

Interdisciplinary & Transdisciplinary Approaches



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Fisher's Response to Michael Eneyo's Rejoinder

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Finding base *common ground* in the midst of conflicts (of any kind), is a basic mature way to proceed. On that, **I totally support** the basic foundation of Eneyo's work in regard to what he just published in his Rejoinder (above)—in his words:

It is believed that, if fear is well understood, it can be used effectively as a tool for human liberation from one's tensions and fears; therefore, assisting one to grow in *fearlessness* and/or become *fear positive*. Such an enlightenment process can help human beings in realising their authentic self, thus enabling them to overcome most of the ambivalences and struggles of their existence. (p. 47)

I agree with Eneyo, in his words: "...these questions and many other forms of critiques raised by Fisher, are meant to expand our knowledge of fear." That is indeed my purpose overall. Fear Studies itself ought to be based on this. "Knowledge of fear" is my emphasis for Fear Studies and fear management/education in the 21st century, and I know that many people read that in my work but then go on to want to focus on behaviors like coping with fear(s), of which I am less focused on at this time of my career and work. The lack of concrete examples in my pedagogy and writing, of people handling fear, be it good fear or bad fear (as Eneyo and other use those terms), is because of my epistemological emphasis—that is, to "expand our knowledge of fear"—and not just by making quantitative gains in that area, but by qualitative paradigmatic changes, if not quantum leaps in new imaginaries that 'see' fear very differently than "fear is an emotion." In this latest 2020 issue of *IJFS* I have pulled out in a few places, in between articles, with images or quotes, that *fear is an idea, fear is a metaphor, fear is a landscape-mindscape*—that is my invoking of us going beyond "fear" as commonly accepted and as I see is primarily used by Eneyo and most fearism writers—that is, "fear is an emotion." Underneath this problematic is to distinguish when we are looking for a *definition* of fear in contrast to when we are looking for *meanings* of fear in our discourses. Few, make that distinction, unfortunately. I tend to focus on meanings, constructed and collectively imprisoned in monolithic culture, or religion, or science, and thus, just assumed they are the best because they are the 'norm' and assumed they are accurate. They are lacking, as I see it because of the narrow approaches, which are not holistic-integral. I won't repeat my teaching on that. It's a topic for another time and I encourage all to share more on this. Use various outlets, e.g., the Fearlessness Movement ning community etc.

I agree with Eneyo, in his words: "These questions may suggest that Fisher did not take time to read my work or, that he didn't insightfully understand how I apply them." Indeed, I am in a really busy space and have not read Eneyo thoroughly. Although, he was a student in

the Fearology Institute under my tutelage and I wrote a Foreword for his first book etc., I do have a good sense of how he thinks, interprets and writes. So, no doubt, he will be disappointed I have not given his work enough time. I may be mis-interpreting him on some things. His Rejoinder did clarify his view he is not utilizing Christian theology in his philosophy of fear and love (i.e., unity). Okay, I can take his word at his word. However, there is an intuition and there is a theoretical problem I have with that artificial rational distancing from his own cultural and religious background in his views on love and fear and thus, on fear management education. Any postmodern analysis, holistic and/or critical analysis of a sociopolitical and cultural kind would not let him off the hook with his distancing that his Christianity (or his gender, his Nigerian and African background, his age, etc.) is not informing his current philosophy. Anyways, that will be likely an ongoing area of disagreement we'll have.

Again, I cannot take time on more nuance to respond in detail to his Rejoinder but I thank him for putting his views and questions, his concerns about my ability to teach the material well, and so on. Maybe, in the future more dialogues and/or disagreements will be published on various venues. I don't have time to do this as priority right now.

Brief Background Context: My Latest Response

To quickly give some background context: When I first started reading Michael Eneyo's work on a combination of philosophical propositions and critiques, first with *Philosophy of Fear* (2018), then with *Philosophy of Unity (aka Love)* (2019), I had no idea one day I would write a ridiculously passionate and 'way too long' critique of his philosophy and critiques (e.g., IJFS, 1(2))—which I focused on the theme of "Love and Fear Problem." More so, I had no idea that after I wrote that piece an idea for a book would arise and I would on this very day be completely steeped in an intellectual biography of "Marianne Williamson." Who she? Why is she relevant to my second article addressing Eneyo? Let me explain.

Oumano (1992), the first (and only) biographer of Marianne Williamson (MW), of which now MW, at age 67, is becoming world famous because of her leadership campaign run for Democratic party leader and potential President of the U.S. in 2020, wrote,

At forty years old, Marianne Williamson is being touted as the high priestess of the New Age, the most visible spokesperson [teacher] of *A Course in Miracles*. A 1200-page, three volume self-study program in "spiritual psychotherapy" [to use MW's words], the course teaches how to relinquish a thought system based on fear and separation and replace it with one grounded in unity and love. (p. 1)

You might quickly see why I would be deeply interested in MW and *A Course in Miracles* because of the dual-modal philosophical teaching about human therapy and healing, if not redemption: (a) *path of Fear* and, (b) *path of Love*. Therein, is the basic distinction, Love and Fear Problem, which respectively, occupies my work and Eneyo's work. MW and *A Course in Miracles* (not written by MW) are both potent educational influences internationally and especially in North America—both I had long ago dubbed as branches of the historical

Fearlessness Movement. If you search the Fearlessness Movement page, for example, you will find several posts I have put up there over the years. I was looking to find engagements with others, for example in the fearism movement, but no one took me up on such. Now, I have devoted the past several months to research and completing this new book on *The Marianne Williamson Presidential Phenomenon* [1]. Foundationally, this new book is all about the Love and Fear Problem, once again, occupying my attention as a philosopher, therapist and educator. Btw, it is occupying me so much, with a short-time line to be handed in to the publisher, that this response to Eneyo's rejoinder is going to be cut very short and will not address adequately our current tensions and conflicts.

In a nutshell, my new book is about myself as a teacher of fear and fearlessness (minimally known) critically analyzing another teacher (great leader and celebrity) who teaches about fear and love. I am continually working as an intellectual biographer to be fair to MW, not let my own distresses get in the way of doing a respectable job of writing about her and her work. I am mostly writing about her work, but also her personality, her religious background, and all that she stands for are part of the fearanalysis. One cannot separate these things, not from a systems holistic-integral perspective, that is. So, to summarize her core teaching, relevant to the conflict I sometimes have with Eneyo and his work, is as simple as this (written by Oumano, 1992):

In a time of widespread unemployment, poverty, escalating civil unrest, drug use, violent crime, and imminent ecological calamity, Williamson offers the only true miracle, *a shift in our perception* of ourselves, each other, and the world, *from fear to love*. (p. 8) [italics added for emphasis]

Indeed, that is the first symptomatic and axiomatic psychological thing to deal with philosophically and theologically: How to make a *shift* from fear-based existence to love-based existence. MW, Eneyo, myself (and others) are also very interested in this shift. Not merely as theory but as practice. Yet, Eneyo and I are philosopher-types and he even has a strong theological education background. Although MW and Eneyo have some distinctions in their work (e.g., MW uses "Love" as all positive; Eneyo has "positive love" and "negative love"), the critical issue I am raising in my book on MW is no different than the one I am raising with Eneyo in our tensions and conflicts—is the dual-modal *shift* conceptualized correctly in the first place? I tend to disagree with MW and Eneyo's conceptualization—and, thus, *Fearlessness* becomes an alternative conceptualization that I have argued for 3 decades, more or less, is better as a way to bring about an effective and truly transformative learning, healing and ultimately *shift* developmentally and evolutionarily, "from fear to love."

Clearly, it is not that I disagree with the end goal of MW or Eneyo but I disagree with the best means of achieving that end. That said, I am well aware of the provocative nature of my using terms like better and best. That is just language expressing my strongest passion and critical thought—but it by no means is a pre-given reality that my means offered (via Fearlessness path) is actually better or best. I am too much of a philosopher to be so arrogant. It will require better arguments in the future (like the current one with Eneyo and myself) and further

research—so that, ultimately, a community of thinkers will arrive at some consensus on some premises that are durable and tested for what is the best and better way(s) to go—re: the dual-modal *shift* many of us see as ethically an imperative corrective to the current directions contemporary society (the world) is heading.

References

Oumano, E. (1992). *Marianne Williamson: Her life, her message, her miracles*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
