norms that go with them; while, on the other hand they find themselves with more freedom of choice but bearing immense responsibility for their decisions. With the globalization phenomenon as political context, they find themselves less and less in control of major changes in society that affect their lives. "The central social issue is no longer formulated in terms of the unequal production and distribution of social wealth but formulated around the *vulnerability of individuals* on the labor market and in social life in general" (Jansen & van der Veen, 1997, p. 266).

Educators and leaders everywhere are feeling the polarizations of which way to go in educational planning and decision-making in educational settings. There seems a constant conflict between the rights and freedom of individuals and the necessity of community values to maintain some stability of institutions. The adult education literature is filled with anger and attacks on the psychologization and individualism of our field and its inability to take on an agenda of cohesive social action to change the status quo inequities of power that are sustained by late capitalism and its classist structures. If Beck is right, then those arguments of the critical and radical 'left' may need to be re-examined in light of the shifting sociopolitical reality of a new "political spectrum" and the insecurity ('fear') that accompanies it. With the increasing diversity of ethno-cultural mosaics in the W. and Beck's reflexive modernity, it is not surprising we are feeling insecure and *at risk* in today's rapidly changing world.

Taking the analysis of the risk society one step further, British socio-historian Frank Furedi (1997) argues,

> Safety has become the fundamental value of the 1990s. Passions
> that were once devoted to a struggle to change the world (or to
> keep it the same) are now invested in trying to ensure that we are
> safe.... Personal safety is a growth industry... hardly a week now
> passes without some new risk [disease, food-poisoning, violence,
> tragedy] to the individual being reported, and another safety
> measure proposed.... Every public and private place is now
> assessed from a safety perspective. (p. 1)

Furedi is concerned that the obsession with safety, health and lowering risk has led to a society in which morality is based on low expectation to be creative, passionate, or flexibly adaptable to change. This society, he believes, is dominated by what he calls the *culture of fear*. AGORA, the name given to a Swiss think tank, has been meeting on this issue and has produced documents that proclaim "The new cultural imperialism [is based on]... the fear of living..." (Anon., 1995, from the internet) and not the fear of dying as we used to believe. The very same conclusion was reached by best selling author de Becker (1997), "... the most imporant question is not how we might die, but rather 'How shall we live?'"

The *culture of fear* is not a new conceptualization. Margaret Mead had identified "paranoid cultures" at times and other authors have called it by different names—e.g.,

"fear/mistrust society" (Gibb, 1991, p. 267), "culture of disrespect and fear" (Watkins & Marsick, 1993). There is convincing evidence provided by Riane Eisler (1987), in her extensive anthropological research, which indicates patriarchal "dominator cultures" (as opposed to "partnership cultures") have been the hegemonic form of society in the W. world for at least 5000 years. "Fear and mistrust" are at the top of her listing of the characteristics of a dominator culture. Whereas nurturing and cooperation are at the top of her list characterizing partnership cultures.

The only educator, I know of to acknowledge the impact of 'fear' as a context for teaching is Parker Palmer (1998) in *The Courage to Teach*, where he devotes an entire chapter of the book to "Culture of Fear." Chomsky (1995) wrote an essay with this title. The issue of violence/hurting and insecurity in W. society is nothing to be minimized. Dr. Ellen Taliaferro, co-founder of Physicians For A Violence Free Society, called the source of all sources of violence—simply, "fear" (Anon., 1997). President of the United States, Bill Clinton, was heard on international radio, after the Oklahoma bombing, telling the people: "These are frightening and terrible times, but we cannot let a few terrible people..." (CBC radio, April 23, 1995). Business and organizational development experts are probably the quickest to pick up on sociopolitical trends and potential impacts on corporate culture. Linda Ackerman labeled it the paradigm of "fear-state management" (Fox, 1994, p. 238), Gibb (1991, p. 106) called it "fearful management" practice and Lawrence (1997, internet) called it "authoritarian organisational culture." Edward W. Deming, the business guru of the quality management revolution, in no uncertain terms, teaches "... we need to rid fear from the organization" (pers. comm, Woods, 1996). Business consultant, Sherer (1997) wrote, "Fear, the real enemy of productivity.... Anyone who uses fear as a weapon might just as well be working for the competition." Dr. Gerald Suarez (pers. comm., 1998), an industrial psychologist, has been hired as Director of the USA Presidential Quality Management (White House Communications Agency) to teach and advise on the impact of 'fear.' No doubt, in the near future, educators and community leaders will be looking in this direction for similar guidance in how best to work within a culture of 'fear.' More importantly, I'd like to see us as educators, developing our own theory of 'fear' and how best to handle it and not be led by W. psychology and its incomplete bias and view of 'fear.'

'Fear': A Cultural and Political Construct

> Fear is a staple of popular culture and politics. There is nothing
> new in that. Capitalist power actualizes itself in a basically
> unihabitable space of fear. That much is universal.
> - Massumi (1993, p. 23)

A most unique research project was created in the mid-1980's to study "political fear" in the Southern Cone of Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay). The Social Science Research Council in New York sponsored an interdisciplinary team of researchers to study civil society and its efforts during the terrorist regimes of the 1970's. In 1985 the first (and only) international conference on "The Culture of Fear" was held in Buenos Aires. The findings from years of research were published in Corradi et al.

(1992), *Fear at the Edge: Sate Terrorism and Resistance in Latin America*. To my knowledge these were the first academics to claim that 'fear' is a cultural and political construct and ought to be studied as such. They wrote,

> In the United States and in other advanced democracies, there is a marked reluctance to consider fear as something other than a personal emotion and, hence, a phenomenon within the exclusive purview of one discipline: psychology. This reluctance, however, is itself a product of deep-seated social habits and political traditions.... Free societies do suffer the occasional occurrence of collective frights or panics, but they do not know fear as the permanent and muffled undertone of public life. (p. 2)

Whether that is true or not is debateable in light of the recent sociology of a risk society. These authors were writing in the early 90's and the changes have been immense as we near the end of the decade. I would argue that although W. nations are generally "free" as civil societies, there is a danger if we assume that the culture of 'fear' is less damaging for us, as compared with nations overtly ridden by terrorist regimes. The more subtle the 'fear,' the more difficult it is to track its impact. I have a strong suspicion that powerful military nations like the United States living in a culture of 'fear' have profound destructive impacts on all parts of the planet. Knowing who, what and where your 'enemy' is, can sometimes be a lot less terrifying than not being able to see the 'enemy' but sensing it is always there. But that is a discussion beyond the scope of this paper.

Elsewhere (Fisher, 1998c) I've examined more substantial evidence for the culture of 'fear.' In the remainder of this paper, I'd like to explore briefly the three value spheres of *culture, landscape* and *mindscape*, and evidence indicating the interest of various people in attempting to understand the nature and role of 'fear' as meta-context in contemporary society.

Culture: Re-positioning 'Fear'

> [Fear]... the everpresent shadow over men and nations.
> –Williamson (1945, p. 10)

> ... Fear, I will call it the Second Horseman of our Eternal Apocalypse, it rides a red stallion with flaming nostrils with many tentacles.... A dreadful self-perpetuated monster that's only roots is in how we think. –Roberto (1997, internet)

> Men are not afraid of things, but how they view them. –Epictetus

Culture is conceptualized in this paper as the inner social 'spirit' of place and time. Artists, in the broadest sense of that term, and their cultural productions create a place to manifest the 'spirit of the times' as honestly as can be expressing in the times. I'm intrigued by the phenomenon of the late 90's and the vehicle stickers and attitude wear of NO FEAR! that has captured a large audience win the W. world. What are the young

people saying who publicly display their NO FEAR! symbols? I tend to think the generation Xers most attracted to this symbol are well-acquainted with the terrors of living in the era afte the baby boomers. They are telling the world that 'fear' is everywhere in this cultuer and has greatly spoiled their lives and they won't personally let the culture of 'fear' do that to them anymore.

"Fear is one of the fundamental human emotions, recognized for so long that it is recorded in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics" (Calwood, 1986, p. 92). Feminist critics, Mascetti and Lorie (1995, p. 187, 189) explored the "End of Fear," examining the predictions of Nostradamus. Whether there will be an end of 'fear' on this planet or not is a long debate, what Mascetti and Lorie do believe is,

> For thousands of years now we have been under the influence of religions which are essentially fear-driven.... After thousands of years of conditioning, we believe [as W. cultures] in this punitive God.... still we carry thus unconscious fear around with us as though it were essential to our lives....

Writers, like Navarett (1997) believe there is a "shape of fear" that is currently embracing the horror that continually appears in contemporary culture, a culture of the *fin de siecle,* and an age of decadence. To further give shape to the culture of 'fear,' a group of yong postmodern architects from Austria recently took on a project of world dimension to acknowledge the importance of 'fear' in our culture. They assembled a live-chat "film" using high tech computer technology, where participants (anywhere in the world with a computer terminal) focusing on issues of 'fear' in contemporary culture, could write and speak (with their image of themselves) projected as a 15 X 20 meter image onto the backdrop of a medieval Cathedral in Graz, Austria. The Cathedral is famous architecturally for its huge sculptured images of the three great Medieval fears, known at the time as the "Three Scourges of God" (i.e., the grasshopper plague, black death, and war as fall of the city by invading societies). Typically postmodern, these young generation-X architects brought together the shapes of 'fear' of the late 1990's and overlayed them on the medieval 'fear' as depicted on the face of the Cathedral wall. People in Graz, were given the opportunity to gather at the square outside the Cathedral and witness this live performance for seven days. Records of the conversations were recorded on tape. Hundreds of participants engaged in live dialogues, presented texts and contemplated the 'fear' of our times. Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (1997, internet), an organizer of the event from Madrid, Spain, wrote,

> The Internet Relay Chat sessions reflected on contemporary fear as decentered [beyond individual mindscape (psyche)], distributed phenomena or 'syndromes' more than invasions: global warming, AIDS, terrorism, economic violence, FEAR.... discussion on FEAR from the realm of the abstract to very specific instances within geopolitical, architectural, philosophical, biological....
> [he believes the Cathedral "transformed" during the session]

Canadian philosophical scholar, Charles Taylor (1992) in his book *The Malaise of Modernity*, identified three major malaises (losses/fears) that summarize the whole of the

W. modern era since the 17th century. If it is the three scourages of the Medieval or the three malaises of the Modern era, it seems more than coincidence that the culture of 'fear' continues to find an expression. I sometimes imagine that if 'Love' (or the trinity of Father, Son, Holy Spirit—or Truth, Beauty and Goodness) is not able to bring our world to a unity of equal respect for one another, perhaps, some trinity of 'fear' will accomplish the task much more effectively because we all know it—so human—so well—so universal.

Landscape: Trying To Contain 'Fear'

Although, culture and landscape are intricately related as part of societies, there is some distinction that seems worthwhile in our study of the culture of 'fear.' If culture represented the social 'spirit' ('We' value sphere), then landscape in a society is a reflection of both geography and society's impact on that geography. People influence landscapes and landscapes influence people/societies. I am talking about human landscapes but landscapes nonetheless that make up the 'It' value sphere. A good example, was the huge temple dedicated to 'FEAR' at the heart of the ancient city of Sparta (Tuan, 1979). 'It' was merely a temple which created part of the landscape of Sparta. Everyone knew of it and some more likely worshipped there. For this was a warring time in ancient Greece and the God 'Phobos' ('fear') had been given great respect for its role on the battlefields. Where would we find landscapes of 'fear' in contemporary W. society? It appears there are no 'fear' temples to be seen because 'fear' in landscape has become normalized into the very fabric of our architectural milieu in the average W. town or city. Ellin et al. (1997) in *Architecture of Fear*, explore ways in which the contemporary landscape is shaped by our society's preoccupation with fear, as apparent in home design, security systems, gated communities, etc. Callwood (1986, p. 92) believed "fear" "... is a fence behind which people feel safer." The paradox is, that the safer they feel behind the walls and fences which barrier individuals and families from the world 'out there,' the more afraid they are to venture out beyond those walls and *risk*. The syndrome of security-insecurity is never released from the conflict, nor 'fear' itself. It makes for good business, if you sell "security systems."

Yi-Fu Tuan (1979, p. 1, 3) is a geographer who studied *Landscapes of Fear* and set the stage for this field of investigation. He wrote,

> Writing a book on fear should not be a delightful experience. But it was, for various reasons, one of which is the sheer intellectual pleasure of exploring a large array of sources, ranging from exegeses on fairy tales to treatises on criminal law.... In every study of the human individual and of human society, fear is a theme—either covert as in stories of courage and success, or explicit as in works on phobias and human conflict. Yet no one (so far as we know) has attempted to take 'landscapes of fear' as a topic worthy of systematic exploration in its own right and for the light it may shed on questions of perennial interest: What is it to be human? What is it like to live in the world?

From the back cover of Tuan's monograph the publishers wrote,

15

> ... Tuan explores the changing nature of fear... he describes the landscapes
> of fear created by epidemic disease and supernatural visions of witches and
> ghosts, violence and fear in the country and the city, and the landscapes
> of punishment—gallows and prisons—erected by authorities to contain the
> chaos of lives deemed unruly by established society.

The more rigid the rules, regulations, and authoritarian landscapes of "do's" and "don't's," the more like 'fear' has pervaded the culture or organization of relationships. Security signs, guards, dogs, and "safe sex," "safe travel," "safe living," advertisements on billboards and on public transport walls, flag our attention daily as part of the cultural landscape. In my part of the world, urban living has been divided into neighborhoods with huge walls and gates, with houses designed for people to never get out of their cars—home to work—enclosed in the privacy of one's automobile and underground security controlled garages and parking lots—and then there are the regular neighborhoods where people mix with whomever happens to live next door or walk down the street. However, more and more houses and their windows and doors are becoming landscapes more reminiscent of prisons with their variously decorated iron bars or, well placed bright yellow signes with large black print: "Beware Dangerous Dog on Premises" or "Beware Dangerous Home Owner" but there is not such a critter to be found in most cases. Tuan goes further, and suggests that stories, fairy tales, legends, cosmological systems (religions) and scientific and philosophical systems are "... shelters built by the mind in which human beings can rest, at least temporarily, from the siege of inchoate exprience and doubt. Likewise, the material landscapes of houses, fields, and cities contain chaos..." (p. 6). But do they really ever contain 'fear'? I doubt it.

Unfortunately, Tuan had no theory of 'fear,' nor any definition of 'fear' that he systematically and critically constructed from his wide spectrum of investigations. It makes it difficult to know what exactly he is talking about when he speaks of 'fear.' What I believe, is most important in Tuan's work and others on the 'It' dimension of understanding 'fear, ' is that it stretches our imaginations further beyond the hegemony of only a knowledge about 'fear' that is situated in the psychological ('I' value sphere or mindscape). A culture of 'fear' produces physical structures and systems that greatly impact upon human sensibility and freedom. The impact on learning and educational processes of landscapes of 'fear' have yet to be fully exposed as an important area of research (that I'm aware of).

Mindscape: The Creations of 'Fear'

The origin and creation of 'fear' is not examined here. Rather, I'm interested in how 'fear' creates patterns/qualities in the mindscape of individuals. 'Fear' as situated in mindscape (psyche) and the 'I' value sphere, is the predominant knowledge available. With limited space in this paper, I will pass by a traditional examination of the data on anxiety disorders as the number one mental health problem in the world, and a lot of other tedious details about the nature and role of 'fear' from the psychological perspective (Fisher 1997 reviews much of this literature). Over ten years ago, I approached an understanding of how toxicity, pathology, and now, what I call the *'fear'*

pattern virus, influences creations in our mindscape. Although, the philosophical and theoretical background to this research is far beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth sharing the *A-ness/D-ness Model* (Figure 2) below which is an attempt to visually and metaphorically show what 'fear' may look like, what it does to creation, what it does to a human mind, and a human being.

Below, the A-ness/D-ness Model shows four different ways to color and draw a rectangular shape.

Figure 2
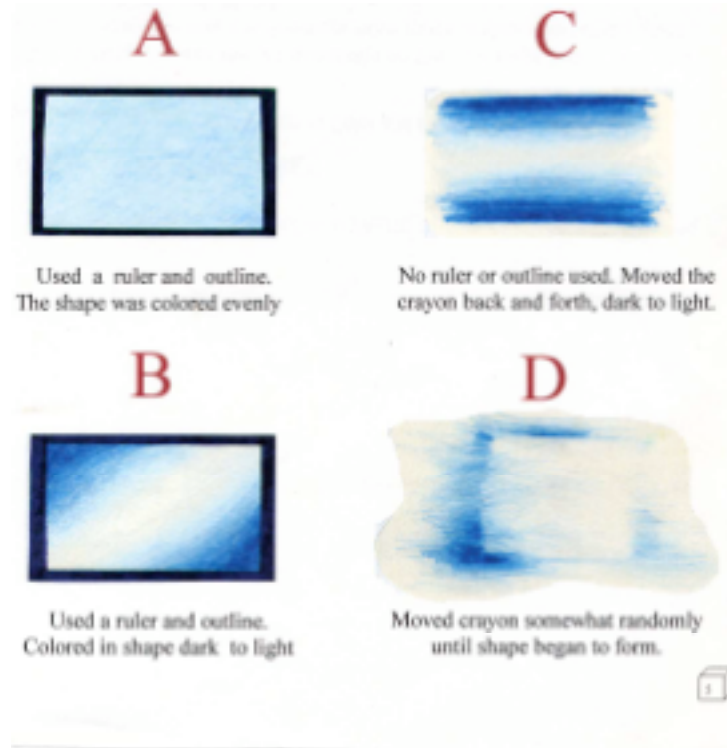
These are the only four major patterned ways I could come up with (admitting there are minor variations on these themes that are possible). It is best, to really know these models by actually composing them on paper yourself, following the instructions given. I have composed several questions which I ask of respondents who are viewing these four different drawings/images/patterns. Nearly 700 people from all walks of life in North American society have contributed to my ongoing research survey. Without going into that data and preliminary findings, my hypothesis is that 'fear' as a 'fear' pattern virus influences the creation-making of the mindscape by a process of continuous homogenization, sterilization, and ultimate loss of lifeforce via obsessive control and the search for safety/security (low risk). What that means, simply, is that our 'natural' and spontaneous 'Creator' in the mindscape most prefers to create in the process of D-ness (Figure 2). It least wants to create in the process of A-ness. The 'Creator' within is a lifeforce that desires all creations to be unique, filled with aliveness and vitality and ever so deeply open, expansive, embracing and beautiful. The 'Creator' within knows exactly what is the truth, when it comes to the creating process that is uninhibited by forces of the

'fear' pattern virus (you will perhaps reacall the Integral Model of Oppression (earlier), and the FPV+ which consists of three concepts/phenomenon = power, hurt, toxicity).

I believe we all start off in this world as children creating and living in D-ness and are socialized ("educated") into A-ness (or variations thereof, like B-ness). Evidence in the data, indicates that A-ness is highly valued and seen as 'good' significantly more than D-ness is seen as 'good' or 'beautiful.' The pathos side of mechanical-industrial instrumental rationality of modernity is completely describable within the qualities that A-ness and B-ness exhibit. And Taylor's three malaises ("fears"), are equally embedded in these mechanical creation models/metaphors. It appears we "educate" and socialize our children and ourselves within a meta-context of 'fear,' or what is a culture of 'fear.' See Fisher (1986) for a summary of the first study using these models with an elementary public school community. In regard to 'fear' in the questions I've asked about these models, it appears that adults (regardless of gender as a variable) are "split" 50:50 between choosing 'A'-ness as *having the most 'fear' in it,* and 'D'-ness. Virtually no one chooses anything in between 'A' and 'D.' Apparently, the population of North Americans as a whole, has completely contradictory opinions about the nature of 'fear.' These survey results are consistent with what I found in surveying the 'fear' literature across the domains of knowledge (Fisher, 1997).

You may recall from earlier in this paper my comments on the superintendent of schools speaking after the mass-killing in an American school, "All the holes in the walls have been filled and freshly painted, the damaged chairs removed, and when the children return to school on Monday there will be no signs to be seen." Here is the sanitizing of surfaces that 'A'-ness so typically creates from a mindscape embedded in valuing 'A'-ness as a solution to a culture of 'fear' (if not terror). The truly educative, and therapeutic thing to do, may I suggest rather boldly, is for the children in that freshly painted lunchroom to be given all the art supplies available in the school, and the guidance of a few compassionate adults, to then express on the whitewashed walls everything that is inside of them that has toxified their mindscape. Let them create a landscape and a culture that no longer tries to hide from 'fear.' Let that created wall, then stand as symbolic for all to see for the next year. Then, let the young people decide if, and/or how, they may want to change the walls when the year is over. Let the people, let the children, destroy the vulgarity of an order and cleanliness in our schools and society, that is merely a surface facade for a rage and terrorism that lies so near below. Let the people rage and at least have mastery over their own rebellion to the false security that the "walls" of 'fear'-motivated authorities have placed around their souls. I agree strongly with Wilber's (1995) summary of our current world crisis,

> It is often said that in today's modern and postmodern world, the forces of darkness are upon us. But I think not; in the Dark and the Deep there are truths that can always heal. It is not the forces of darkness but of shallowness that everywhere threaten the true, and the good, and the beautiful.... It is an exuberant and fearless shallowness that everywhere is the modern danger, the modern threat, and that everywhere nonetheless calls to us as savior.... whose prophets lovingly exhort us to dive into the shallow end of the pool

head first. (p. xi)

A Few Closing Thoughts

> World leaders are unaware of what is to become of the future,
> yet they play aware. They send fear to the hearts and minds of
> mankind because they are in fear.   – Anon.(1993, internet)

Learning and the educative experience are politically embedded in every moment. Radical educators have challenged our educational communities and society as a whole to look at the conflictual reality of the context of "**power**" in the creation of everything we do. We have Marx to thank for that. Environmental educators have challenged our societies to examine everything we do within the context of "**toxification**" as the polluting of our environments both external and internal. We have many to thank for that (with Rachel Carson, 1962, as a highlight). Psychological educators and therapists have challenged our societies to examine everything we do within the context of repression, abuse, violence and "**hurting**." We have Freud to thank for that. If we put these three major contexts together under the umbrella of the 'fear' pattern virus, then **'fear'** becomes the meta-context for all those contexts which affect everything we are being and becoming in the W. world (and beyond). To ignore any of these contexts, at the expense of the others, is as dangerous and oppressive to life on this planet as ignoring all of these three contexts. To ignore, the meta-context of these three contexts is what I believe has kept humanity in the shallows of a lie. Once, admitted, we at least have a chance of recovery. Whether, that recovery will be fast enough, or sufficient enough, is an old question that only 'fear' itself asks—as 'fear' still lurks and searches endlessly for the *security*, the *low risk*, the end *guarantee* which it can never have.

The dominant situating of 'fear' within the psychological mindscape today is problematic in that it has produced a very narrow or shallow conceptualization of 'fear,' accepted by the vast majority of people I interview, as a "feeling or emotion." I've also attempted to show that oppression is also shallowly understood because of its contingent relationship with 'fear.' This leads me to think that liberation and emancipation are concomitantly also shallowly understood, though often paraded in educational rhetoric. Despite this rather universal acceptance of understanding about 'fear,' there is a vast discrepancy in our understanding about 'fear' when examined in closer detail. A search of the world wide web (internet) on 'fear' these days indicates a veritable 'Fear' Wars is going on between many individuals and defined sub-cultural groups. There is clearly, a battle for the meaning of 'fear' well underway, with roots that historically go far back to at least the split between the church and the state, between religion and science.

As good news on the other hand, near on the horizon, I'm seeing "movements" that are pushing for a renewed critical examination of the assumption that 'fear' is a given and merely ought to be coped with as part of human nature and part of normal society. I'll mention just a few examples: (1) in 1991 a government document called *Living Without Fear: Everyone's Goal, Every Women's Right* speaks a powerful message (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women); (2) in 1982 a manifesto was created from a

group in Norway called *The Future in Our Hands* which demanded their government (and society) no longer assume or accept that with increasing technological innovation and globalization, "fear" continue to be their byproduct. These, I believe are fine examples of resistance to the culture of 'fear' as our normal and inevitable context for living. Directly from the adult education domain, I was very pleased a year ago to receive a brochure in the mail from the Banff Centre for the Arts, Alberta, Canada. They had completed a vision process and re-organization. Their mission statement read (paraphrasing): *Our mission is to provide an educational environment without fear for all students, faculty and staff that work at the Banff Centre for the Arts*. I look forward to new discourses within the educational arena that seriously consider the meta-context of a culture of 'fear.'

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