
Education and the Culture of Fear: A Review

-R. Michael Fisher,¹ Ph.D. © 2007

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Abstract

Based on years of research of the literature on “culture of fear,” the author is convinced that educators as a group are far behind the study of the “culture of fear” done by other disciplines. This has to be corrected and soon; living in a post-9/11 world has surely brought this forth, and evidence is presented that the “culture of fear” has emerged in research documents and books for the public mostly within the past 13 years, thus making the idea relatively new and more research is required.

[Note to Readers: This technical paper is a reproduction of a paper I wrote over two years ago and sent to an educational journal in the UK, of which the editor was not willing to examine the paper because of its lengthy size. I argued that it is actually not long enough to do this topic justice, mainly, because the “culture of fear” has not been systematically dealt with by any educator to date. The paper is a Review work and that requires it to be longer than normal journal articles. The editor and I didn’t see eye-to-eye, and so, I’ll publish it here in its full version, albeit, somewhat out of date, a little stale perhaps for me, but it is a good overview of the topic and ought to prove useful as an introduction to educators. Introduction A. is fresh writing. If the ‘stars’ are with this fearlessness movement, I would predict a book shall be written by me on this topic in a year or two.]

Introduction A.

This is really an introduction to the technical paper to follow on education and the “culture of fear.” I won’t rationalize here on why I think it is important to have Introduction A, other than to say, studying the “culture of fear” or ‘fear’ in general in education, as I have for so many years, is not complete unless there is a constant awareness and vigilance as to the dialectical relationship of ‘fear’ with fearlessness.

The goal of education must be freedom from fear.... Until education is really based on fearlessness there is no hope of any change in society.

- Vinoba Bhave¹

Where does one start to make truth claims about fearlessness and education? And one has to wonder, and be open to critique, that any such “truth claims” may be false outright, or at least, may require more nuance in their descriptions and prescriptions. At best, more research on the topic fearlessness and education ought to be pursued as the topic fear and education is more common (albeit, still too rare). For clearly, precious little research is available and what is available is often not very detailed or theoretically complex.

¹ For further details about him and his work see www.feareducation.com

Mahatma Gandhi was no fool. He knew, for the most part, what was needed in India to free itself from colonialist British rule: *fearlessness* and the spiritual practice of the “*gift of fearlessness*.” Most observers would say Gandhi knew the people of India needed a sense of “independence” and that meant an intellectual self-reliance so they could think critically and learn and live beyond fear as their ruler. Fearlessness, we shall see, is part and parcel of a free-thinking and critical mind that is independent from the dominant forces that try to impose only “one right way.” One might say that the nourishing and teaching of an independent ethical or holy fearlessness is the foundation for all liberation (I refer readers to my other technical papers and writing on fearlessness, since 1989).

Of course, history has shown that Gandhi’s leadership was not perfect and the freeing was, well, never quite the ideal, and many horrifying circumstances have evolved with the changes he brought to India’s independence (e.g., the Pakistanian and Islamic fundamentalist problematic, etc.). Fearlessness was a path, not a fixed attribute one “gets” and keeps without it being challenged and without weakening at times to less than a perfect fearlessness. Yet, although he often spoke of the essential foundation of fearlessness, non-violence, and compassion as integral to the fight for justice, and the fight to overcome the fear and terrorizing that plagued his peoples, Gandhi has not specifically written a lot on education and the role of fearlessness and fear *per se*. It is always difficult to know where education begins and ends. One has to acknowledge that education of the peoples, be it in formal schools and curriculum or through living and learning from life itself (outside of schools), is a major ongoing task if a civilization wants to both maintain itself in healthy ways, and if it wants to grow and develop in new ways to meet new demands. But if we use here “education” in the largest sense, I argue below in this technical paper that we have to also use “fear” in the largest sense, and fearlessness. This paper focuses on fear (or “fear”), but in a postmodern linguistic and sociopolitical reality—that is, as “culture of fear” (some have called “climate of fear” and/or “politics of fear” or “culture of terror” and so on).

INTRODUCTION B.

Mis-education On Fear And New Educational Reform

Increasingly I get the sick feeling in my stomach that we are making the same transition the Romans did from republic to empire. An empire cannot afford to do justice. It simply must continually reassert its power thus establishing a pedagogy of fear.²

... our schools have sunk into a dark discourse mired in a neurotic culture of fear.³ [and a] ... perpetual pedagogy of surveillance.⁴

Children are not going to school to be reared in what I called in the Open Mind Lecture on Education, ‘a pedagogy of fear.’ We should eliminate all fear from education. There should be a pedagogy of creativity and a pedagogy of love.⁵

At first sound, eliminating fear from education might be a good thing, as some philosophers and educators have argued, such as J. Krishnamurti to R. Steiner, P. Freire, and A.S. Neill to B.F. Skinner. This article implicitly suggests there is a

substantial case to be made that a good Fear Education,⁶ rather than an “education without fear” is the better way to go in the 21st century (Fisher, 2001).

A good quality Fear Education, analogous to a good quality Sex Education, would ideally provide all students with the reality of how fear (like sex) is constructed, manufactured, and disseminated to citizens based on sociopolitical (ideological), cultural, religious and economic agendas, both in the so-called “free world” and in dictatorships— often the two are alarmingly similar—as fear has become, for many, the least expensive ‘weapon of choice’ to get attention, manipulate opinion and alter values. “Nothing in life gets attention as reliably as fear—and that’s the way the system is designed to work,” says de Becker (2002, p. 40).

As a start to this new educational reform, the idea of *fear* itself has to be reconfigured. *Culture of fear* theorist and sociologist, Furedi (1997, 2002, 2004), has argued that fear, risk-aversion, and personal safety obsessions have become a “growth industry” and are re-shaping the entire organization of Western societies. New interdisciplinary research in parenting and education is required to keep up with the rapid change of the nature and role of fear, especially in the context of a “culture of emotionalism”⁷ and over-emphasis on, and social construction of, human vulnerability in an age of uncertainty or a “risk society” (Beck, 1992, 1999).

Some educators are starting to look at the notion of the *culture of fear*, as one part of this work. A spokesman for the Children’s Society (U.K.), who sponsored a recent survey of 200 London children, has said that the results show that “safety and security on the streets is an obvious priority” for improving the lives of young people. In a critique of the above, The Social Issues Research Centre (U.K.), suggested that,

The children’s response is worrying, not because it reveals any increase in the actual dangers faced by young people, but because it indicates that children are increasingly affected by the culture of fear, risk-aversion and worship of safety which have become the defining characteristics of contemporary society.... We are raising, it seems, a generation of anxious, timid young people, with low expectations, stunted aspirations, little sense of enjoyment and no spirit of adventure.... children are being taught to believe that the world they live in is a scary hazardous place.... we are teaching them to feel frightened and helpless and in need of protection. Then, when they grow up, they will know how to be scared of food, mobile phones and sunshine.⁸

In a recent posting entitled “Culture of Fear Over School Trips Attacked,” Education adviser, Lord Puttnam (U.K.), has criticized media for “generating unnecessary fear over safety concerns associated with school trips.” Puttnam, like this author, believe that too many children are missing out on school excursions that extend the “walls” of schools, all because of insurance issues and fears of parents and educational authorities—fears, which Furedi, de Becker, Glassner and others (cited later) have characteristically shown to be inflated in proportion to the actual risk of the danger happening. The National Trust education campaign spokesperson, Fiona Reynolds, suggested that an “element of risk was a crucial ingredient in a child’s upbringing.”⁹

The debates over safety and security in education circles will continue, no doubt, with lots of heated conflict. Radio National (Australia) recently produced a four-part series entitled "Don't Panic," in which one show was devoted to looking "at fear in the world of education and why we [adults] project our need for innocence onto children" (Saunders, 2003). Perhaps, we adults are over-protective of children, not for their own good, but for ours, because we are the products of a "poisonous pedagogy" (Miller, 1985, p. 18) of repression of our vitality, creativity and expressive feelings. Is it possible our attempts to care for, and love our children, are turning out to be rationalizations for our fears that have never been resolved from our past development within the context of a culture of fear?

Australian education researcher Scott (2003), wrote that "As a culture, we are fearful, as never before, and becoming more so" (p. 1). She notes that there is so much fear around potential abuse of children that in the State of New South Wales, male preschool teachers may not be with a child, or take them to the washroom, without another adult being present (also see Jones, 2003). She laments,

... I have my research restricted and compromised by fears that merely photographing or videoing a class full of children puts them at dire risk. Many other examples of the regulation and surveillance of day-to-day relationships could be listed.... I have noticed particularly, the ambivalent attitudes towards parents that schools display. Parents are expected to be partners in education of their children but, at the same time, they are regarded with deep suspicion. Teachers must be on the alert for signs of 'abuse' [and *visa versa*] (p. 2)

Not only do today's majority of children perceive that life is dangerous but 90% of American adults in a 1997 survey have said that they feel less safe today than they did when they were growing up (de Becker, 1997).¹⁰ One can imagine, since 9/11, what the climate of fear has heated to and what prevailing attitude exists toward the future— it isn't bright. Everyone is affected by the invidious impact of the culture of fear today.

Some educators are taking action to better inform themselves. For example, The Institute for Law School Teaching, at its 10th Annual Summer Conference (U.S.), devoted one theme to "Fear and Authenticity in Learning and Teaching," claiming in the advertisement that the focus will be "... on one important and rarely discussed dimension of teaching and learning: fear." The work of Parker Palmer (1998), the first educator to publish on the "culture of fear" in the Education system, was used as one of the readings for this conference theme because the organizers wanted to "... explore how much of our behavior as learners and teachers is driven by [the context of] fear..."¹¹

This article [Technical Paper No. 25] reviews the growing interest among educators regarding the impact of the culture of fear, as well as its sources outside of education circles and offers preliminary suggestions for a proper *Fear Education* in the future. How else are our students going to deal effectively with terrorism (fearism) and the "War on Terror" as the "war without end," what Douglas Kellner has called "terror war"¹² and this author calls Fear Wars?

Scholarship on *fear* is fast becoming a body of knowledge that educators ought to pay closer attention to. Arguably, at least in America, Australia, and Britain, the politics of education is largely a "politics of fear" today, and rare is it to find a

professional pedagogue, educational philosopher, or educational researcher devoted to the topic of fear on a broad scale. We also have to ask why that is?

Fear as a concept, never mind an experience, is often perceived fearfully and enshrouded in a hegemonic discourse that makes it repulsive itself. Figure 1 depicts a representation of the horrific gloom associated with collective human fear. The human imagination, within various cultural contexts, creates images of fear that scares itself/ourselves even more. This makes fear something to want to get away from, rather than get to know. How could we learn anything about fear (like sex) with this kind of biased aesthetic repulsion in our social imaginary?



Figure 1 Cartoon by Art Young, who in 1927, foresaw the world into which we are moving.¹³

Fear is too 'negative.' Fear, many claim, is looking at the 'cup half empty not half full.' Educators are much more in love with the 'positive' and believe it is their calling to teach courage, hope, peace, love, light, and freedom. Proof of this bias is easy to gain if one were to look at all the book, journal, and magazine titles published, or paper titles presented at conferences under Education. One would find tens of thousands with 'positive' terms like courage, hope, love, and so on, and maybe 150 with the word *fear* in the title.

Scan any professional teachers' glossy magazines and you'll not likely see one photograph or drawing of a principal, teacher, or student ever portrayed in a condition less than "happy" and glorified. It isn't real and this portrayal ends up as promotional propaganda for the "Education industry." Fear is totally under-represented as part of the human condition in educational reality. Any school staff room, teacher pre-service training, or grad school experience this author has had, shows that fear rules most every part of the organizational culture of "Education" — higher or lower (see for e.g., Malin, 2000; Palmer, 1998). Surely, this bias, if not deadly denial, cannot be regarded as healthy "emotional intelligence," that educators rhetorically espouse today in droves.

After this author devoted five years of graduate study focusing on "conflict" and "fear" in education, the common reaction from 99.99% of educators encountered became predictable and inevitable. They forced a smile and walked away or

refused to continue correspondence. The more honest and those trying to guide helpfully, would suggest studying something more “positive,” like love, or hope. A few thought a combination would be better. For example, one colleague, who was working with aboriginal students in communities with major suicide problems, wrote a half-encouraging response to the author:

It is good you are working on fear. The unspoken, unclaimed, ‘ran-away from without admitting to it’ fear lies underneath much of what is hurtful (even when it labels itself helpful, at times) in our society today. For me, though, living/being/working in the ‘othered’ community, the negativity/hurt/ depression etc. is so predominant that it is important to look to the strengths — flooding light on them and encouraging them to shine through the darkness.¹⁴

Educators would do well to look at the “facts” of political psychology in the warring nations, where fear always overcomes hope as the more powerful social force that continues wars despite all efforts at peace (e.g., Bar-tal, 2000). Probably all educators could be split into two camps, not unlike critical pedagogues and non-critical pedagogues, along the lines of those who foreground issues of fear, conflict, power, violence, and those who like to put that part of human life behind them and their students.

No educator ought to instill negativity for the purpose of negativity alone, and a healthy balance of the negative and positive side of life is the only justifiable education of truthfulness. However, modernism and its performative search for totalizing control, and the concomitant modern educational philosophy of current practical reforms, like the standards movement and high stakes testing, are “defenses against the terror of the abyss” (Taubman, 2000, p. 25)-- and only feed the cycle of fear, sometimes hatred, and inevitable violence, be it symbolic and subtle or literal and gross.

Taubman (2000) wrote of modernisms’ fear (and its many disguises, like hope), suggesting a new approach to education in the 21st century :

If we only found the best curriculum or the best practices, our children would be safe. What I am going to argue is that at this particular historical moment [these words are prior to 9/11], teaching, and writing about teaching and education, may mean giving up hope, renouncing the desire to cure, reform, or rescue, and taking a much more modest view of our own free will. It may be that hope for a better world, the desire to cure, and the belief in agency are not only defenses against the terror of the abyss but in fact work against what we hope for, what we desire, and what we believe in. In fact they may keep us from exploring at a deeper level.... They may keep us from exploring what is most important to us. They may keep us from facing who we could be. (p. 25)

Good intentions and positive discourse are not enough to make things better, we also have to look at our deeper motivations. Taubman is pointing out that our agency to turn fear around, to cope with it, to address it and resolve it, may be limited, more than we wish to admit. In this present article the concept of a culture of fear and research on it, indicates that the systemic complex mechanisms of fear in society are far beyond the control and cure that any individual or psychological approach alone can offer. The very nature of fear and our experience and identity with it, have changed dramatically in the past 15 years (Fisher, 2004).

We need better information on fear, across disciplines, cultures, and through time. We need a synthesis where neither subjective or objective, nor individual or collective ways of knowing are privileged above others, in order to know fear integrally. First our attitude as educators toward fear is going to have to change. bell hooks (2000), prior to 9/11, fearsomely challenged educators, and most everyone else, who promotes “love” and avoids focusing on “fear.” She wrote,

... we do fear and fear keeps us from trusting love. Cultures of domination rely on the cultivation of fear as a way to ensure obedience. In our society we make much of love and say little about fear. Yet we are all terribly afraid most of the time. As a culture we are obsessed with the notion of safety. Yet we do not question why we live in states of extreme anxiety and dread. Fear is the primary force upholding structures of domination. (pp. 93-94)

When “love” or “care” gets rooted within the obsessive quest for “safety,” people try to live (and love and care) by minimizing or eliminating all risk (cf. Beck, 1982, 1999 and “risk society”). Talking at Washington University in April 2001, hooks emphasized,

It is never going to be safe. There is no safety for black people or for white people or for our other allies in struggle when we decolonize our minds. I have a big sign at my desk. “You love at your own risk.” Love is by its very nature a risk. It’s a risk of trust.... Part of what I’ve been trying to do in my work with students is to challenge this idea of safety—to challenge this whole idea of being safe. In *The Culture of Fear*, Barry Glassner talks about how the very notion of safety is part of the reproduction of all this fear and paranoia.¹⁵

Culture Of Fear: They Don't Teach That In School

As this article is being written, Russia and the world, are facing the horrors of terrorism (cultivating fear) at a country school in Beslan, where over 350 people were murdered, half of them school children, and hundreds more traumatized and wounded, in a failed hostage attempt by Chechnyan¹⁶ rebel fighters. Editor Mick Hume, of *Spiked*, wrote of “One Lesson of the Russian School Siege”:

In the West we are familiar with the culture of fear. Our anxious, insecure societies offer easy targets for terrorists who can prey on our nightmares.... As we recoil in horror from what has been happening in Russia, let us try to remember that the corrosive culture of fear poses the greatest threat to our own and our children’s future in a free society.¹⁷

Fear and schools have long been linked but the form of fear and its impact has evolved. In general, educators and parents have been slow to catch on to the importance of contemporary fear and the popularized notion of the *culture of fear*, which Michael Moore’s award-winning documentary film *Bowling For Columbine* (2002), made part of public discourse.

“There’s a whole industry out there, studying fear,¹⁸ historically, psychologically, sociologically, culturally,” wrote McInnis (2004, p. 6) with surprise. Politically, fear has become a post-9/11 ‘football’ as candidates in the U.S. presidential election and their advocate groups Right and Left, accuse each other of abusing fear to

persuade voters. First Al Gore in 2000, and now John Kerry in 2004, have condemned the Bush administration for playing on peoples' fear, especially after 9/11.

Al Gore, a keynote speaker at the New York-based public conference, "Fear: Its Political Uses And Abuses," February 5-7, 2004, spoke of the historical connection and reality of the American politics of fear, which could be applied to many nations. He said,

Like Bush, Nixon understood the political uses and misuses of fear. After he was driven from office in disgrace, one of Nixon's confidants quoted Nixon as having told him this: "People react to fear, not love. They don't teach that in Sunday School, but it's true." (McInnis, 2004, p. 3)

They don't teach that in public school either, and perhaps it is about time students have access to better knowledge on fear than they have in the past. The first major scholarly study of the political history of the idea of fear has just been published (Robin, 2004), with the author concluding that our highest educational institutions and their intellectuals have systematically obscured fear's political dimensions, and diverted attention away from its role, in order to keep the public ignorant to the ways fear was being manufactured and used for the benefits of the elite. Fear, says Robin, is an exemplary instrument of repression in the public and private sectors.¹⁹ It appears the history of the West is fraught with a mis-education in terms of fear.

Ideal "Fearless" Societies And Contemporary Urban Reality

The idealists, backed by authoritative empirical evidence, may conclude that "fearless" societies have existed, like the harmonious Mbuti pygmies of the Congo (Tuan, 1979) or the fearsome Vikings from the 8th-12th centuries (Zeldin, 1994). Yet, below the surface appearance, researchers have found all such societies have had their fears, suggesting "There are several powerful reasons why a society in which fear is unknown has not existed and is unlikely ever to exist..." (Corradi, 1992, p. 267). Some fear is natural but fearmongering systems of one kind or another are ubiquitous, and at core, remain part and parcel of every cultures' defense mechanism against fear of death (mortality) (Pyszczynski, Solomon & Greenberg, 2002).²⁰

Contemporary social critics, like Altheide (2002) suggest "fear is a lens" and a "discourse;" others like Massumi (1993), have argued fear is no longer an emotion or feeling, becoming "... the mode of being of every image and commodity..." in late capitalist societies (p. 12). From this urban and cyberspace background 'noise' (read 'diet'), a low-grade matrix of fear, we construct a 'self' that is 'fear.' We seem unable to resist any longer because we cannot tell where this "hyperreal formation of an entirely new species of fear" (McLaren, 1995, p. 148) begins, and we end (Massumi, 1993). Much of urban planning (Sandercock, 2002), and architecture (Davis, 1999; Ellin, 1997) have become a reflection of, and reinforcement for, 'fear,' barely perceptible and accepted as normal (read natural), what some have linked to the post-industrial city (Hubbard, 2003) as a "fearscape" (Gold & Revill, 2003) of manipulation targeting the marginalized.

The rather convincing intimate historian (e.g., Zeldin, 1994), with realist pessimism, may conclude that for the most part “Fear has nearly always been more powerful than the desire for freedom.... [p. 8] people have freed themselves from fear by finding new fears” (p. 10). He wrote,

The history of fear over the centuries shows that liberation from fear has from time to time been achieved, by two methods. The first has been with the help of fear itself, by escaping from one fear to another, which contains more hope. The second has been through curiosity about something quite different, which has temporarily blotted out the awareness of [real] danger. (p. 169)

Both of these historical-laden patterns of fear management are, as you will read later, characteristic symptoms of a culture of fear.

“Fear is a highly ideological emotion,” says political historian Corey Robin, and it cannot be understood outside its embedded political nature as a weapon of power and control, as far back as Genesis (Robin, 2004). According to feminist archeologist-educator, Riane Eisler (1987), “fear and mistrust” have been the articulating characteristic, or way of organizing, in what she called “dominator societies,” for at least the past 5000 years in the Western world. To move toward “partnership societies” where this pedagogy of fear and mistrust is no longer dominating, is her challenge (including this authors’) to educators everywhere (Eisler, 2000) to end the cycle of violence and oppression.

CULTURE OF FEAR: DEFINITION AND A BRIEF HISTORY

Certainly nothing entirely new in essence, the culture of fear has taken on forms remarkably unique to a highly mediated contemporary and globalizing society. The events at Beslan, Columbine High School, or New York 9/11, for example, have become spectacles for news media’s construction of a culture of fear but the phenomena has roots in any state, society, organization, or culture that uses fear to manage fear. After the first systematic study of the “culture of fear,” Fisher (2004) concluded that a general definition could be established to systematize further research:

culture of fear- any human/living organization (system) that manages fear, overtly or covertly, in harmful ways that ends up encouraging more fear in the organization, instead of less—resulting in a dispirited culture based on fear and intimidation (injustice), instead of trust, cooperation and true democracy (p. 46)

Political sociologist, Benjamin Barber (2003), in his book *Fear’s Empire: War, Terrorism, and Democracy* bluntly proclaims, the evidence shows, “We cannot defeat fear with fear” (front jacket). The culture of fear dynamic is basically one that goes against that truth.

For purposes of this article, “climate of fear” is one quality and expression commonly attributed to the culture of fear but is not equated with the latter. In the following review, the author chose to simplify the amount of material by eliminating searches in the educational literature using terms like “culture of risk,” “culture of

terror,” and so on,²¹ even though they are similar to the culture of fear, they are not terms which have the same documented history and systematic study that the culture of fear²² does.

There is no one definition of “culture of fear” (Fisher, 2004) and there is no one history of the idea of the “culture of fear.” The abstract history described below does not adequately deal with the subjective and intimate history to be written of what people have suffered from, as they have understood the culture of fear from the ‘inside.’ The first full university course designed to learn about “Cultures of Fear” through literature used “uncanny fictional worlds” to explore the insiders’ views of the phenomenon (Ribkoff, 2004).²³ Equally important, is a more objective approach of scientific-oriented descriptions and generalizations working toward greater theoretical understanding. The latter route is taken here for brevity, but arguably, there is no pure ‘outside’ view of the culture of fear because we are all touched, more or less, by its impacts.

First coined and studied in the early 1980’s, the “culture of fear” concept has grown and attracted attention steadily. Figure 2, from data collected in a large statistically significant sample of the professional and scholarly literature, depicts the number of documents, across disciplines, which have referred to the culture of fear. From a total of 180 documents found, it is apparent that a focus on the phenomena did not appear until roughly 1973 (implicitly), but the interest was sporadic and relatively very rare until around 1994. Sixteen percent of the documents were published prior to 1994, and 84% after that date. For speculative or significant factors in this sharp increase of attention to the culture of fear, and its popularization after 1997, see Fisher (2004).

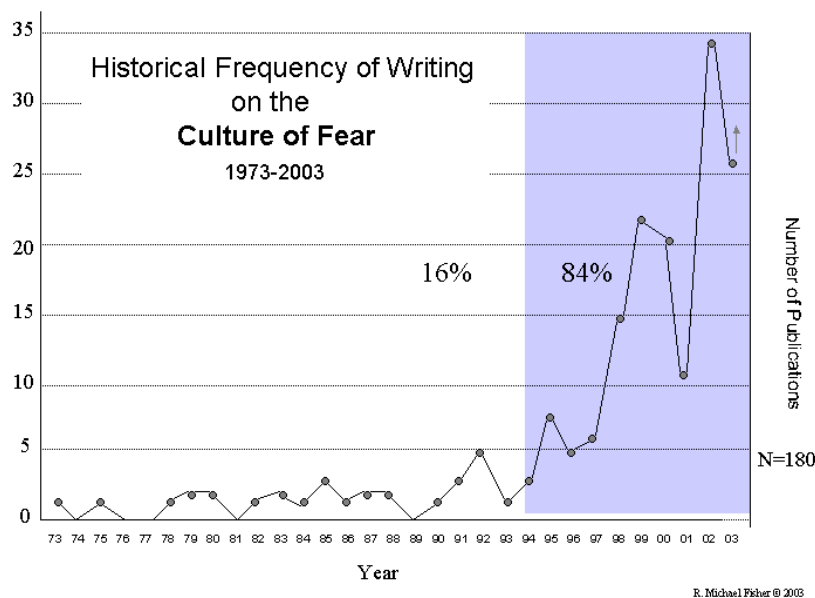


Figure 2 Publications On The Culture Of Fear (Fisher, 2004)

When this same sample of publications were categorized into rough disciplinary and subject areas, an accumulative frequency distribution (Figure 3) shows that the topic was mostly written about in Political Science/History and Business, with Education being very far behind.

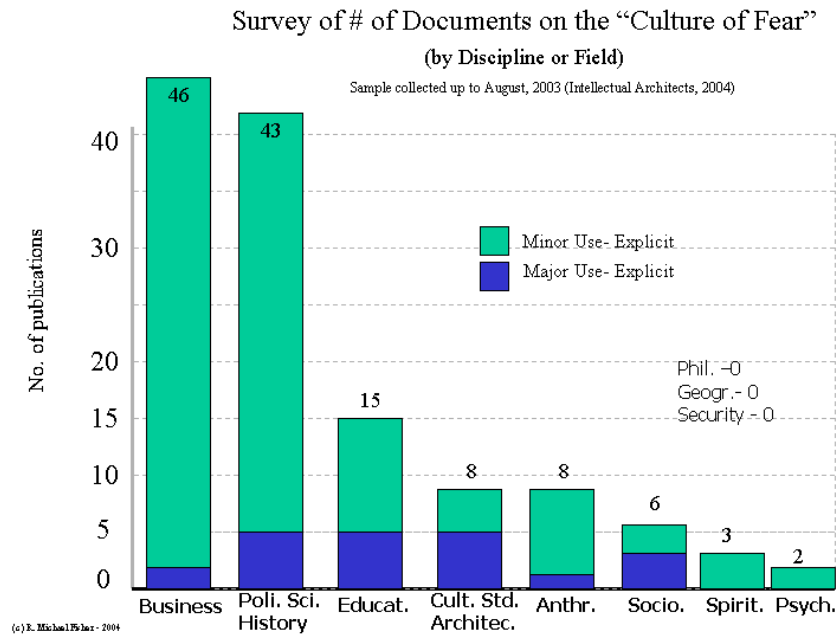


Figure 3 Culture of Fear Documents By Disciplines (Fisher, 2004)²⁴

Political Culture Of Fear: Latin American Dictatorships 1970-80's

In 1980 the Social Science Research Council in New York funded the first interdisciplinary systematic studies on the culture of fear in the Southern Cone of Latin America. A political scientist from Argentina and a psychologist from Brazil,²⁵ respectively, journeyed into the 'heart' of the repressive militarized dictator regimes. As they questioned the middle-class on their acceptance of the conditions and lack of criticality or concern about the political everyday life of Argentina-- the researchers thought they were recording "apathy." Further inquiry led them to conclude it was pervasive "fear" that was the cause of the apathy. They urged other scholars to study what they believed was a "culture of fear."

In the next few years interest had grown and Latin American scholars from the U.S. and L.A. gathered with human-rights activists to share papers and experiences in a conference called "The Culture of Fear" (in Buenos Aires, 1985). The first and only conference this author knows of on that topic *per se*.²⁶ This led to a wide-ranging discussion on fear and society, much of which was later published in an interdisciplinary anthology entitled *Fear At The Edge: State Terror And Resistance In Latin America* (Corradi et al., 1992). The high quality, empirically-based,

research in this book makes it the most suitable foundational text on the culture of fear to date. Most all the other publications in the study by Fisher (2004), only mention the term culture of fear, but few develop the idea.

Lechner (1992) summarized the culture of fear phenomena that existed in much of Latin America during the 1970's and into the 1980's:

... in Latin America diversity is perceived as an invader.... Authoritarianism 'solves' the problem of order not by the suppression but by the manipulation of fear.... authoritarian, as opposed to democratic, regimes fail to process fear in creative ways. (p. 5)

Fruhling (1992), from the same anthology, wrote that,

Two principal elements lend themselves to a culture of fear: first, the sense of insecurity, which increases in direct proportion to the lack of available information about the exact objectives of state repression; second, the sense of powerlessness, of the impossibility of creating spaces within which to organize in the face of terror. (p. 129).

Similarities to the current post-9/11 Bush administration run U.S.A. are obvious.

Popularizing "Culture Of Fear" And Its Post-9/11 Dramatics

Sociologists, first in the U.K. (Furedi, 1997), then in the U.S., published the first full explications in books with "culture of fear" in the title. They were only interested in Anglo-American issues. Neither of them integrated the prior work on the political culture of fear (e.g., Corradi et al.). Writing in a popular "culturalist" style, both books examined our everyday life and warned of an emerging era of sociopolitical decadence based on fear and mistrust. Best-selling book *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things*, by Barry Glassner (1999), struck its U.S. reader's jugular vein. Oprah Winfrey, TV-talk show host extraordinaire, was to have said, "If you were to go to my house, you wouldn't see a gun under my bed, but you would see [Glassner's] *The Culture of Fear* by my night side table."

With the tragedy of September 11, 2001 (9/11) everything changed, and a heightened interest in the culture of fear emerged as part of a forced new relationship to fear, especially in the U.S. Some American-based critics were quick to react to U.S. President G. W. Bush Jr.'s militaristic crack-down, in what he called the "War on Terrorism." The production of the award-winning documentary by activist-film maker Michael Moore (2002), coupled strategically with Glassner's appearance in the film, proved that Moore could convince millions that America's originating history and current state was an exemplar culture of fear, which has led to gun culture and violence like no other highly industrialized country in the world. Ever since, use of the term "culture of fear," by academics, professionals, leaders, media, and public alike, has increased at an exponential rate.

For the most part,²⁷ the culture of fear researchers, theorists, and authors have, more or less, avoided citing each other's work. Yet, in their own way, they all have been critics of the culture of fear as an organizing modality of self/society in the

20th-21st centuries. Some have suggested that the culture of fear, once in place, is virtually impossible to eradicate (e.g., Demarco, 2001) and change is slow.

Details of the dynamics of the culture of fear would require a long dissertation. Some of these dynamics are brought forward in the following review of educators who have published or presented on the topic. For purposes of this article, suffice it to say, the most common aspects of the popularized versions of the culture of fear include:

- news media play a big role in spreading unwarranted fear and creating an ongoing culture of fear
- the public is given mis-information or incomplete information by news media and government authorities, and advertisers, so that they cannot accurately assess the risk of a particular danger and thus they inflate the risk (and fear of) rare dangers (e.g., dying from W. Nile virus) and avoid social problems (e.g., racism) that are much worse and ought to be worrisome
- individual risk and the desire for personal safety have become the obsession and value priority for many, which leaves a decreasing interest in moral social expectations; a “victim culture” is growing with narcissistic individualism, where everyone is taking someone to court, and policies are being formulated and organizations designed continually from fear of liability suits
- there is a large “fear economy” where few are benefiting from an “organized fear trade” (Massumi) and many are suffering as unnecessary anxiety and worry wear on people’s budgets and health
- civil rights and democratic process are diminished in societies and organizations because of the fear created (often falsely justified), where authorities argue they are just making the people safe and secure

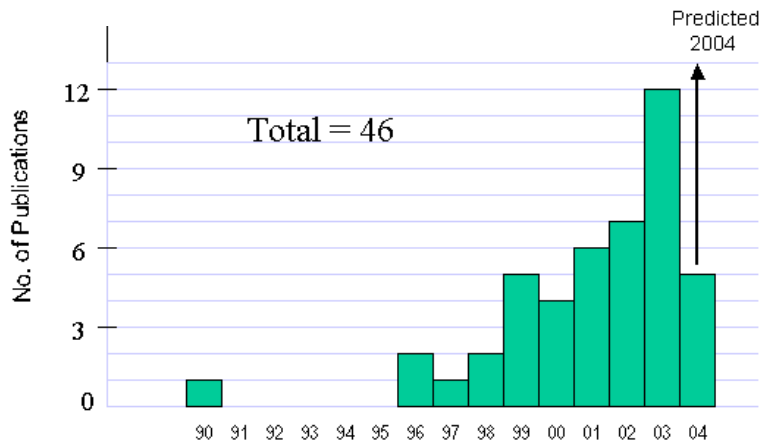
Already there has been some “backlash” against the criticism of the culture of fear researchers, theorists, and writers. The criticism has been found in the popular press and in interviews. Some have complained about the over-sensitivity of “victims” and others have challenged that a “culture of fear” is a good thing, especially when high performance is required. Others have suggested that safety and security is a first priority and no accusation by some, for creating a culture of fear is rational, because if someone is “hurt” then we’ll be really sorry.

Some authors have taken to “poking fun” at the culture of fear by publishing tongue-in-cheek popular culture books on “how to” not be at-risk, and assess all the fears we have about silly things and replace them with fears about seriously dangerous things (e.g., Laura Lee’s *100 Most Dangerous Things in Everyday Life and What You Can Do About Them*). No doubt through time, the backlash against the use of the label “culture of fear” will grow. Many groups, like unions, are enjoying the use of this label “culture of fear” to attack managers and employers for unfair practices, and American courtrooms are taking the charge seriously, in all kinds of cases. The reality is, as research shows, it takes two or more players

(roles) to create and sustain a culture of fear, and no one party is ever to blame as the total cause.

DOCUMENTATION: EDUCATION & THE CULTURE OF FEAR

This is the first systematic study of the “culture of fear” as a concept (and phenomena) in educational discourses. As of September 1, 2004, at least 46 documents (English only) over a 15 year period (1990-2004) were found in the field of Education,²⁸ in which 30 different published authors (50% school-based, 13% adult/higher ed. and 37% both) have used the term “culture of fear.” See Figure 4 for frequency of documents per year.



- R. Michael Fisher (c) 2004

Figure 4 Frequency of Publications On “Culture Of Fear” In Education (1990-2004)

Ninety-eight percent of the documents appear after 1995, with the first documentation of the term “culture of fear” appearing in 1990. In Figure 2 a similar rising trend of numbers of publications occurred using this term after 1994 but numbers are found in works going back to the mid-1980’s, where “culture of fear” is first used and studied. Figure 4 points toward a general trend of increasing numbers per year and to be expected in the future. If Fisher’s 2003 self-published documents were excluded from the calculation, a total of eight would be found in 2003, indicating a relatively stable number of documents from 1999 to 2003, slowly increasing (i.e., predicted) to 2004 and beyond.

Overall, 9/11 (September 11, 2001) seemed to have some significant influence on the emergence of more use of the term “culture of fear” (see also Figure 2). Similarly, Michael Moore’s (2002) film seems to have little influence in education circles, relative to the sharp increase in Figure 2 during and after 2002. The educational document numbers therefore do not closely follow the scale of relative increase in Figure 2 trends, thus far. These findings are all an indication of the seeming relative lack of interest, or delayed interest, in Education compared to some other disciplines or popular culture (see also Figure 3).

Between 1998-2004 only three authors have either presented a professional paper and/or published on this specific topic more than once, for a combined total of 44% of the documents found (i.e., Fisher-11 (24%), Giroux-6 (14%), Palmer-3 (6%)). The only systematic treatment of the topic (other than Fisher, 1998, 2004) is found in one recent book by Giroux (2003) entitled *The Abandoned Generation: Democracy Beyond the Culture of Fear*. In Education, this is the only book with the words “culture of fear” in the title.²⁹ The only articles (other than Fisher’s work³⁰) with “culture of fear” in the title are Couture (2004), Livingston (2002), Scott (2003); with one Foreword by Giroux (2003a), and one chapter in a book “A Culture of Fear” by Palmer (1998), and one scholarly journal article (not an Education journal *per se*) with “culture of fear” in the title (Thompkins, 2000).

Except for Fisher,³¹ authors have characteristically omitted systematic reviews of the literature on the culture of fear and thereby have not cited previous documents that have mentioned the term “culture of fear” in an educational context or beyond the Education field --although a few authors have to a limited extent, for example, (1) Gajda (2004) reviewed Giroux’s new book, (2) Mayo (2004) and Smyth (2001) referenced a few books or articles inside Education. Those who have cited books outside Education, written by sociologists on the culture of fear, for example, include Glassner (hooks, 2001)³² or Furedi (Davidson, 2001; Ecclestone & Field, 2003; Jones, 2003; Scott, 2003; Smyth, 2001) or referred to the popular film by Michael Moore outside Education (Lipman, 2003). Three referred to Palmer’s work in Education (Anonym, 2000; Glazer, 1999; Livsey & Palmer, 1999). Furedi was the “culture of fear” theorist most referred to, with 11% of the documents citing him, who Fisher (2004) labeled as one of the “Popularizing Culture of Fear Theorists.”³³

Other than Fisher (2004), none of the educators here have studied the culture of fear phenomenon explicitly. They rather describe its features and implications. None have defined or tried to define “culture of fear” *per se*, but have rather left it implicitly defined by the context of the writing and situations described. Typically, they have used the term “culture of fear” without any critical analysis of its meaning, but more, they seemed to have used it for affective rhetorical impact and part of a growing populist discourse, which in all cases was referred to as something negative rather than positive in impact.

None of the authors, other than Fisher, a “Revisionist Culture of Fear Theorist” (see fn. 32) challenged the way *fear* itself is conceptualized or ought to be in the context of a “culture of fear.” A survey (unpublished) of the documents published in Education after 9/11, by the present author, revealed that educators writing about this tragedy and its impacts have continuously neglected to challenge the very conceptualization of fear itself. With educators writing on these subjects, there is a characteristic neglect of clarifying systematically, and theoretically, what is being

analyzed and responded to. This neglect tends to make the understanding of fear and curriculum on fear education or culture of fear, nebulous at best.

INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

School Violence, Fear Of The Future, Media, Academic Culture And The Culture Of Fear And Blame

As the world scrambles for a sense of security and certainty, the culture of fear and spectacle [9/11 and terrorism] leads us to ignore other problems and challenges.... The challenge facing today's educators is to teach their students that the world is not entirely evil and not to be feared.... Where are the possibilities of educating for a culture of hope?³⁴

Let us commit ourselves to education—education that overcomes hatred and fear.... Despite the many problems that face us [post-9/11], we are moving forward to replace a culture of fear with a culture of hope.³⁵

The above speech (the second quote) given by the president of a modern university may sound good, but it leaves the authors of several of the documents in this study, with a questioning critique as to the reality of education achieving this impossible goal. Brooks (1999) suggested that adult educators are however, generally less encumbered than public school educators by the culture of fear.

Davidson (2001) called the language of marketization and privatization of Australian schools part of a culture of fear, which leads to the middle class taking flight from public schooling, to maintain their power advantage in elitist private schools (cited in Smyth, 2001). "A culture of fear, pervasive in so many schools, is a barrier both to collaboration and to working across difference in race, class and culture" (Nichols-Solomon, 2000, p. 21). The education system maintains thus, a significant role in systemic violence *via* racism and classism, according to these authors (including Mayo, 2004 and the writing by Giroux).

"Many if not all, children today live in fear of society" as there are so many readily available images of disaster and experiences of adult fear in a post-9/11 world—"socially toxic environments" are the great source of pollution "instilling a culture fear while ignoring the importance of preparing youth for advanced citizenship in a global civil society" (Mayo, 2004, p. 217). According to Ecclestone & Field (2003), adult educators promoting social capital, in the societal context of a preoccupation with "risk aversion," cannot ignore the impact of "a broader pessimism and culture of fear among educators committed to liberal humanist or social justice aims"—which Furedi's analysis concludes is leading to low moral expectations about the future and our ability to face it honestly and effectively for the good of the whole.

Ecclestone & Field summarize the dynamic of this culture of fear and the increasing coercion in educational (therapeutic) interventions by the State:

New forms of mistrust and fear of the future depict people as individual victims of events and their own failings, isolated within fragmented communities. This leads to a growing acceptance that State agencies and prof-

essionals are the main experts in helping or controlling a growing array of educational, health and social problems. These encompass the most structurally embedded and intractable difficulties as well as the most commonplace, mundane and personal. More subtly, fear of risk leads to an increasing range of attributes and situations being depicted by politicians and State agencies as 'risky.... Such judgments start by being genuinely well-meaning as a basis for leading people to independence, but end up as calls for compulsion once people resist voluntary ways of redeeming themselves.... Images of risk and victimhood also require new therapeutic interventions to restore 'damaged self-esteem' and create safe environments for people.... Lifelong learning is increasingly the focus for these new inclusive interventions.... (p. 272)

These authors argue that a "moralisation of risk" undermines independence, whereby educational policies and practices become increasingly conservative/authoritarian and "performative,"³⁶ largely based on fear and mistrust of the "at risk" (abnormal). This can "lead educators to espouse their own subtle forms of 'blame the victim.'" (Ecclestone & Field, 2003, p. 276).

Manufacturing what is "at risk" as well as the "dangers" of society is now becoming a major industry.³⁷ News media was pointed out by Scott (2003), and several of the authors in this study (e.g., Giroux, 2003; Mayo, 2004; Thompkins, 2000), as a main contributor to constructing a culture of fear around schools and students. Scott concluded,

What is typical of all these stories is the marked tendency to take the most extreme case—playground violence, drug swapping primary school kids—and present these as the norm. (p.2)

Lipman (2002) argues that media and government working together have attacked public schools traditionally, creating a culture of fear, by which they can then argue for restrictive authoritarian curriculum policies, along with traditional character education agendas-- the latter which was critiqued by Jacobs (2003), a post-colonial author, who suggested that European White Society misuses "authority" and character education to inscribe a culture of fear.

The challenges are many, but school leadership has to deal with the ways the culture of fear and formality can be engrained in the organization (Ramsey, 2003, p. 42) and look so 'normal' after awhile. Unfortunately the "advent of the Age of Risk" has placed unprecedented new stresses upon educators, as if they are totally responsible for everything that may possibly harm a student while attending schools (Scott, 2003, p. 3). The long term impact of this demand is unknown.

The earliest documents in Education that used the term "culture of fear" were pointing to the disturbing extent to which inner city street culture, with its attendant culture of fear, was infiltrating urban schools (Devine, 1990)-- and the repetitive theme that a strong culture of fear exists in most university cultures, which tends to marginalizes women academics (Kamau, 1996), as well as breed a general climate of despair, self-hatred and divisiveness (Marranca, 1996) in higher education (see also Palmer's critique below). Fielding (1997) recommended educators ought to "chase away the culture of fear" but that everyone in the community is responsible; yet, teachers in particular, he believed, ought to take leadership to end the culture

of fear in schools, due to their (often) excessive fear of disruptive students and challenges to teachers' authority.

Thompkins (2000) argued that educational institutions and systems have been notoriously ineffective in reducing the culture of fear that school violence and gangs can promote. His study of reports and discourses of security in education lead him to conclude that they mostly end up constructing a culture of fear among students and teachers, along with policies that use excessive surveillance via security officers, metal detectors and security cameras in schools. Gang leaders take advantage of fearful students and thereby prey upon the common strategies used by educational authorities to reduce the culture of fear. Entire school climates can be led by fear, as Nichols-Solomon (2000) noted,

In schools where teachers are preoccupied with sanctions and the capricious use of punishment, there is little collaboration between staff members, and almost certainly none with parents.... The companion to this fear is a culture of blame.... (p. 21)

Ultimately, in a culture of fear, the students (especially youth of color), says Giroux (2003), are "demonized" as a constant threat to order and control. He wrote,

... the United States is at war with young people.... Youth have become the all important group onto which class and racial anxieties are projected.... youth prompts in the public imagination a rhetoric of fear, control and surveillance.... a deep distrust of students furthers the notion that youth have become a generation of suspects.... this perception [aided by news media] of fear and disdain is increasingly being translated into the social policies that signal the shrinking of democratic public spheres, the hijacking of civic culture, and the increasing militarization of public space. (pp. xvi-xvii)

Referring back to the definition of the culture of fear provided in this paper, it is evident that a culture of fear cannot devise appropriate strategies that will undermine a culture of fear, as too often fear is used to control fear, and fear management, overall, remains ineffective at best, and at worst it serves those in authority (majority) positions and harms those in subdominant or marginal positions.

Often the culture of fear concept is thrown around in a 'blame game' dance between various adult parties in the educational system. At a recent teachers' conference, the Education Minister was accused of maintaining a culture of fear (Anonymous, 2003) among the teaching community. In some cases, teachers have accused principals of mismanagement by using a culture of fear (Blase, 2002) and delegates of an American university professor conference have stood united to challenge the political discourses in society that limit their freedom of speech in a post-9/11 world (Anonymous, 2002).

The most extensive writing specific to schools today and the repressive conditions for teachers is found in Livingston (2002), in an article entitled "Teaching in a Culture of Fear of Reprisal." Livingston, a professor of education at LaGrange College, GA, tells of a supervising experience with a grad student, who is a local teacher in the public system. One day his grad student came to him very distressed because she had a public school official come into her classroom and remove the

wood blocks from her elementary classroom. The unexpected situation left the teacher stunned. When she called the superintendent, she was told that the new academic kindergarten curriculum standards were such that wood blocks were not appropriate. Livingston wrote that she wanted to do her masters thesis on this problem and critique the new academic kindergarten curriculum as developmentally inappropriate. For various reasons of fear of reprisal, the masters thesis ended up being a non-critical piece, and Livingston writes at length about how the legal protection of teachers and academic freedom is not as secure as it may appear on paper.

Using a post-structural critical analysis of power (*a la* Foucault), Livingston (2002) concluded from his research into teachers' rights in regard to teachers who speak out against authorities:

... I, too, began to feel the heebie geebies of big brother's watchful eye and agreed [with my grad student] that playing it safe in this present day environment was the prudent choice. My student will write her uncritical thesis because she is afraid to speak out, and I agree that she has reason to be. After some contemplation, or maybe it was paranoia, I began to question if these court decisions are mere artifacts intended to give the appearance of being the defenders of constitutionally protected conduct, while in practice, teachers work in an environment where fear of reprisal is a very real threat to their livelihoods.... In the current culture of fear of reprisal in our schools today, teachers are under constant surveillance from standardized testing results, superiors, other teachers, and most disturbingly, a deprecating form of self-surveillance.... What's so disturbing about self-surveillance is that the individual monitors his/her own behaviors to ensure compliance with the very same power that oppresses them (Foucault, 1977).... While it remains covert and intangible, this culture of fear and surveillance operates within a powerful discourse. It matters not if these messages of fear begin as fact or fiction because there is no distinction between the two; we have always been ruled by fictions of every kind (Gough, 1998).... In the aftermath of 9/11, it has become evident that what people really want is more surveillance, more fear; in a word, they want fascism (Deleuze & Guatari, 1987). (p. 4)

Secular And Spiritual Interests In The Culture Of Fear

From the study of documents, Henry A. Giroux and Parker Palmer, both rather well-known professional American educators, have most likely influenced much the field of Education, in terms of the notion of the culture of fear.³⁸ In many ways, interestingly enough, these two educators are at opposite ends of the philosophical spectrum, with Giroux a materialist (neo-marxist critical pedagogue) and Palmer a spiritualist (Quaker). Yet, both argue for non-violent revolution, replacing *hope* for fear,³⁹ with education and teachers playing a major role in the transformation of society.

Giroux's change focus is more political and structuralist (external) with Palmer's view being more psychological and focused on individual teacher change (internal)— the two thereby making a potentially useful integral combination to challenge the culture of fear. They both see we are entering very dark times

historically and they call on teachers to unite with renewed civic courage to challenge the fear-based systems of education, economics, politics, and government/corporate hegemony.

Palmer (like Fisher) has been writing seriously about the culture of fear before 9/11. Palmer has not continued publishing on the topic *per se* into the 21st century, as Fisher and Giroux have. Giroux's main emphasis on the culture of fear *per se* has come primarily after 9/11, picking up on the trope of popularity for the term "culture of fear."

Palmer (1999) has nicely summarized his view on the culture of fear in the following passage:

We all know that what will transform education is not another theory, another book, or another formula but educators who are willing to seek a transformed way of being in the world. [p. 15] We [academics] do not grant respect to silence and wonder. Why? Because in academic culture, we are afraid. Academia is a culture of fear. What are we afraid of? We are afraid of hearing something that would challenge and change us.... I don't want to hear those voices because I am afraid of change.... It is a culture rooted deeply in fear. (p. 21)

Palmer's message is that fear, at a cultural level, is a major obstacle to growth and development and it gets in the way of love; thus the culture of fear impacts negatively against spiritual development (higher consciousness), as hooks (2001) has also argued. Educator-spiritual psychologist, Sardello (1999), has vehemently concluded that, "The most central spiritual task of our time is working with fear" (p. vii). Sardello, writing prophetically two years prior to 9/11, was the first educator to discuss terrorism in relation to "the new capital economy of fear," "ecology of fear," and the problems of "living within a culture of fear" (p. 166).⁴⁰ Sardello is not cited by any of the authors (other than Fisher) in this study.

Giroux (1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2003a, 2004) has distinctly connected issues of neoliberalism, racism, news media, cultural politics, economic capitalist materialism, and militarization of education with the "culture of fear." Daims (2004) summarized Giroux's (2004) thinking on the culture of fear nicely in the following extract from a review (see also Gajda, 2004):

Henry Giroux's Foreword forcefully attacks the current [U.S.] administration's tactics concerning education and the greater society. Alluding to a "tyranny of emergency" and an inauthentic use of the country's fear of terrorism, Giroux feels the President [Bush] is changing the nature of our society—community is constructed "through shared fears rather than shared responsibilities!

Giroux's (2003) book is by far the most extensive analysis of the destructive dynamics of a post 9/11 world on youth and education, of which Giroux adds the culture of fear phenomena. There is not the space here to look at all of the connections Giroux makes, but his compelling analysis offers one unique feature of the culture of fear (not mentioned in the other 45 documents) worthy of note here—that is, "emergency time" vs. "public time."

In a post-9/11 climate, the culture of fear "... raises serious questions about the meaning of patriotism, democracy, education, and the emergence of a repressive state..." (Giroux, 2003, p. xxi). Giroux argues that one of the main features of the culture of fear, witnessed in America today, is the use of an "emergency time" framing for decision making by elites. Emergency time is a perception that social order is under attack (virtually) now, or could be at any time. Therefore, the security discourses of safety and national security are continually given the highest priority over values of freedom of rights, constitutional law, and what he called "public time" frames—the latter, where issues are discussed (and perhaps voted on in some cases) before policies and strategies are put in place and enacted by authorities. Basically, once an elite group constructs a culture of fear, they also construct a frame of emergency time, where they can justify all kinds of unjust actions in the name of "freedom" but they are not consulting a public, not taking the time to care what the people think, and thereby may rationalize any form of violence based on, in this case, "terrorism."

Giroux concludes the dilemma, in terms of being able to offer critique and dissent in the public school and overall education system. He wrote,

For Bush and Ashcroft, the culture of fear fueled by emergency time provides the conditions in which Americans can be asked to spy on each other, [and] dissent can be view as un-American.... (p. 7)

The climate within which education takes place today, is therefore one which is highly reminiscent of the McCarthy era of the 1950's and Red Scare of the 1930's. However, regardless of the good analysis of Giroux, and his call for "civic education," "public pedagogy," "civic activism" and "rethinking hope"—there is not nearly enough of a synthesis in his work of the culture of fear dynamic, based on all the previous writing on this topic, to offer sound solutions. Giroux's writing is not unique. All the educators cited above offer little in systematic concrete solutions to the culture of fear in education.

BRIEF SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

The culture of fear is a complex idea and phenomena, which can hardly be addressed adequately in this review article. The general definition of *culture of fear* is when attempts at fear management are misguided because they are motivated by fear and thus create more fear in an organization or individual. Fear in this cultural context, is closely linked with the causes of violence, injustice, wars, and hate. Teaching and learning, in a culture of fear, is usually coercive and ethically unjustifiable. The big problem is that once a culture of fear is in place, it can easily become normalized, and virtually impossible to eradicate.

This article presents the first review of the culture of fear in the field of Education. To date, over 40 documents (in English only), with 30 different authors, have used the term "culture of fear" in the field of Education. The vast majority of these documents appear after 1995, approximately 10+ years later than the use of this term in the Social Sciences. Although, still a rare concept in educational discourse, evidence shows that there is a significant increasing trend of interest in the culture of fear concept and phenomena in the past few years in Education, especially since

9/11 and the popularizing influence of Michael Moores' film *Bowling for Columbine* (2002).

Three educational writers, Henry Giroux, Parker Palmer and R. Michael Fisher have been most influential in promoting an analysis of education from the perspective of the culture of fear notion. However, despite their efforts, little in depth analysis of the culture of fear appears in the documents studied. Educators have characteristically not defined the term, nor have they cited the extensive literature in the Social Sciences, the latter providing an in depth analysis of the culture of fear in political regimes and in popular culture. Educators have also not cited each others' writing on the culture of fear, and thus, the importance of the term and further collaborative research efforts have been largely neglected.

This paper suggests that "fear" itself has not been a subject of great legitimacy in the field of Education historically. Thereby, interest in the culture of fear has also been denied value as a construct and reality worthy of systematic investigation. Recent interest by educators in the culture of fear is a good sign that things are changing. Many authors, unanimously, pointed to the politics of fear as something that is negatively affecting the lives of students, teachers, administrators and entire communities living in a post-9/11 world. At the same time an economy of fear is of great benefit to many others. The challenge for educators in the future is to bring the best resources available on the culture of fear, from across disciplines, into the curriculum, pedagogy, and policies of Education as a field.

Unfortunately, most all of the documents in Education are much better at analyzing or pointing to the problem of the culture of fear, while they lack offering concrete solutions. Anonymous (2000) is one source that begins to provide a way to question and assess the culture of fear, based on Palmer's writing. More research, from an educational perspective, would be advised, so that an apoliticized psychological discourse on fear does not dominate the meaning of "fear," and does not reduce the problem of fear to individual biology, bodies and minds.

An integral curriculum of Fear Education would include a good understanding of the dynamics of the culture of fear, from across the disciplines of knowledge, and from popular culture. The greater the diversity of ways of knowing fear, from empirical to social constructionist means, the more likely we are to create a curriculum for our students that can truly undermine the culture of fear and its destruction of the quality of life.

Fear Education ought to be based on collaborative research, where those who are already working with fear more closely exchange their wisdom and research findings. An integral approach to the topic challenges us to not overly privilege any one method of fear management over another, but rather to look at the developmental and cultural appropriateness of applications and dissemination of information about fear and the culture of fear dynamics. Most importantly, a critical theoretical lens is required to ensure that functionalist or pragmatic means of dealing with the phenomena are not allowed hegemonic control of pedagogy and curriculum. With fear now becoming such a powerful force and discourse, in a post-9/11 world, teachers have to be cautious in using any information on fear because it is going to have political and economic agendas of various kinds behind it. Fear educators, unlike fear-mongers, are required to assess their own complicity in the

culture of fear, in order to offer their students the opportunities to emancipate themselves from the violent grip of the current era of Fear Wars.

End Notes

¹ Vinoba Bhave, is a revolutionary pedagogue and political-spiritual leader in India, and known in some circles as the "spiritual successor" to Mahatma Gandhi (according to Gandhi himself). Excerpts by Bhave are Retrieved from http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/resources_bhava.html

² Harry Coverston, from an e-mail listserve "DISC: Webpage for Bin Laden," June 28, 2002. Retrieved from <http://venus.soci.niu.edu/~archives/Abolish/aug02/1474.html>

³ Livingston (2002), p. 1.

⁴ Reynolds (2000).

⁵ M. Higgins, Parliamentary Debates, 1998, Parliament of Ireland. Retrieved from <http://www.gov.ie/debates-98/11feb98/sect2.htm>

⁶ See Fisher (2003, 2003a) for more in depth writing on this conception, as well as Fisher (2001a) on a proposal for 'Fear' Studies as a new field of inquiry.

⁷ The sociopolitical implications of this come down to the claim, by Furedi (2004), that "Our culture has fostered a climate [of fear] where the internal world of the individual has become the site where the problems of society are raised and where it is perceived they need to be resolved. This shift of focus from the social to the internal life of the individual has also led to a reorientation of intellectual life towards a preoccupation with the self. Since the self is defined through feelings, the state of emotion is often represented as the key determinant of both individual and collective behaviour. Social problems are frequently recast as individual ones [requiring "therapy"] that have no direct connection to the social realm" (pp. 24-25). This is a large cause for social moral degeneration and loss of civic strength and democracy, according to Furedi's in depth analysis.

⁸ Anonymous (2004). Nothing to fear but fear itself. Retrieved from <http://www.sirc.org/news/fear.html>

⁹ Excerpt retrieved from <http://www.teachers.org.uk/showwirearchive.php?id=1931984>

¹⁰ These results are from a scientific poll of 1009 adults conducted by Opinion Research Corp., International. There is a 'universal' consensus on this 90% response regardless of race, sex, age, income level and geographic location (de Becker, 1997).

¹¹ Excerpt from Institute for the Advancement of Teaching In Higher Education, Retrieved from <http://www.iathe.org/banffretreat/resources2.asp>

¹² Retrieved from <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/papers/newbarbarism.htm>

¹³ Taken from *New Republic*, 117(6), August 11, 1947, p. 10.

¹⁴ Brenda Firman, personal communication, November 30, 2000.

¹⁵ Retrieved from <http://www.spintechmag.com/ampersand/interview/hooks.html>

¹⁶ Early reports link this siege with Al-Qaeda terrorists and now "all schools" from Russia to America, are implicated as vulnerable "terrorist targets." The public fear grows everyday.

¹⁷ Excerpt from pp. 1, 4; <http://www.spiked-online.com/Articles/0000000CA6C3.htm>

¹⁸ Conference proceedings (2004) on "Fear: Its Political Uses and Abuses," available from *Social Science Research: An International Quarterly of the Social Sciences*, 71(4), Winter 2004. Other recent scholarly journal issues, for example, have focused on fear as the theme: "Fear Itself." *The Hedgehog Review*, Fall 2003, Vol. 5(3), a neo-Marxist critique in *Class and Capital*, 80, Summer 2003, "Fear and the City." *Urban Studies*, Vol. 38(5), 2001, and "Fear." *Bad Subjects: Political Education for Everyday Life*, 50, 2000, retrieved from <http://eserver.org/bs/ issues/>

¹⁹ Retrieved from <http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/Politics/PoliticalTheory/PoliticalPhilosophy/?view=usa&ci=0195157028>

²⁰ This is a claim of empirically-based terror management theory (TMT), which originated from the anthropological and philosophical scholarly work of Ernst Becker (1973, 1975), amongst others (see also Wilber, 1981).

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- ²¹ Other terms found in the educational literature have included: "culture of domination," "culture of incarceration," "culture of silence," or "culture of violence," to name a few.
- ²² I acknowledge that some researchers (Margold, 1999; Tudor, 2003) believe it is better to label cultures with "cultures of fear" rather than the broader universalizing term "culture of fear." The arguments are technical and in part dubious but beyond the scope of this paper.
- ²³ Course title: "Cultures of Fear: Introduction to Issues in Literature and Culture. English 105, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia (Dr. Fred Ribkoff, is now faculty at Kwantlen University College, BC).
- ²⁴ Numbers of documents come from a different search sample (13 months prior) than the one employed in the present paper.
- ²⁵ Guillermo O'Donnell and Cecilia Galli, respectively (cited in Corradi et al, 1992, p. 3).
- ²⁶ Remarkably, around the same time period "sociophobics" was being born amongst anthropologists, sociologists, and literary scholars in North America. Scruton et al. (1986) was the first and only sociophobics' publication on the topic of "the study of fear" as a "cultural phenomenon."
- ²⁷ Other than Fisher, Margold, Tudor.
- ²⁸ Authors who have used "culture of fear" are not always easily distinguished as writing in the field of Education and not all education or educators are restricted to Education. The rather arbitrary line of what documents were in Education was determined by their appearing in recognized professional Education indexes, periodicals, journals, books and/or in some way 'representing' a general educational statement for an educational institution or Faculty of Education. In other words, it is quite predictable that the 30 individuals here would identify themselves professionally as an educator and/or be dedicated to education before any other form of disciplinary practice.
- ²⁹ Giroux has published lots on "cultural politics" and education, but never has paid attention to Furedi, Glassner, Fisher, and those writing on the culture of fear. He was quick to grab the cultural platform (teaching moment) with 9/11 and the burgeoning more popular use of "culture of fear." In this author's view, his interest is purely for his own work, not the movement of critics writing about the "culture of fear" *per se*.
- ³⁰ Fisher (1998, 2000, 2001, 2001a, 2002, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004).
- ³¹ I've omitted my writing re: citation analysis, to give a more general and accurate assessment of the field of Educational publications overall.
- ³² From a talk entitled "Living Rightly," transcribed by C.J. Carley, Washington University. Retrieved from <http://www.spintechmag.com/ampersand/interviw/hooks.html>
- ³³ See Fisher (2004) for criteria and distinctions of the various major writers on this topic. Furedi, Giroux, and Glassner comprise this group of theorists.
- ³⁴ Couture (2004), pp. 22-23.
- ³⁵ Post 9/11 memorial speech by Martha C. Piper, President of The University of British Columbia, BC, Canada 2001-2002 Annual Report. Retrieved from <http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/annualreports/2002/president.html>
- ³⁶ See critique of the "education economy" by Ball (2000).
- ³⁷ See for example, Beck (1982, 1999); Best (1999, 2001); Giddens (1991).
- ³⁸ The degree of influence is difficult to measure, and beyond the scope of this study. Giroux has influenced many educators by his passion and sheer volume of work, while Palmer has influenced teacher training and his Chapter 2 on "The Culture of Fear" (1998) has influenced other documents (e.g., worksheets) and has been used in at least one university course as part of the reading list for an education course.
- ³⁹ This is not a direction I pursue in my own writing and theorizing.
- ⁴⁰ Similar to Massumi (1993), Sardello (1999) says that the current current of fear phenomena is far beyond "just a problem of individual psychology" (p. 166) and worst of all, "... we have become co-conspirators with fear without even knowing it" (p. 145). Writing from very different theoretical frameworks, both Sardello and Massumi argue that the "self" is transformed when fear penetrates into the

very essence of a person and their formation within the self/world complex. Educators have yet to tackle what this means and its implications for education in the future. Fisher (2004a) explains this in terms of culturally modified 'fear' and contiguously a culturally modified 'self' based in 'fear.'