
Fear Management and Education: Status of a Failing Relationship



R. Michael Fisher

© 2020

Technical Paper No. 97

In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute

Fear Management and Education:
Status of a Failing Relationship

Copyright 2020

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from the publisher/author. No permission is necessary in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews, or other educational or research purposes. For information and permission address correspondence to:

In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute
920A- 5 Ave. N. E., Calgary, AB
T2E 0L4

Contact author(s):

r.michaelfisher52@gmail.com

First Edition 2020

Cover and layout by R. Michael Fisher
ISOE Logo (original 1989) designed by RMF

Printed in Canada

The In Search of Fearlessness Institute is dedicated to research and publishing on fear, fearlessness and emotions and motivational forces, in general, as well as critical reviews of such works. Preference is given to works with an integral theoretical perspective.

Fear Management and Education: Status of a Failing Relationship

R. Michael Fisher,¹ Ph.D.

©2020

Technical Paper No. 97

Abstract

Basically, for Ernest Becker, fear management is inevitable for all organisms; and cultural organisms have a really complicated fear management systems structuration. Cultures, like individuals, like educational systems of cultural reproduction, can do fear management well or really do it poorly—it all depends, on many things. Doing it unwell has severe consequences for life on this planet. The author has dedicated his educational career for 30+ years to this cause of finding the ‘best’ fear management/education (FME) possible. Terror Management Theory (TMT) is a great gift in this regard. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the current status of fear in educational discourses, in particular, the educators who advocate for TMT. He shows a ‘gap’ in the introduction of Beckerian educational philosophy/theory from the mid-60s-70s through to the current status of fear/terror management in the field of Education. He provides a complementary Fear Management Theory (FMT) in Appendix 1. The author finds several problems with the current applications and makes generic and theoretical recommendations to improve understanding and applying TMT in educational settings. He addresses there will be differences in applying TMT by educators because of how they choose to frame the insidious global Fear Problem.

¹ Fisher is an Adjunct Faculty member of the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, AB, Canada. He is an educator and fearologist and co-founder of In Search of Fearlessness Project (1989-) and Research Institute (1991-) and lead initiator of the Fearlessness Movement ning (2015-). The Fearology Institute was created by him recently to teach international students about fearology as a legitimate field of studies and profession. He is also founder of the Center for Spiritual Inquiry & Integral Education and is Department Head at CSIE of Integral & 'Fear' Studies. Fisher is an independent scholar, public intellectual and pedagogue, lecturer, author, consultant, researcher, coach, artist and Principal of his own company (<http://loveandfearsolutions.com>). He has four leading-edge books: *The World's Fearlessness Teachings: A critical integral approach to fear management/education for the 21st century* (University Press of America/Rowman & Littlefield), *Philosophy of fearism: A first East-West dialogue* (Xlibris) and *Fearless engagement of Four Arrows: The true story of an Indigenous-based social transformer* (Peter Lang), *Fear, law and criminology: Critical issues in applying the philosophy of fearism* (Xlibris); *India, a Nation of Fear and Prejudice* (Xlibris); *The Marianne Williamson Presidential Phenomenon* (Peter Lang). Currently, he is developing The Fearology Institute to teach courses. He can be reached at: r.michaelfisher52@gmail.com

Introduction: Status Report on Fear

Education need no longer be beholden to the powers that be.
 – Becker (1967, p. 243)

Especially since September 11th [2001], it seems our duty as citizens is to inform ourselves better as to the nature and causes of this [insane] “War on Terror” that the U.S. has led—what I [prefer] to call a “Fear Wars” program, which is likely to last a very very long time on this planet. It irks me that several powerful (well-educated) Western white male world political leaders have decided to control ‘fear’ by means of another world war. I cannot myself, see what theory of ‘fear’ they utilize to make their choices, nor inform the public of such theoretical frameworks and assumptions that go with it. I do not see them inviting us to examine their ‘fear’ policies and pedagogy [and governance], nor do they declare whom they have hired as their expert ‘fear’ consultants. Do you? –Fisher, (2002, p. 1)

Orienting Generalizations

To begin to assess what is happening in regard to the entire phenomenon of *fear management* and then assess that relationship to the field of Education, you can imagine is to embrace an extraordinarily vast territory. I cannot do it justice here as it would take volumes and many years. Thus, this report in Technical Paper No. 97 is going to focus on some generalizations of vast details and specifics not covered. At the same time, this is a report that reflects much of my work over all. It is not merely about “generalizations,” albeit, I am often critiqued for ‘not giving enough examples to make my lectures more easy to understand.’ For many I speak and write in philosophical and theoretical abstractions more than they prefer. It is important readers make a distinction, however, as this writing unfolds, which requires some deeper critical analysis and thinking through what it means to say anything really significant about fear management. Perhaps, a first hint of practice, so you may re-orient somewhat, and avoid disappointment or boredom, is to attempt to align with my teaching approach in that anything I say here is not ‘all about you’ (i.e., about how you cope with and manage anxiety and fear). Of course, there are relevant things here that involved you and your relationship to fear, but the issue at-hand here is not a self-help guide, which most people tend habitually to default to when they read about *fear* anywhere. I am asking for slight re-alignment, and some resistance, related to that default expectation (need)—merely so as to explore together, freshly with a new lens, a wider and deeper understanding of fear (and ‘fear’) that is of collective importance to society and where

society itself is going as a whole system complex. My interest historically and globally is in the co-evolutionary potency of *humans* and *culture*—and thus, the organizational possibilities of a relationship with fear that serves the ‘better’ ways to make choices, manage (perhaps solve) problems and ultimately govern ourselves with dignity and integrity in relative harmony with the rest of Creation.

You can decide how wide that sense of “society” is in your mind, as I tend to think for the whole species (*Homo sapiens*), but you may want to just think for your society, your community, or nation. Bottomline, my theory about fear, my engagement with fear, tells me that *the world is perilously close to massive collapsing systems due to excess pollution caused primarily by human societies* especially since the Industrial Revolution a few hundred years ago but traceable going back to ten thousand years ago and the invention of the Agricultural Revolution. *Fear* ought to be recognized as equally important as say CO₂ in terms of excesses accumulated on the planet that were once natural only and not a problem and now are toxic and increasing in toxicity as ‘pollutants’ and thus as ‘threats’ to our very ability to sustain life for the next generation(s).

Below, I’ll introduce what is happening with fear management and its relationship to education in general, yet, my entire work (call it fearology or Fear Studies) is all about unravelling from a lot of unnecessary confusion about “fear” and ‘fear’² that exists in everyday discourses on these topics, which unfortunately are popularized so heavily into the category of emotion(s) and/or feelings and affect alone. I take a critical and conscious turn from that typical categorization, perhaps, I even take exception to it as an insult of undue reductionism, to not me and my theorizing but to the very nature of what I call Fear Management Systems. I’ll get to that later as an articulated (skeletal) *Fear Management Theory* (FMT), which is discussed in Appendix 1 for those interested in a deeper reading. But my point here is to bring to awareness that generalizations of specifics is not the only thing going on in my work on fear (and fearlessness). Rather, there are systematically rigorous “orienting generalizations” that are particularly important to understanding (and theorizing) not only about reality, as best we can as a species, but in understanding the very ways (more or less accurate and/or

² Fear with (‘) marks refers to pursuit of knowledge on this topic that puts a critical spin of deconstruction and reconstruction methodologies at the forefront of determining the nature and role of ‘fear’ (as a culturally-constructed, that is, culturally-modified phenomenon) (see, for e.g., Fisher, 1995, 1995a). This distinction is crucial to all my Fear Management Theory (FMT) and Fear Management/Education (FME) initiatives. I’ll not focus on this distinction in this paper.

distorted) that we choose for orienting ourselves to reality and methods of knowing reality. “Orienting generalizations” are necessarily in this use, part of a methodological approach of *integral theory*,³ as I draw upon the profound work of integral philosopher Ken Wilber overall for much of my fearological work since 1989. That said, there is no need to describe this further and complicate the essence of this paper and its basic purpose: that is, *to show the current status of the relationship of fear management and Education*.

Reports on *Fear Education*

In order to link this Technical Paper 97 with prior work that reports on “fear education” overall, it is necessary to summarize a few projects I have undertaken over the years. For an overall annotated bibliography of my work on fear, fearlessness and education see Fisher (2018). All this past

³ Wilber, according to Crittenden (1997), uses the *integral method* (e.g., see Wilber, 1997) in working with any field or discipline of knowledge. He tends to not be concerned with generic conflicts between findings and knowledge claims *per se* from the different fields and thinkers. He cherishes their diversity and avoids outright dismissal of claims from any such field, as widely across the spectrum from empirical hard sciences to arts, humanities and spiritual and religious knowledge claims. He believes, as *integral theory* predicts, the better path to Truth, than fighting over who has ultimate authority for a knowledge claim, is to adopt and embrace the possibility that within each field or discipline or group there are likely some “orienting generalizations” or “sturdy conclusions”; which, if looked at carefully over time and across various methodologies and proponents of knowledge—gems can be found. The attitude of standing back, and taking inventory on this meta-cognitive level allows for rich sources to be brought together (and synthesized)—and, overall, this is an *integral philosophical* approach. Crittenden concludes: “He [Wilber] is not worried [meaning, non-fear-based epistemologically speaking], nor should his readers [or students] be, about whether *other* fields would accept the conclusions of any given field; in short, don’t worry, for example, if empiricist conclusions do not match religious conclusions. Instead, simply assemble all the orienting conclusions as if each field had incredibly important truths to tell us. This is exactly Wilber’s first step in his integrative method [not called “Integral”]—a type of phenomenology of all human knowledge conducted at the level of orienting generalizations. In other words, assemble all of the truths [facts and theories] that each field believes it has to offer humanity. For the moment simply assume they are indeed true. Wilber then arranges these truths into chains or networks of interlocking [patterns of patterns] conclusions. At this point Wilber veers sharply from a method of mere eclecticism and into a systematic vision” (pp. ix-x). There is far more to Wilber’s methodology but this shall suffice for this paper, yet I want to remind readers that, according to Crittenden (and myself) “Wilber’s overall approach is the development of a new type of *critical theory*” (p. x). My own work on fear (‘fear’) attempts to this same general aim; it is crucial in the study of fear (and fear knowledges across fields and disciplines) to utilize non-fear-based methodology generically and that demands researchers (especially) ask deep questions about their motivations for studying fear in the first place. I have referred to this as (much like Kierkegaard) an epistemological fearlessness (see “fearlessness paradigm” and its role, in Fisher, 1995a and “fearlessness psychology” in Fisher, 2019). But that’s another topic for another time.

work has focused on fear management and fear education, or what I have preferred to call FME (fear management/education). Although rarely acknowledged in contemporary Education as a field, my FME work has been endorsed by several educators,⁴ albeit to a very limited degree.

First, let me define what I mean by “fear education.” Some critics believe this is a horrible term to promote. They believe fear ought to be removed from education and they (mis-)interpret my chosen term as if it is using fear to educate or train people. If fearmongering is used to educate or train anyone, indeed, that is abhorrent to me—even though, this practice goes on nearly every day in our homes, classrooms and governing institutions without a blink. That aside; no, this is not what I mean. I use fear so broadly and deeply as part of the systems involved in general human experience, thus, it ought to be labeled *fearuality*⁵ just like *sexuality*. I do not make fear negative only. Yes, it can be destructive but so can sex. As an educator of liberation for all, my aim is to create a massive movement of good fear education just like others have done with sex education, or conflict education, moral education or spiritual education.

Next, I offer radical and progressive pedagogical and curricular framings for a good critical integral fear education as FME. FME needs theory and I have done so early on by developing Fear Management Systems Theory⁶ and later into social theory as Fear Management Theory (FMT) that has been emerging in my work has a foundational premise that humans are only *really* interested in learning about *fear* (be it conscious or unconscious) because they want to learn how to better manage it—that is, how to better *avoid* it as a ‘negative emotion’ and experience.

And, with that inner motivational avoidance drive (perhaps instinctual, perhaps not) fear education (formal or informal) gets quickly skewed to-

⁴ For e.g., by the Indigenous educator, Four Arrows (*aka* Don Trent Jacobs), “I love what you are doing. Your work is so special, Michael” (Prof. of Leadership, Fielding Graduate University, San Francisco, CA); “I’m a big fan of your work, which, as you know, I find very important in this ‘fearful’ world,” (Clifford Mayes, Prof. Educational Psychology, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT; in art education (Baer, 2012); in language and literacy education (Leggo, 2011, 2016); in critical pedagogy (McLaren, 2016; Smith, 2014, 2016), in environmental and sustainability education (Godfrey, 2015; Mattson, 2009), educational philosophy (English & Stengl, 2010), curriculum theory (Slattery, 2012), Indigenous curriculum (Four Arrows, 2013), educational psychology (Mayes, 2010), adult education (VanderWeil, 2007), emotions and peace education (Zembylas 2013).

⁵ E.g., Fisher (2013).

⁶ E.g., Boschman (2007); Fisher (2010, Chapter 2).

ward the avoidance-learning methodologies in the very teaching about fear management. I won't go into this further here but you can read my many other works on this epistemic problem of *knowing fear* itself, when already fear is making itself untraceable (invisible, unlearnable) under the motivational/learning regime of 'get rid of it' or 'conquer it' etc. All too familiar statements about the relationship that humans are supposed to have. At least, I am referring here to most modern views on fear—albeit, some more positive framings are emerging in the last 50+ years or so to 'befriend fear' etc. Yet, deep down, FMT predicts the avoidance pre-dominating in the human experience (i.e., self-ego relationship to fear).

You have heard of “fear of fear itself”⁷ likely and that has a particularly interesting history and tells me lots about how the very study of fear (even hearing the word for many people) is triggering of fear—and, clinically this has a label in severest of cases called *phobophobia* = a phobia that consists of fear of fear itself or a phobia of having a phobia, etc. There are other strategies, less obvious, to learn and manage fear *via* counter-phobic reaction formations (e.g., bravado) too. Anyways, it starts to look like a kind of *madness* on some level in how people may reach such a point—such an ignore-ance and arrogance in *re*: to knowing the nature and role of fear ('fear'). FMT predicts this madness, pathology, and problematic as systemic and characteristic of a “culture of fear”⁸ context (e.g., see Fisher, 2010). All these dynamics named here, theorized here, make it near impossible to study fear (unbiasedly or accurately). That is, they make it near impossible to easily recognize and/or assess “fear” anything, including the very definition of fear. Those are all concerns far beyond the scope of this technical paper but they raise questions inevitably and essentially as a meta-context for any critical study of fear, any fear education worth its salt, and any good interventions we may call “fear management” (or TMT). I have invoked from the beginning of my fearological explorations the notion of “fearlessness”⁹ adjacent with this problematic of knowing fear.

⁷ Most famously former Pres. of the U.S.A., F. D. Roosevelt, made this famous; it is a discourse that can be traced back to many others at least as far back to Francis Bacon in the 17th century.

⁸ There are thousands of thinkers using this term now “culture of fear” but two leading sociologists Furedi (1997) and Glassner (1999) were at the forefront and one adult educator Palmer (1998). I began using the term after reading Furedi's work in 1997. It is a more rigorous term than what it mistakenly gets equated with *via* terms like “climate of fear” or “fearmongering.” See my definition in, for e.g., Fisher (2006, pp. 54-56).

⁹ “Fearlessness” has 15+ meanings (see Fisher, 2010) and they are evolving all the time, not the least of which has been to interpret Four Arrows' CAT-FAW/N theory of fear manage-

I knew at some point in my chosen life-purpose and career path that if I was to specialize on the topic of fear and fearlessness, I better come out explicitly and label myself “a ‘fear’ critic” (Fisher, 2002). Rare if ever, do I find anyone else so committed to this emancipatory research, management and educational trajectory. Even Terror Management Theory (TMT¹⁰), probably one of the most profound forms of fear management on the planet, is not shaped or situated *via* such a rarified and critical positioning as FMT is, and as I have argued is necessary if we really want to address the worst dangers of humanity’s overall evolutionary Fear Problem.

So, perhaps it is worth taking a moment to go to Fisher (2003) and my first official publication “Report on the Status of Fear Education.” I had just completed my doctoral degree in Education and was disappointed to say the least at how hard it was to publish in educational journals, and have anyone take my work on fear and education seriously. I quote from the Abstract of that report:

This report offers the first known summary on the status of *fear education* in Western society, and probably in the world. The results of studying fear education for the past 13 years casually, and the last four years intensively, have shown that fear education is not yet an entity (or field) self-reflective, never mind critical of itself. Fear education is now as inadequate as sex education was 100 years ago. With such an important topic as fear (and fearless), it is concluded that the lack of systematic study of fear education itself, may be equally as much of a problem to healthy human/global functioning, as fear is. (p. 1)

I defined “fear education” with small letters as the “unsystematic and un-critical, often habitual, ways that groups, organizations, and cultures teach and learn about fear and how best to handle it” (p. 3). This is generation-to-generation learning that is steeped in every day practices, conscious or unconscious. “Fear Education” with capitals “refers to the systematic holistic and critically researched ways that diverse information about fear (beyond psychology and common cultural biases) is discovered and learned” (p. 3)—also inferring fear (and ‘fear’) are dynamic and not static and ever completely known at any one time—they evolve as humans and societies evolve.

ment from an Indigenous worldview as a great pragmatic way to fearlessness in education and general society today (e.g., Fisher, 2018a; Fisher & Four Arrows, 2020).

¹⁰ E.g., see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terror_management_theory ; see also Fisher (2020) in discussing the relationship (nascent stages) of TMT and FMT.

So, this first 2003 report, with some generalizing assessments based on my years of work on the topic, focused in with a particular critical discourse methodology:

The following selected small sample of quotes was found from the author's Education and Fear files, collected in the past four years. Only authors with last names beginning with A, B, or C were arbitrarily chosen for this sample. I analyzed what professional educators (in the sample) were saying about fear and education. [I noted:] Although it is not the purpose of this document to dive deeper into a general fear theory [i.e., FMT] and its methodologies, suffice it to mention that the following very brief analysis of these Sample (discourses) is part of a developing methodology this author refers to as *fearanalysis*.¹¹ A quality FE [fear education] curriculum and pedagogy would teach [in part] fearanalysis to students of virtually all ages (p. 7).

Now, that's not what you'd typically expect in any form of fear education that we know of. This was radical stuff then and still is. But fact is, it is virtually invisible (denied access in the 'halls of learning'). To this day, one cannot find "fear education" or "fear management" and education in the ERIC data base, which is supposedly the ultimate go-to Index source for most significant literature on Education (at least, in the Western world). In the Summary of Findings of this report, I wrote:

If there is anything outstanding in this Report, it, at least, ought to be the fact that this is the first Report on fear education and its status ever published (that we know of). That frankly, seems ludicrous, when it is so well-known that fear is such an important subject in shaping human relationships and history itself. (Fisher, 2003, p. 12)

I noticed I did not use "fear management" *per se* in this 2003 publication, although everything in it is about that. I emphasized "fear education" and that is why eventually I chose FME as the best term to include how they are inseparable phenomenon. My study of the discourses showed that educators did care enough about the nature and role of fear in schools, learning, and behavior management to write about it. However, after that superficial treatment by all the authors examined, there were so many contextual issues not dealt with. There was no self-reflectivity questioning from the authors that maybe "fear" needs to be examined more critically and trans-disciplinarily outside of the normal education psychology notions (e.g.,

¹¹ E.g., Fisher (2012).

fear is an emotion and feeling, period). There was no hinting at the formation amongst these authors that maybe a “critical pedagogy of fear” was a worthwhile concept and certainly they did not mention fearlessness (p. 14). There are other critiques I offer in the 2003 Report, however, what the point of the findings were is both implicit and explicit: *Education has not kept up with advancing its own self-reflectivity and criticality in regard to its relationship with fear (never mind ‘fear’)*.

By any objective measure, and good systematic observation, there was no Fear Education really to be found, only a muted form of un-self-reflective fear education, whereby all authors drew almost exclusively from psychology for informing their views along with their experience and habits of conceptualizing fear and its management in the first place. It was not impressive and I was forced to say that the curriculum and field of Education had failed in maintaining a quality up-graded 20-21st century approach to fear management. And, that would lead to disaster, I predicted.

This was not really a surprise for me because in my doctoral research I had studied the ‘Fear’ Matrix (as I called it¹²) as an oppressive architecture to keep human beings as ‘slaves’ to the powers of operations and discourses that reinforced the domination of the rule of Fear (‘Fear’), what one sociologist called “Fear’s Empire”¹³ and others called “culture of fear”¹⁴ of which I linked to “fearism” (toxic form¹⁵). In Fisher (2002) I summed up my findings to say that the domination of the ‘Fear’ Matrix of our lives is due to a “failure of the Cultural”—meaning, quite ubiquitously, the very ways *cultural* structures, practices and so on have been grown and consumed was the problem—the source of the Fear Problem—because their own insidious *fear-based* (usually unconscious) architectures were uncritically examined¹⁶—that is, they too never provided their citizens with a quality Fear Education, at least for millenia. I’ve recommended a new ‘Fear’ Studies to challenge the hegemony of the cultural sphere and its biases in conceptualizing fear itself and reforming FME.¹⁷

¹² Fisher (2003a).

¹³ Barber (2003).

¹⁴ E.g., Fisher (2007).

¹⁵ E.g., Fisher (2020a).

¹⁶ Now a days, after my co-researching with Four Arrows, I would agree with him the cultural, belief, value sets that give meaning are all components of a more broad-based foundational “worldview” system, of which he argues there are only two: Indigenous worldview vs. Dominant worldview (e.g., Four Arrows, 2016).

¹⁷ E.g., Fisher (2006); see nine propositions for ‘Fear’ Studies (Fisher, 2012a).

There was a suspicious note in my calling out “culture” as a failing phenomenon itself, and as culprit of questionable hope-mongering¹⁸ (e.g., immortality and illusory promises) that were paradoxically often excessive, fear-based, and quite oppressive (and violent)—and, that had roots in other critiques (e.g., Wilber¹⁹)—with TMT right up there (as I was now citing Becker, 1973, 1975; Solomon, Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 1998) to back-up my own hypotheses and indictments of the near-psychotic way humans²⁰ are socialized, enculturated and educated (i.e., indoctrinated).

And, it was this indictment that began my serious critique of culture(s) ongoing, of which the latest form of “culture of fear” is particularly catching more and more attention—and, in that regard I drew upon TMT as part of FMT (and the meta-context of “culture of fear”), not that one came before the other, but they were co-emerging. TMT had been much more successful however in being situated for 35+ years in research universities with good funding and opportunities to collect empirical data to ‘prove’ Becker’s ideas. FMT lingered then and still does, in the margins of power-money-privilege—that is, outside of university institutional support and has not attracted major funders from other parts of society.

Terror Management Theory & Education

TMT provides an opportunity to engage with our mortality in a way that can help us tolerate uncertainty regarding our own worldview and thus help us relate in more amicable ways to those who hold different worldviews.²¹ It is vital that those involved in the educational

¹⁸ In Fisher (2002a), I wrote: “I envision, not hope, that the *path of fearlessness*, as an ongoing struggle of ‘correcting’ the ‘fear’-based path, will always be to grow within the ‘Fear’ Matrix—or, at least, as long as I can imagine realistically. Maybe, someday, the ‘Fear’ Matrix will collapse when we quit feeding it with ‘fear’ (i.e., our ‘cultures of fear’). The choice is ours individually and collectively....” (pp. 28-29).

¹⁹ E.g., Wilber (1981)—*via* a transpersonal view of human cultural evolution, who also integrated Becker’s work in his theory.

²⁰ I acknowledge “humans” here refers to peoples who have left the Indigenous (sacred nature-based) ‘old ways’ that dominated 99% of human evolutionary history (cf. Four Arrows, 2016).

²¹ Although a topic beyond the scope of this paper, one has to be very cautious about TMT’s conception of worldview as well as the authors of this quote and their use of worldview—which, means, the theory behind construction and use of worldview is under suspect for many reasons including colonialist intentions that may be largely unconscious. Because the authors of this quote mention the importance of an Indigenous respect and re-education for settlers and non-Indigenous in higher education and school classrooms these

endeavour...disrupt beliefs about ‘just the way it is’ regarding the norms of inequalities that plague not only our classrooms, but also broader society....TMT is an important part of the puzzle to better human relations.... – van Kessel, den Heyer & Schimel (2020, pp. 438-9)

In Fisher (2020) I wrote about the new emerging dialogue between TMT and FMT potentially. This led me to recently search out specific uses of TMT in Education. You may recall the Becker quote opening this paper. Becker as cultural anthropologist and renaissance thinker was not going to be quiet in his times because he challenged the current hegemonic cultural and education practices and the unnecessary oppression that existed in the institutions. Arguably, he knew they were overly conservative and dominating because of their role in socialization to get everyone, more or less, to fit the ‘status quo’ (i.e., the needs of the State for power and control of ‘the People’). His deep cultural critique and psychological insights were aimed at both Left and Right political proponents that infused Education overall.

Sadly, in my preliminary (not extensive) research on who in Education was significantly utilizing TMT (and/or Ernest Becker’s work), I found only a couple references: a book by Kagan (1994) and journal article by Scimecca (1978).²² I’ll utilize Scimecca in this technical paper because I have easy access to it. Other than my own work attempting to introduce TMT and FMT into Education since after 9/11; clearly, there is a vast paucity of applications in this field. This needs to change and soon as possible, as fear is not only a rapidly growing factor in mental health concerns of students but in clashing of values, worldviews, cultural and political differences under the pressures of the Anthropocene challenges to survival. It’s encouraging

days, it is even more important to consider the theoretical (fear management) implications of what is meant by worldview and conflicting worldviews as these authors refer to in this educational article. Suffice it to say, Indigenous scholarship, with a potent theory of critique of worldview conceptions typically used in diversity and inclusion in mainstream institutions, ought to be brought to bear upon educational policy and practice and to do so in light of a critique of whether the very conception of worldview is fear-based or fearlessness-based, which TMT and the authors quoted do not entertain *per se*; I highly recommend the Indigenous scholar Four Arrows’ work on a decolonizing of worldview conceptions and his critiques of diversity and inclusion conceptions, with his radical “point of departure theory” all of which I have, in a small part, been in collaboration with for 13 years (e.g., see Four Arrows, 2020, 2016; Fisher, 2018a; Fisher & Four Arrows, 2020).

²² Interesting this was published in *Journal of Educational Thought* in my *alma mater* The University of Calgary, Alberta, where at the time (1978) I was finishing my Environmental Biology degree and starting a BEd. (after) at U of C to become a secondary science teacher.

some new pragmatic uses of TMT are beginning in the past couple years to show up in Education faculties (e.g., see van Kessel et al.).²³

A quick glance at the major TMT books, for example, indicates that TMT researchers (often social psychologists) have studied and applied TMT findings to many diverse fields, like medicine, criminology, health, environmentalism, therapy/counseling, conflict resolution, international relations, politics, organizational leadership, etc. but have *not* mentioned Education as a field *per se*. The absence is overt in the 2019 volume *Handbook of Terror Management Theory*.²⁴ For another example, Pyszczynski, Solomon & Greenberg (2002) wrote,

TMT combines ideas from biology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, theology, literature, and popular culture [no mention of taking ideas from education, like specifics from Dewey’s educational philosophy and learning theories, for e.g.]....we [generically] believe strongly [like “Charles Peirce and John Dewey”] that theoretical accounts of human behavior [i.e., TMT] should be framed so that they can be used to improve social conditions to maximize individual and collective well-being....we believe that credible theories of human behavior should be grounded in evolutionary theory. (p. 13).

It is odd this omission exists, when Becker (1967) had written a book on “philosophy of education” utilizing his own theory. Even van Kessel’s et al. writings on TMT within Education have *not* cited this preliminary book on education by Becker,²⁵ and prior to this technical paper, I have not done so either.²⁶

In a recent dialogue I initiated with Sheldon Solomon, a social psychologist (and one of the three core founders of TMT), we discuss the issue of how

²³ Not insignificantly, van Kessel is a Prof. of Education (social studies, secondary) at the University of Alberta; so, for some reason, including that Alberta is my home, TMT is being nurtured here in the field of Education like no other place, certainly not in Canada, but apparently not in the world.

²⁴ Routledge & Vess (Eds.) (2019).

²⁵ As well, I’d recommend Rank (1932) on education ought to be studied by those applying TMT to Education, because Becker integrated a lot of Rank’s thought in his own work.

²⁶ At the time of writing (June, 27, 2020) I have Becker (1967), Rank (1932) on order to arrive soon.

to best move research findings out into the places where they can have a positive educative influence,²⁷ and the sooner the better:

RMF: You folks in TMT, more than anyone I know in the field of psychology...you are on the button that needs to be brought forward in the century of terror that we're in....

SS: [re: after 35 years of empirical research using a scientific methodology] I'm proud of the work...we've established...the merits of Ernest Becker's contentions about the role of death anxiety [fear] in human affairs...but/and my view is...[re: academic books and articles] the work may be important, that's not for me to judge; but clearly it's not the best way to get these ideas [and findings] in circulation that put them to good use.

As I mentioned, not much has changed in terms of getting Becker's ideas or TMT findings into the field of Education (and particularly, into public schooling). Recall, Becker (1967) was a book of his own educational philosophy—which seems to be near invisible in the years later. It is rare to find an article generally in the Education literature with TMT at the forefront. Van Kessel, Den Heyer & Schimel (2020) and other works by van Kessel and colleagues²⁸ are an exception. They believe educational researchers and teachers ought to give TMT attention specifically in the area of “cultural education” and the problem of conflict(s) among social groups. They link that application with the perennial concern of educators as to how to facilitate relatively ‘safe’ effective learning²⁹ and social emotional climates for learning, when “divergent worldviews” are inevitable and potential barriers to empathy and understanding. They concluded: “TMT can assist our understandings of the psychological process of worldview threat

²⁷ Fisher & Solomon (2020).

²⁸ E.g., van Kessel & Burke (2018).

²⁹ In their “Some Implications for Education” section they cite only two studies which have direct application to learning reading and how it can be influenced by worldviews (e.g., affirming and disconfirming prompts presented in texts). They wrote also, “TMT can be applied to a variety of educational settings, but this task is another article in itself” (albeit, I wonder how many studies they would cite that are available on this?). They concluded, “Further research needs to be done regarding the myriad of possibilities for implementation [of TMT] in various subject areas at a variety of grade levels” (p. 438). Clearly, they are implying that the field is wide-open and just breaking ground in terms of TMT and Education.

with the hope that we might better metacognitively anticipate our threat and defence cycles” (p. 428).

Becker’s Ideal-Real Intervention: New Future Curriculum

The TMT core founders, implicitly stated, have a piece of advice for the new 21st century curriculum and pedagogy of troubled times:

Somehow we need to fashion worldviews that yield psychological security...but also promote tolerance and acceptance of ambiguity [and of difference]....[this is best accomplished *via*] Ancient wisdom fortified by contemporary science....the vast knowledge we have now about the pervasive influence of the awareness of death on human affairs may give us some purchase on how we can get better at living out our [meaningful] mortal lives. (Solomon, Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 2015, pp. 224-25)

There is the basic belief (hope) in awareness through educating ourselves that some ideals of societies can be achieved, perhaps be even liberating in part; but also TMT keeps us humbly aware of the real by which “humans are transient creatures...[by which] misery and strife will almost certainly persist, perhaps even to the point of human self-destruction [extinction]” (p. 225). My dialogue with Solomon on the future of a universal Fear Education where TMT and FMT unite at the basis of a living curriculum, is met with some critical skepticism by Solomon, which I totally understand (see Appendix 2). Overall, it remains largely unknown and unpredictable how humans will handle the cascading crises of the Anthropocene, including an impending extinction of global life on mass scales not previously part of the human experience. From the grand thoughts about the human condition and potential, I found the last page of Solomon et al. (2015) book, and the last paragraph of explicit specifics, actually the most profound and useful of all educational questions they raised implicitly:

[to advance progress/education and “have a beneficial impact”:] [Y]ou can be more self-determined in the choices you make and the actions you take. *Are you acting out of fear, or being manipulated to do so by others?* Are you driven by rigid defenses, or are you pursuing the goals you really hold dear in your life? In dealing with other people, are you considering how their efforts to manage the terror of death are affecting their actions and how your own defenses are influencing your reactions to them? (p. 225) [italics added for emphasis]

Any good Fear Education (or FME) would of course begin with *Are you acting out of fear, or being manipulated to do so by others?* Yet, so many problems derive from that question. I was pleased at least to see TMT core founders addressing “fear” and its management as an overall concern, albeit, then they quickly moved in this quote above to “terror of death” as focus—but both domains of inquiry are welcome in educative processes and curriculum as far as I am concerned because of the pragmatic value of basic empathy (a point made re: practice *via* classroom demonstration, echoed in van Kessel et al., p. 438). Yet, without problematizing “fear” (and ‘fear’) in more complicated renderings as FMT would do, the TMT directive here is limited in terms of truly getting to the larger Fear Problem. One has to take this all and sort through the immediate acute uses and long-term uses of TMT (or FMT)—with each real situation of application perhaps demanding a different blend or proportions.

That said, I would like TMT (and educators) to more frequently talk about “fear management” as the larger domain of what they are addressing; because focus on fear of death or terror of death (i.e., fears rather than on *fear itself*) over-determines the phenomenon of death *per se* and keeps the study of fear as one of extreme “fears” (i.e., fear of x, y, z)—all of which perpetuates a dominating discourse of “psychology of fear(s).” This is problematic as when Becker himself perhaps would question that focus somewhat—to paraphrase, Scimecca (1978) posited: [re: man or the human] “He fears death, yes, but more than that he fears a meaningless death” (p. 104). So should the greatest motivation of study be meaningfulness? Living life fully? And so on...yet, “fears” are inevitable. FMT would ask to give more attention to the meaningfulness of the *fear-self-Other* configuration or nexus—and, thus investigate the knowledge we create and pass on as a society about the nature and role of fear itself (and ‘fear’ in its morphing cultural and political forms—e.g., fearism). Food for thought.

With some of these introductory ideas and questions stirring, keep in mind that this section of Technical Paper No. 94 is in no way going to do justice to the full educational theory of Becker or implicitly TMT. I have selected a few aspects to elucidate, mostly for the reason of giving them attention in an educational publication and to help them remain viable to discuss by other educators as well.

Arguably, one of the most in depth examinations of Becker and Education comes *via* Scimecca (1978), who noted that probably Becker’s finding that “self-esteem” in co-ordination with the lens of one’s cultural worldview is critical to human behavior, especially, in the face of death aware-

ness/anxiety. And, indeed Becker's own initial approaches to an educational theory, according to Scimecca, were set around "self-esteem" maintenance primarily (p. 100). Also, Becker focused on "freedom" in education and one's freedom to pursue their own meaning-making (self-esteem building) processes and ends. Becker meant, according to Scimecca, "freedom from the constricting nature of the very social fictions he creates" with the help of culture (p. 100). Yes, Becker was a critic, in part, of culture's role along with one's personal psychological fear—and, really he implied culture's collective fear (if not taboo matrix) was involved in everything that shaped and reinforced freedom or denied it. Scimecca wrote, paraphrasing Becker: "Man creates a tenuous, fragile fiction, but it is the only defense he can [his culture can *via* providing "cultural hero systems"] muster against the despair that is inherent in the human condition" (p. 101).

So one could say a good 'self-education' on top of, and in contradiction to, a 'societal-education' (formally, and public) is the way out of the *fear-based* human condition and cultural hero systems³⁰ that may, despite themselves and their good intentions, still reproduce enslavements of their own kind—in order to remain (if only unconsciously) in a fear-based condition and development. It is near impossible to get out of this 'Fear' Matrix (defense)—which, Becker knew (implicitly) so well and TMT has shown as well in recent decades. How would this all impact Education, philosophy, theory and practice *via* curriculum and a pedagogy? For Becker (*via* Scimecca) we must, at least, turn to an "Ideal Curriculum" or "Anthropodicy of Alienation"³¹—as processes and imaginaries on the way to Beckerian freedom. I pursue this "curriculum of alienation"³² and investigation of a Beckerian social philosophy and particularly, philosophy of education, on rather shaky grounds due to my limited knowledge. I have yet put in the systematic study of his profound work, his interdisciplinary reach, and his wisdom, that so many others have validated. That said, let me at least note here a preliminary number of aspects that stand out for me when examining Beckerian educational directions to consider today.

Scimecca (1978) summarized:

³⁰ Typically a hero, is characterized as brave, courageous or even fearless. However, from a FMT point of view, a hero (system), like culture itself, is a kind of "fear management system"—a point, I'll return to later in the paper.

³¹ Scimecca (1978), p. 103.

³² *Ibid.* p. 103.

Becker's social theory [i.e., social philosophy and "social phenomenology," p. 100] provides a built-in ethical imperative by presenting a normative structure to aim for, one that enables us to discuss the ways in which any existing society provides (or fails to provide) for the self-esteem needs of its members. (p. 102)

Scimecca's (1978) point, paraphrasing Becker in part, really catches my eye with enthusiasm:

...the important claim of Becker's curriculum of alienation is its provision of a vantage point from which individuals can examine [as clear from emotional and cognitive confusion, trauma and pathologies, as possible] their lives, their society, their world. (p. 103)

This is theoretically interesting to me because in most all liberation pedagogies that I know of, there is the essential goal of teaching learners (and their teachers) a critical "standpoint" on not just the content and processes of schooling as normal curriculum but there is the competency-building (e.g., critical literacy *a la* Freire; or Fisher, 2018b) to be able to recognize and uproot the hidden curriculum of schooling, higher education and oppressive socialization overall. The critique is built-in to the emergence of intelligence and flourishing of learners. The "vantage point" means a lot, and although I have not read Becker on this *per se*, my guess is that he means some vision (imaginary) of non-alienation has to be juxtaposed to the hegemony of alienation at the core of the hidden curriculum of societies—of which we will keep referenced to the Western modern world here, for simplicity. Non-alienation, in my sense of Becker's work is a "freedom" orientation, a non-fear-based, non-deficit-based,³³ non-victimized, non-oppressed positionality (or near-ideal condition). In FMT this vantage point is "Fearlessness" (which is much more complex than it may sound, because it is not just a behavioral orientation but an ethical imperative and much more than that; see Appendix 1)—but more accurately, it is a nondual consciousness I've called a "Fearless Standpoint Theory."³⁴ This is beyond the scope of the paper, but it is worth juxtaposing with my own educational philosophy that makes a distinction between fear-based pedagogy and a *pedagogy of fearlessness* (e.g., Fisher, 2011).

³³ *Deficit-based* knowledge pursuit and tier of fear-based values (i.e., he called D-values) are coined by Abraham Maslow in his potent critique; which is another topic for another time—but suffice it to say it is overlapping with much of Becker's work, I believe.

³⁴ E.g., Fisher (2008, 2019a).

A Beckerian (rebellious) education is: (a) a path to higher potential self-esteem for students (and all humans) and, (b) intimately interrelated, it is a path to a higher quality fear education (FME). It is an ethical imperative for healthy existence, individually and collectively. A Beckerian education is one of admission (beyond denial)—that, education (like society) is in crisis—virtually, all the time—always, on the tipping point of madness—i.e., or evil, as outcomes of relentless and unexamined terror. I know that may sound hyperbolic but I truly do not think it is. I think it is what humanity has to face in relationship to its cultures and the dynamics of freedom and unfreedom—of healthy and unhealthy—of love vs. fear. At least, as I speak to North America, where I live, since I was born in 1952 in Alberta, Canada; yes, human existence is on the tipping-point and today in COVID-19 era and post-9/11 era, there is no doubt in my mind of how close the extinction edge is upon us all. I suspect Ernest Becker knew that too.³⁵

Excessive (and/or unconscious) fear/terror for Becker, sets the focus of thinking about all human behavior—he, refers to as “fear of death” (p. 102) as one way to articulate the (apparently) deepest universal meta-motivation he is addressing—as would most any existentialist thinker. To note: “terror” as the *extreme* expression of fear (arguably) is a particular strategic biased (and questionable) way to proceed in trying to understand human nature and behavior.³⁶ That aside, excessive and/or denied fear (e.g., of death) is the cause of lowered self-esteem *and* concomitantly a perceived threat to one’s own (or social in-group) worldview. Note: this is also a reciprocal mutual causal dynamic. That fundamental existential (self) threat causes cognitive and behavior pathologies (e.g., violence), subtle and gross. I am generalizing basically what TMT has ‘proved’ empirically true over the past 35 years of research. There are of course many critics of TMT, which I am not addressing here.

Basically, for Becker, terror management is inevitable for all organisms, and cultural organisms have a really complicated terror management systems structuration. Cultures, like individuals, like educational systems of

³⁵ I am working on another technical paper on this “dark turn” in the latter few years, especially, of Becker’s work and life philosophy.

³⁶ There is a complicated discussion to be had here, and one I have begun to have with some Becker scholars (e.g., Jack Martin, Professor of Psychology, at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada) re: the merits of the *in extremis* (spectacle) approach to understanding human nature, human condition and potential. I am reminded of the trend at various times in psychology’s history as a discipline to go in this direction, e.g., the famous Milgram prison experiments. I will address this and share more of that dialogue with Becker scholars in another future technical paper.

cultural reproduction, can do terror management well or really do it poorly—it all depends, on many things. I have dedicated my educational career for 30+ years to this cause of finding the ‘best’ fear management/education (FME) possible. TMT is a great gift in this regard.

Yet, this Beckerian unveiling is germane to my interest *via* this technical paper only when it juxtaposes itself with educational uses of TMT.

Becker’s social theory of fear (by any other name) is linked to educational situations and educational philosophy. For example, it is worth emphasizing that in van Kessel, den Heyer & Schimel (2020) they begin their paper on TMT and Education with framing their particular pedagogical and psychological interests³⁷ to Garrett (2017), “who asked us [teachers, educators,

³⁷ The three authors, respectively, are two social studies educators and the third, Schimel, a social psychologist with some expertise in TMT, social cognition, existential psychology and various counseling/therapy applications. I am always cautiously intrigued how educators (almost by necessity) require (for funding and legitimation) psychologists on the “team” in order to get funding when the topic is “fear” (or “terror”). Albeit, van Kessel informed me this was not the case with her particular study/grant (pers. comm. July 2, 2020). We need to really be conscious of this hegemonic power-knowledge-fear discourse formation/regime within our work (as educators, especially). It will skew things—for one, it keeps notions of fear (“fear”) trapped in assumptions unquestioned often, and that shows itself typically within a hegemonic of “psychology of fear” (i.e., *fear* is an emotion or feeling). Social psychologists (e.g., TMT advocates) may improve on this by bringing fear into a social theory framing somewhat. But typically it is not very sociologically-informed or radical in the ways they do this. Note, that the sub-title of the TMT book on post-9/11 is “*the psychology of terror*” (could just as well be “psychology of fear” (Pyszczynski, Solomon & Greenberg, 2020). This social theory ‘turn’ is part of a larger philosophical study I am making recently of Rank-Becker-Maslow-Wilber-Williamson (the big 5), in an attempt to bring their social critical philosophy and theory back into the light of the problems of today (and, what I see as their important historical 20th century input to understanding the history and dynamics of the “culture of fear”). In the 1970s it is important to note, Scimecca (1978, 1979) labeled Becker a “social phenomenologist” and one who presents “social theory” and “social science” for the problems of the world. Bates (1977) labeled Becker a “social critic.” Becker (1971) forefronts “social encounters” in his self-esteem notion (Chpt. 9), “sociology” and “social theory” (Chpt. 11-12) converging with anthropology, psychology and psychiatry, including “political theory” (Chapt. 12). For e.g., Becker-Maslow-Wilber have been very interested in what a *fear-based* culture/society is and unfortunately, various interpreters took most of their work into “psychology” (*via* an ideology of psychologism/positivism) for functionalist (and marketing) purposes, concomitantly gutting the sociopolitical thrust in their core of social critiques. We ought to recall always Becker (like Rank) were preaching a “beyond psychology” (e.g., Liechty, 2017; see Part Three, Subsection 9); see how educators (e.g., Kagan, 1994) foreground *psychology* (re: Becker) for their applications in educational philosophy. Martin & Liechty (2016) warn of “the temptation” of too quickly moving “beyond Becker” for authors using his work, especially, in their motivation to be less pessimistic than he was and became at the end of his life and his last two books of the “dark turn” (p. 143). Fearology chooses a transdisciplinary approach to (somewhat) counter these very problematic reductionistic (if not epistemically violent)

researchers] to consider a key question at the heart of education: How might we live well together with others? Our response to Garrett’s question lies in reframing and adding insights to education through an engagement with terror management theory (TMT)...” (p. 428).

There are many other aspects to this welcomed paper by van Kessel et al., yet, with limited space here, it is best to move on to some final thoughts for educators.

Some Final Thoughts

All my work tells me that fear management and the field of Education have been in a failing relationship—neither powerfully engaging with the other—and certainly, not engaging enough to address the ever-increasing global and insidious Fear Problem (Becker and TMT theorists might call it a Terror Problem). I have pointed to a few aspects of where FMT and TMT are barely getting attention in the field of Education to this day. Education, like the rest of society, is ‘way behind the growth of fear’—and it is damaging in ways now that will be extremely difficult to recover. I have at times suggested analogously CO₂ levels and Fear levels (as outer pollution and inner pollution, respectively) are ‘out of control.’ High quality fear management is foundational to any sane and/or sustainable living world. Culture itself (as Becker has well argued) is both a blessing and a curse when it comes to fear management (i.e., TMT). I trust this Technical Paper No. 94 will positively and critically awaken dialogue to new levels that are not happening enough in the field of Education.

The field of TMT and Education is just beginning to break its ground (e.g., van Kessel et. al.), with no particularly evident positive movement in this direction; albeit, I am optimistic this has great potential in Education, along the lines of the potential that a few educators recognized Becker as an “authentic radical” (p. 111) based on Becker’s (1967) views on education (e.g., Scott, 1986). The fact that van Kessel et al. have attracted some initial governmental/public funding support (*via* Social Sciences & Humani-

tendencies in fear studies. Yellow flags arise when I read: “TMT offers two contributions to educational concerns noted above: information that can be used to *manage difficult emotions* during [classroom] discussions about ethnoracism” (van Kessel, den Heyer & Schimel, 2020, p. 437) [italics added for emphasis]. If fear, for these researchers in education, is continually manufactured to be the ‘difficult emotion’ that is limiting but it is understandable and reasonable to begin early understanding of fear (‘fear’) within that mindset; however, at a minimum, van Kessel et al. (or any others using TMT) ought to ensure they are aware of and in dialogue with the important work of Boler (1999), who has opened the door to ways to critique managerialism discourses re: emotions (and education).

ties Research Council of Canada) to write a paper on the topic of TMT applications is a good sign of recognition. The follow-up and further opportunities are still awaiting to come to fruition where more substantial work can be accomplished.

I have implied throughout Technical Paper No. 94 that the ‘better’ combination available for Education as a field is to find ways to cross-reference worldview studies, cultural studies, conflict studies, emotion(s) studies (e.g., emotional and social intelligence) and in particular, TMT advocates in the field of Education (and TMT researchers themselves) ought to ensure the linkage with the legacy of “fear management/education” (FME) that has substantial theoretical offering since the early 1990s. Appendix 1 has offered a skeletal understanding of one direction of giving both FME and TMT a foundation in Fear Management Theory (FMT). It can no longer be justifiable to keep TMT and FMT apart as if they don’t have a vested interest. Arguably, FMT is the more generic foundation for the development and applications of TMT, while acknowledging TMT has the vast and undeniable resources behind it as an empirically valid theory and set of ideas. My own work will continue to develop FMT, preferably in dialogue with TMT and educators of all kinds.

A critical area of research not yet discussed by TMT advocates in the field of Education or by TMT researchers themselves, is: *Why has there been a universal ‘gap’ in applying TMT to Education? The ‘gap’ here, at its most basic expression, is the near total invisibility of Becker’s 1967 book on educational philosophy and the non-up-take of Scimecca’s 1978 classic paper on Becker’s educational theory.* I find it odd, to very interesting, that the current up-take of TMT advocates in Education are (apparently) more or less ignoring these early classic works, as well as all the work on FME since early 1990. Yet, more germane than those areas of required critical reflective praxis and research, the most important area that represents a ‘wild’ break from the already ‘grooved’ habituation of most everyone engaging TMT, is to ask what are the *political and epistemological demands* that Becker’s original work and TMT’s findings and methodologies ask of us, be it researchers or educators? For my own work, see FMT (Appendix 1) offers, amongst other framings, a well-honed body of thought on the problematics of *an epistemology of fear* in relation to *fearlessness* (as path and paradigm of knowing). And, like Becker (1967) such radical education is ultimately to address, in his words, the growing “crisis of democracy” and the nature and role of Education overall.

TMT is all about fear—and fear management ultimately; and so far I have not found Becker and/or TMT advocates in his foot-tracks, who have taken the investigation into the topic of fear/terror deeply enough to address the causal network and insidious dynamics of both the meta-context of the “culture of fear” and the current global Fear Problem (*a la* Fisher).³⁸ I have not found either, that they have taken on some form of project of a general *critical literacy*, informed by emancipatory methodologies, to ensure the vocabularies, discourses and imaginaries around fear (‘fear’) are up-lifted (at least somewhat) out of the normal “grooves” of the *habitus* of culture(s), traditions, communities and disciplines, etc.³⁹ I look forward to that dialogue with others from all kinds of fields and perspectives. I reiterate, TMT is merely one way to study the nature and role of fear (‘fear’) and its impacts; and, let’s not forget even TMT is steeped in Psychology as hegemonic in its definitions, meanings, conceptualizations of what “fear” is and isn’t; that alone, is a problem fearology (as transdisciplinary) has long pointed out. We have an epistemic cautionary to face, I believe, that involves us asking continually: *Are we as leaders, researchers, educators, and school teachers adequate to the task of teaching about fear/terror? How would we assess that?*⁴⁰

³⁸ Basically, how one defines and conceptualizes, and theorizes “Fear Problem” is the issue I am raising. How wide and deep, or reduced and pragmatic, will a researcher/educator go in their quest to get to the truth about fear (‘fear’) in this world? Becker’s work is a great philosophical and theoretical foundation (and TMT has made that even more evident) but without at least a Wilberian (*a la* Integral), Indigenous, Feminist (*a la* Matrixial), and Spiritual (transpersonal, mystical) perspectives brought into the dialogue, as well as my own adaptations on “hurting and healing” (thanks to the foundational work of Harvey Jackins and Re-evaluation Co-Counseling). Without supplements like those I just mentioned (for starters), the Becker-TMT initiative (movement) alone will fall terribly short of the task of analyzing and intervening competently in the global Fear Problem in the context of the cascading crises of the Anthropocene.

³⁹ E.g., Fisher (2018b).

⁴⁰ This foundational and ethical epistemic cautionary has been at the core of my work on fear and fearlessness since late-1989 and the founding of the In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute in Calgary, Alberta; and, it is the foundational critical reflexive component of my asking in my Education dissertation (Fisher, 2003a): *What makes a fearless leader in and out of the ‘Fear’ Matrix?* I could have inserted: “fearless teacher,” “fearless researcher.” Just for the record, I am using “fearless” here for effect and ease of accessing a fairly common expression; however, a more accurate term would be derived and dependent upon discernment of terms to choose based on an array of qualities (and/or responses to fear) for the “spirit of fearlessness” itself, evolving and moving through a *spectrum* of consciousness (*a la* Wilber) and developmental “fear management systems” (see Fisher, 2010). FMT, unlike TMT, takes these former aspects seriously into account to address human nature, the human condition, human behavior—and human potential (including the educative learning aspects of that potential that ought to concern us all—especially, teachers).

How would we assess *that*? Might as well ask how would we assess *culture*? Okay, in my own theorizing, albeit beyond the scope of this paper, I present the integral triad of domains Natural, Cultural and Spiritual. The last sphere or domain of knowledge is (with the Natural) the source of correction for the Cultural pathologies. I think Becker's notion of a Spiritual domain, in his striving to theorize "beyond psychology" (like Otto Rank's view) is particularly relevant to education and society whereby "spirituality" is now, more or less, common (e.g., those c. 25% of Americans identifying officially as 'Spiritual But Not Religious'). Avrill (2014) wrote of Becker's transcendent streak that needs to be in Education and democracy:

In 1967 Ernest Becker wrote *Beyond Alienation: A Philosophy of Education for the Crisis of Democracy*. In that work, Becker appealed passionately for an education that would "hold up... the vision of the absolutely serious, the awesome, the mighty, the all transcending, the divine mystery in all its unspeakable magnitude." Now, thirty years after Becker published his educational manifesto, the evidence is clear that, in the culture at large, spirituality is "in."

On that note I conclude, with gratefulness for a crack in the door—still, letting in the beaming light of the spirit of Ernest Becker and all those who continued, often selflessly, to bring this great philosopher-educator's work to the contemporary world.

And, it wouldn't be existentialism... it wouldn't be good education (Beckerian wise or otherwise) IF we did not end with a shadow-side perspective of things re: of our current situation—not to be forgotten or denied... so, leave it to Becker's own cautionary words, and his felt and cognized sense of terror with it:

*"...we are clinging to our institutions with a mechanicalness that is terrifying."*⁴¹

A Sense of the Future: Educational Task

The present is challenging enough for learners (e.g., school students) in a COVID-19 era, never mind the shrinking sense of the future in the imaginaries of most all youth, I would guess. Pihkala (2018) speaks to the role and responsibility of educators and the existential crisis of our times of which in my view and van Kessel et al. has opportunity still remaining and

⁴¹ Excerpt from Becker on alienation (cited in Liechty, 2017, p. 105).

TMT (at least) is a good start to preparing and ‘working through’ what challenges are at hand:

The future is a key existential concern. People ask: What will happen to me, those close to me, and the world? Many emotions are involved, such as fear and expectation. Young people, the main subject of education already experience many emotions and existential questions when they enter the classroom (or other education setting). These must be taken into account...the educators must be sensitive to that which arises. (pp. 559-60)

APPENDIX 1 FEAR MANAGEMENT THEORY (FMT): The Basics

This skeletal sketch below is part of a 30+ year project on my part. It is transdisciplinary. It is incomplete. Yet, the project has from the start been infused with my primary role on this planet as an educator of liberation. I am a teacher without a school or job so to speak, and so in that light this Appendix 1 is skewed toward the “educational” side of FMT, for the very reason that this Technical Paper No. 97 is about FME and Education.

There’s something fundamentally ‘wrong’ in the field of fear management, I suggested in Fisher (2010). The vast bulk of writing on fear, on fear management, even if it was not specifically called that, which is all about managing fear, I found repetitive and boring, if not distortive of truths I was intuiting. So, long ago that led me on a path to investigate a critical integral theory approach to understanding fear and its management (what I eventually called fear management/education or FME). Educationally speaking, rather than hyper-focusing on the question (most everyone does) *What is fear?* –my deep passion came through with this leading questions (and still does to this day): *What happens when fear meets fearlessness (and visa versa)?* I cannot think of a more intriguing question for school teachers and curriculum-makers to put into the ‘core’ of all their efforts to “educate” no matter what their subject speciality might be. How can learning and teaching anything, and raising an educated citizenry for the 21st century be anything but interested in this question. I note here, that the existentialist-artist-philosopher Albert Camus wrote c. 1946 a poetic indictment and challenge for humanity (and educators) in the 20th century: “*The 17th century was the century of mathematics; the 18th century that of physics; the 19th century of biology; and the 20th century is the cen-*

ture of fear."⁴² And, to follow, I suggested in my dissertation that *the 21st century is the century of terror*. From post-9/11 era onward, to COVID-19, and where the USA is heading, etc. I think my prediction is rather true, and is it not appropriate in timing that TMT has taken off in popularity in some circles in this light(?)—the awareness of the depth and intensity of terror in the early 21st century (e.g., in Fisher & Solomon, 2020, at one point after hearing my view, Solomon says: "I was not familiar with that quote; how prescient however....to be corny, I fear you are quite right, when you describe our current century in terms of terror").

Before briefly sketching a map of my FMT, it is essential to include my work on Fear Management Systems Theory, which was original work that no other in the field of fear management has approached. It is a developmental and evolutionary model of ten fear management systems (FMS 0-9) (e.g., see Fisher, 2010, Chapter Two). But before diving into that a few more premises are required as foundations to my theory and thinking. I said earlier in this paper: "fear is not only a rapidly growing factor in mental health concerns of students but in clashing of values, worldviews, cultural and political differences under the pressures of the Anthropocene challenges to survival" but I would add "fear" is now more than a factor (Barber, 2005), it is the very medium/background and "matrix" upon which we construct our meaning of reality and our place in it. Fear ought not be conceived without its context of situatedness in a "culture of fear" (thus, see my 'fear' conception epistemologically; Fisher, 1995, 1995a). Thus, "fear" is a system of symbolic forces, definitions, meanings, engagements, ecologies—to put it bluntly, "fear" is no longer a simple thing, it is very complex. Evolutionary theory (e.g., evolutionary psychology), complexity theory and ecological theories etc. are most appropriate in the domain of understanding fear and its entire net of relations/dynamics—albeit, here I am focusing on humanity and fear and education. Ultimately, I have claimed of late that no one will be able to really understand my work on fear and fearlessness accurately until they understand that I (at a minimum) think about fear as a *social* theorist and social philosopher (e.g., Fisher, 2020b). Fear ('fear') is a social enterprise, and sure, it is a psychological enterprise as well. What I have found is an immense *collective inertia* (e.g., ignore-ance and arrogance) in the human population generally, that is in complete *resistance* to understanding fear as so complex (e.g., see Fisher, 2018c). Thus, I have started with the hypotheses, becoming a theory (e.g., FMT) is that *fear ('fear') works to both get attention and to avoid getting attention* (e.g., a denial of its presence and power). Yet, "fear is power" as the ancient traditions have acknowledged, but often it goes underground and into an erasure of its own tracks—making, getting to know fear ('fear') in a systems perspective is a difficult epistemological task. I won't go further into explaining why fear is so elusive but the concept of fearism evolved for me in 1990 as a way to explain this invisibility and insidious oppres-

⁴² Original in Fr., thus I thank John Eagan for the Engl. transl. This is an excerpt from the essay "Neither Victim Nor Executioner: Two Answers" by Camus, published in the Fr. underground newspaper *Combat*. Retrieved from http://www.ppu.org.uk/e_publications/camus1.html

sion—making fear almost taboo itself and thus virtually un-attended to as a curriculum for “fear education” seen to be worthy. Educators are way behind on this subject of fear itself. Perhaps, introducing TMT into Education has potential to improve the status of fear education (FME). This taboo structuration against ‘knowing fear’ is one way to say this, and another way is to call it a hidden curriculum (ideology) at the base of what constitutes a near-totalism (*a la* Robert J. Lifton), or *colonialism of our minds* and affect (e.g., what I have called a ‘Fear’ Matrix). To note: ‘fear’ is one way to begin to track this Fear Problem humanity has grown into and reproduced en masse, and the Fearlessness Movement⁴³ is its counter-force. ‘Fear’ is so insidious in that it is no longer a feeling, affect *per se*—it needs to be detected by other means, mostly of which we are as a species under-equipped to do—and, thus Fear’s Empire continues to rule and ‘take-down’ most life on this planet in a cascading spiral.

Now, onto Fear Management Systems Theory—the evolutionary systems theory I have constructed based on Wilber’s (1977, 1995) basic E-W. spectrum of consciousness theory and model for development in general. A variant cultural model from Wilber and Claire Graves, *via* Spiral Dynamics integral (e.g., v-memes) helped also in constructing the holarchy of 10 Fear Management Systems. You could say, that these grand developmental theories (*a la* Integral) offer structures (soft and hard) for mapping out “worldviews” (or more accurately, Wilber calls “worldspaces”). Each worldview has a holonic architecture of “forces” or motivations that Wilber (1995) has organized at base around Love vs. Fear forces (e.g., Eros vs. *Phobos*, and Agape vs. *Thanatos*)—these are foundational in my ontological pursuit to understand fear (‘fear’) (e.g., Fisher, 1997) and how it plays out in these pre-configured (evolved) ‘grooves’ that are somewhat like Foucault’s big ‘D’ discourses, in my view—i.e., they influence everything just like cultural memes do (analogous with genes). Of course, structures are also in co-evolving dynamic relationship with the environmental conditions—so, keep that in mind. You might call these 10 *fear-ecologies*. And the theory I’m working with says that these FMSs can be ‘lit up’ more or less by individuals or collectives to process the required conditions, situations, emergencies, fears, terror, dread, panic etc. of a time or place or peoples. They are universal, albeit, the FMSs will be expressed with unique surfaces and symptoms—yet, underneath all fear management going on anywhere, there are identifiable patterns and patterns of patterns of FMSs architectures at play. The average person (to give a coarse generalization) accesses maybe one to three of the FMSs available at any one time. Yet, they have access to all 10 if they are taught how to access them. That latter component is where FME steps in to offer the necessary teaching and conditions for expanding accessing of the FMSs.

FMT is founded on FMS theory. FMT is more refined but I won’t be able to get into all of it. FMT offers humanity a rich diversity of Defense Intelligence systems that have evolved since life evolved some 4 billion years ago. Expanding one’s

⁴³ See e.g., Fisher (2018d) and <https://fearlessnessmovement.ning.com/>

consciousness to higher and deeper levels of possibilities then one expands the access to higher FMSs but also, they may be prevented from such accessing of higher FMSs because they are “dangerous” to the status quo FMSs that dominate a society, institution, family system, and self-sense (self-esteem) structuration of an individual (in a particular social system). There are several ‘Fear’ Barriers ‘hidden’ in social cultural systems—and, a dynamic of regression and reductionism thus tends to dominate the overall ecology of fear (and fearlessness) of most places and times—and, that explains, in part, the disastrous actions of human beings (equally found in the history as understood by Becker and TMT). As for fearlessness in FMT, that is another complex story and *theoria*—with its own *therapia*—because fearlessness is a spirit of restoration (self-system regulation) at its most basic operations in FMSs 0-6 but then there is a second-tier of the FMSs where at FMS-7 (on to 8, 9)—there is manifest more fearlessness than fear in motivating. There are several other theories I have drawn upon that validate this 2nd-tier idea of moving (evolving) into higher FMSs for more people IF certain learning and social conditions allow it. Liberational education ought to pay attention to FMT. And, this 2nd-tier motivational (meta-)theory can be found also in the thinking (at times) of the TMT theorists (e.g., Pyszczynski, Greenberg & Arndt, 2011). To conclude this skeletal map for you, a basic dictum of FMT is: *When fear appears, so then does fearlessness*. The real management/education issue I present involves asking ourselves, if this is true, then why do I (we) pay more attention to the symptoms of fear than the signals of fearlessness in any experience of “fear” (my own or others)? The answer: *because we have been taught to—i.e., fear-conditioned to—i.e., hypnotized to*.⁴⁴ This privileging of attention on fear symptoms (e.g., fight-flight responses) is the educational task—it needs to be radically changed and improved, and we’ll need a good critical theory to help, like TMT and FMT.

APPENDIX 2 FISHER-SOLOMON DIALOGUE

The following is an *excerpt* from a recent 2020 dialogue of R. Michael Fisher with Sheldon Solomon⁴⁵ (one of the core three founders of TMT) discussing Education in the future:

⁴⁴ I think the “hypnotized” part of learning within a “culture of fear” (or ‘Fear’ Matrix) is potentially one of the biggest insights of our times. I’m grateful to the prescient work of Indigenous educator and professional hypnotherapist, Four Arrows, for revealing this process *via* his CAT-FAW/N model and theory of learning. For example, see Four Arrows view on why cultural trance and “Trance-based Learning” is “the only explanation that makes sense of how modern educated societies, especially, have rationalized their technologies of domination, their polluting of their own nest, and their addictions to ways of life that paradoxically destroy Life” [i.e., their near-psychotic state] (in Fisher, 2018a, p. 2).

⁴⁵ Fisher & Solomon (2020).

SS: [re: Heidegger's idea] If you're able to confront, if we're able to confront our fears and anxieties directly, that we can come out on the other-side uplifted and inspired....my fears these days, not to bash psychological interventions because they're all important, but I think that sometimes we're too quick to try and blot out our anxiety by distracting ourselves or through medication rather than working through those fears and anxieties. Easier said than done, but I think that's what we've done.

RMF: Yeah, well said, easier said than done. I often say that as well [re: same tendency in the field of Education today]. One of the things I'm curious about, you know, what would be a great Fear Education—from a child going all the way through the system....I'm an educator so I'm thinking always curriculum design. And that's why TMT or FMT, what I use, and all the combinations; wouldn't it be great that actually becomes like a core curriculum, so there wouldn't be a thing about, 'Oh, fear! What is fear? Oh, and... oh, well, we can solve that [i.e., manage or conquer fear] with love, hope and the great pills....

SS: Yeah, alright, I mean this as the highest compliment, but you're betraying a by-gone day of maximum hope and optimism with regard to education....[Aldous] Huxley said we need to overhaul education from day one....Love, Sex, Death [LSD], the three most important things [and], they're not even part of any formal educational curriculum. And Huxley's point, as just a reiteration of your excellent one, Michael, is isn't it somewhat necessary particularly now that we begin to weave those notions [LSD] into education from minute one[?]....

References

- Averill, L. (2014). Transcendence and higher education. Retrieved from <http://ernestbecker.org/transcendence-and-higher-education/>
- Baer, S. (2012). Re-envisioning fear: The role of conversation in an arts classroom for prospective teachers. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Nebraska.
- Barber, B. (2005). Fear's not just a factor, it's a major player. Retrieved from <http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-bk-barber7aug07,1,6360574.story?coll=la-headlines-politics&ctrack=1&cset=true>
- Barber, B. (2003). *Fear's empire: War, terrorism, and democracy*. W. W. Norton.
- Bates, H. (1977). Letters from Ernest: Correspondence between the late social critic Ernest Becker and a protestant campus pastor. *Christian Century*, 94,

- 217-27.
- Becker, E. (1975). *Escape from evil*. Free Press.
- Becker, E. (1973). *The denial of death*. Free Press.
- Becker, E. (1971). *The birth and death of meaning: An interdisciplinary perspective on the problem of man*. [2nd ed.]. Free Press.
- Becker, E. (1967). *Beyond alienation: A philosophy of education for the crisis of democracy*. George Braziller.
- Boler, M. (1999). *Feeling power: Emotions and education*. Routledge.
- Boschman, C. (2007). Researching the fear factor: 'Fearologist' has mapped out different fear management systems. *The Lethbridge Herald*, July 5, A1-A2.
- Crittenden, J. (1997). Foreword: What is the meaning of "integral"? In K. Wilber, *The eye of spirit: An integral vision for a world gone slightly mad* (pp. vii-xii). Shambhala.
- English, A., and Stengl, B. (2010). Exploring fear: Rousseau, Dewey, and Freire on fear and learning. *Educational Theory*, 60(5), 521-42.
- Fisher, R. M. (2020). Dialogue between Terror Management Theory and fear management education. Technical Paper No. 94. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (2020a). Fearism concept in education literature: A review, a new model. Technical Paper No. 96. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (2020b). Fear and social theory: Fisher's essay in progress. Retrieved from <https://fearlessnessmovement.ning.com/blog/fear-and-social-theory-fisher-s-essay-in-progress>
- Fisher, R. M. (2019). Fearlessness psychology: An introduction. Technical Paper No. 79. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (2019a). Fearless standpoint theory: Origins of FMS-9 in Arthur Schopenhauer's work. Technical Paper No. 86. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (2018). Fear, fearlessness, education: Annotated bibliography of the publications of R. Michael Fisher. Technical Paper No. 77. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (2018a). *Fearless engagement of Four Arrows: The true story of an Indigenous-based social transformer*. Peter Lang.
- Fisher, R. M. (2018b). Developing a critical literacy on fear. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CXUkaFSdMA&t=717s>
- Fisher, R. M. (2018c). Resistance to fear understanding. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfVNktnN3v4>
- Fisher, R. M. (2018d). The Fearlessness Movement: Meta-context exposed! Technical Paper No. 72. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (2013). Fearuality: Introduction to a theoretical and conceptual breakthrough. Technical Paper No. 50. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (2012). *Fearanalysis: A first guidebook*. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (2012a). Foundations for 'Fear' Studies: 9 propositions. Technical Paper No. 43. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.

- 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.
- Fisher, R. M. (2010). *The world's fearlessness teachings: A critical integral approach to fear management/education for the 21st century*. University Press of America/Rowman & Littlefield.
- Fisher, R.M. (2008). Fearless standpoint theory: Origins of FMS-9 in Ken Wilber's work. Technical Paper No. 31. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R.M. (2007). Education and the culture of fear: A review. Technical Paper No. 25. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (2006). Invoking 'Fear' Studies. *The Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 22(4), 39-71.
- Fisher, R. M. (2003). Report on the status of fear education. Technical Paper No. 15. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (2003a). Fearless leadership in and out of the 'Fear' Matrix. Unpublished dissertation. The University of British Columbia.
- Fisher, R. M. (2002). On being a 'fear' critic. Technical Paper No. 14. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (1997). *Thanatos and Phobos: 'Fear' and its role in Ken Wilber's transpersonal theory*. Technical Paper No. 4. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (1995/2012). An introduction to defining 'fear': A spectrum approach. Technical Paper No. 1. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M. (1995a/2012). An introduction to an epistemology of 'fear': A fearlessness paradigm. Technical Paper No. 2. In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.
- Fisher, R. M., & Four Arrows (Jacobs, D. T.) (2020). Indigenizing *conscientization* and critical pedagogy: Nature, Spirit and Fearlessness as foundational concepts. In S. Steinberg & B. Down (Eds.), *Sage Handbook of Critical Pedagogies (Vol.2)* (pp. 551-60). SAGE.
- Fisher, R. M., & Solomon, S. (2020). FearTalk 9: Sheldon Solomon and R. Michael Fisher on Jeff Gibbs' *Planet of the Human*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXzUhVTYdb8>
- Four Arrows (aka Jacobs, D. T.) (2020). *The red road: Linking diversity and inclusion initiatives to Indigenous worldview*. IAP-Information Age Publishing.
- Four Arrows (aka Jacobs, D. T.). (2016). *Point of departure: Returning to a more authentic worldview for education and survival*. Information Age Publishing.
- Four Arrows (aka Jacobs, D. T.) (Ed). (2013). *Teaching truly: A curriculum to indigenize mainstream education*. Peter Lang.
- Furedi, F. (1997). *Culture of fear: Risk and the morality of low expectation*. Cassell.
- Garrett, H. J. (2017). *Learning to be in the world with others: Difficult knowledge and social studies education*. Peter Lang.

- Glassner, B. (1999). *The culture of fear: Why Americans are afraid of the wrong things*. Basic Books.
- Godfrey, P. C. (2015). Teaching *Society and Climate Change*: Creating an “earth community” in the college classroom by embodying connectedness through love. *Journal of Sustainability Education*, 9 (March).
- Kagan, M. A. (1994). *Educating for heroes: The implications of Ernest Becker's depth psychology of education for philosophy of education*. Hollowbrook.
- Leggo, C. (2016). Review (endorsement), in *Philosophy of fearism: A first East-West dialogue*, R. Michael Fisher & Desh Subba. Xlibris.
- Leggo, C. (2011). Living love: Confessions of a fearful teacher. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 9(1), 115-44.
- Liechty, D. (2017). *The Ernest Becker reader*. University of Washington Press.
- Martin, J., & Liechty, D. (2016). Ernest Becker's dark turn (1971-1973): A critical “deepening.” *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 59(2), 131-47.
- Mattson, M. (2009). Neglected interiors: A critique of political ecology, with reference to the work of Ken Wilber. *South African Journal of Environmental Education*, 26, 221-31.
- Mayer, C. (2010). Foreword. In R. M. Fisher, *The world's fearlessness teachings: A critical integral approach to fear management/education for the 21st century* (pp. ix-x). University Press of America/Rowman & Littlefield.
- McLaren, P. (2016). Review (endorsement), in *Philosophy of fearism: A first East-West dialogue*, R. Michael Fisher & Desh Subba. Xlibris.
- Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. Jossey-Bass.
- Pihkala, P. (2018, June). Eco-anxiety, tragedy, and hope: Psychological and spiritual dimensions of climate change. *Zygon*, 53(2), 545-69.
- Pyszczynski, T., Greenberg, J. & Arndt, J. (2011). Freedom versus fear revisited: An integrative analysis of the dynamics of the defense and growth of self. In M. Leary & J. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of self and identity* (pp. 378-404). Guilford.
- Pyszczynski, T., Solomon, S. & Greenberg, J. (2002). *In the wake of 9/11: The psychology of terror*. American Psychological Association.
- Rank, O. (1932). *Education: A critique of its fundamental ideas*. Knopf.
- Routledge, C., & Vess, M. (Eds.) (2019). *Handbook of terror management theory*. Academic Press.
- Scimecca, J. E. (1979 Fall). Cultural hero systems and religious beliefs: The ideal-real social science of Ernest Becker. *Review of Religions Research*, 21(1), 62-70.
- Scimecca, J. E. (1978). The educational theory of Ernest Becker. *The Journal of Educational Thought*, 12(2), 100-07.
- Scott, B. A. (1986). The decline of literacy and liberal learning. *Journal of Education*, 168(1), 105-16.
- Slattery, P. (2012). *Curriculum development in the postmodern era: Teaching and learning in an age of accountability* [3rd ed.]. Routledge. [online "Additional Material" - Chapter 4 - <http://www.routledge.com/cw/slattery-9780415808569/p/supplements/>]

- Smith, D. G. (2016). Review (endorsement), in *Philosophy of fearism: A first East-West dialogue*, R. Michael Fisher & Desh Subba. Xlibris.
- Smith, D. G. (2014). *Teaching as the practice of wisdom*. Bloomsbury.
- Solomon, S., Greenberg, J., & Pyszczynski, T. (2015). *The worm at the core: On the role of death in life*. Random House.
- Solomon, S., Greenberg, J., & Pyszczynski, T. (1998). Tales from the crypt: On the role of death in life. *Zygon*, 33(1), 9-43.
- van Kessel, C., Den Heyer, K. & Schimel, J. (2020). Terror management theory and the educational situation. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 56(3), 428-42.
- van Kessel, C., & Burke, K. (2018). Teaching as an immortality project: Positing weakness in response to terror. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 52(2), 216-29.
- VanderWeil, E. (2007). Accepting a ring of fire: Stories of engagement with fear in transformational adult learning. Unpublished dissertation. Gonzaga University.
- Wilber, K. (1995). *Sex, ecology and spirituality: The spirit in evolution (Vol. 1)*. Shambhala.
- Wilber, K. (1981). *Up from Eden: A transpersonal view of human evolution*. Anchor Press/Doubleday.
- Wilber, K. (1977). *Spectrum of consciousness*. Theosophical Publishing House.
- Zembylas, M. (2013). Critical emotional praxis: Rethinking teaching and learning about trauma and reconciliation in schools. In P. P. Trifonas & B. Wright (Eds.), *Critical peace education: Difficult dialogues* (pp. 101-114). Springer.