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# Fearuality: Introduction to a Theoretical & Conceptual Breakthrough



R. Michael Fisher, Ph.D.  
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**Technical Paper No. 50**

In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute

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First Edition 2013

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

Printed in USA

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

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## Fearuality: Introduction to a Theoretical & Conceptual Breakthrough

- R. Michael Fisher,<sup>1</sup> Ph.D.  
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*Technical Paper No. 50*

**Abstract:** This is my first systematic publication on fearuality. It is the core conceptualization beneath all my other ventures to create 'Fear' Studies, fearology, and fearanalysis. For years, these methodologies have been my focus and I was yet ready to take on fearuality in a document. What I am ready to do now is show some of my biased interests in how to frame fearuality conceptually and theoretically. I present three frameworks to do this: **(a)**, and **(b)** a psychological theory, which I call a meta-motivational values template, and **(c)** a psychoanalytical theory I call matrixial learning theory. Immediately, you can see my rather eclectic transdisciplinary wandering here from politics to psychology to psychoanalysis of learning (i.e., education).

### Introduction

Although not the first time I had thought of a notion of human *fearuality*, the first time I performed it in public was during my doctoral research years (2000-03). I had created 70 small and rather spontaneous art collages of things I was picking up in the culture (i.e., mostly North America at the time) that had anything to do with fear and human beings in relationship.

These collages were like recordings. I called them "plates" and I was the anthropological-artistic-shamanic sensitive observer and transmitter of anything to do with fear onto the plate so it could be recorded for historical purposes--for potential benefit. So for example, an archeologist many years later might find these plates. I was thinking of burying them. And from the plates, would be able to tell something about what this particular culture at this particular time was going through in relation to fear. It occurred to me the umbrella term and topic the archeologist might use in studying the plates was *a study of human fearuality*.

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<sup>1</sup> Fisher is co-founder of In Search of Fearlessness Project (1989- ) and Research Institute (1991- ) of which archives can be found at <http://www.feareducation.com> (click on "Projects"). He is also founder of the Center for Spiritual Inquiry & Integral Education (<http://csiie.org>), and is Department Head at CSIIIE of Integral & 'Fear' Studies. He is a consultant, coach and teacher and principal of his own company (<http://loveandfearsolutions.com>). He can be reached at: [r.michaelfisher@yahoo.com](mailto:r.michaelfisher@yahoo.com).

The plates and my discipline of observation were meant to screen out nothing and reflect a rich and diverse "true" sense of the meaning and expressions of fear-human activity going on. Some of that activity was physical, some mental and symbolic, and some subtle and unknown but sensed.

I planned to show these plates in an art exhibition which eventually manifested in 2002 on campus in an art gallery in the student center. It was called *Platinum Fear: Plat du jour*. That title reflected that "fear" whatever we thought it was as some inside normal feeling or emotion was not containable to such a simple conceptualization, at least, not if you really looked at it in a transdisciplinary way outside of biology and psychology. Of course, 'fear' was inside and outside, above and below consciousness, real and symbolic and virtual.

The notion of platinum fear (also called 'fear' in my research<sup>2</sup>) is rather more constructed and often without feelings, but still sold and consumed. Fear was a commodity marketed like anything else. Scholars were talking about an affective economy and politics that needed to be analyzed, and my work on fear ('fear') was part of that larger body of Cultural Studies. Thus, I called the exhibition "plate of the day" (*plat du jour* in Fr.).

It was a successful show in demonstrating the complexity of which 'fear' is woven into the fabric of our culture, society, politics, economics, architecture and designs, our psyches and behaviors, institutions and policies that come from ruling bodies. I was also showing that 'fear' had become a sought-after commodity and was often used and misused without regulations, without ethics, without understanding of its negative consequences. Although, arguably, some really understood that it could be constructed to manipulate people to vote for them, to buy their product and to obey them.

The term "culture of fear" had arisen in the mid-1990s in North America and Europe, as critics were arguing this is a disturbing trend of cultural formation and power/knowledge/fear. Basically, 'fear' had become popular in all kinds of forms, in forms that you wouldn't even recognize were 'fear.' Examples of this are many, and beyond the scope of this more theoretical paper. Suffice it to say, if "sex" was popular, so was "fear" (especially, after 9/11). That connection of "sex" and all its constructions and consumptions and weavings into our total lives, all its uses by advertisers as sexploitation (for e.g.), was a connection I could not resist to make in the art exhibition. I had this notion of fearploitation lurking in the back of my mind. I thought of how pornography (exploitation of sex) was a big hit in the new digital mediated culture of the West and then thought about 'fear' pornography in how

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<sup>2</sup> To avoid a lot of references in the text, I recommend you visit my other publications which will fill in a lot of details behind what is in this technical paper. Go to free pdfs on my work at <http://csiie.org/mod/page/view.php?id=3>.

an industry (culture) was being constructed around fear, fear of fear, terror, horror, and all the hype and adrenalin, even sexiness of it. And with that all the equally bravado of "overcoming fear" and TV reality shows like "Fear Factor," were attempting to construct "fearless" people. These were symbolic 'winners' and 'heroes' of our Age of Fear, and thus were the Platinum successes-- like recordings of fear for consumers and making a lot of profit from it. Just like a musician would do with a music recording and sell it hoping to become a best-seller and platinum album.

To bring the fearuality concept to a serious fruition I looked at sexuality. It was obvious that sexuality was not delimited to sex (i.e., as in the biological condition nor the performance of intercourse and its erotic accompanying behaviors). Sex had become a symbol and signifier for power of attracting attention, seduction, pleasure and danger (e.g., transgression and taboo-breaking). The whole study of sex had to be framed in the largest sense and eventually become known as the study of sexuality. Michel Foucault wrote the great volumes (late 1970s-80s) on *The History of Sexuality* in the West. I had peaked at those books and liked his critical discourse analysis approach and transferred it to my own way of thinking about fear and the history of fear and fearuality as the broadest concept that would include all the dimensions from the real to the symbolic and beyond.

If you look up on Wikipedia on the Internet "*sexuality*" you will get a whole lot of information on a serious study of this phenomenon, and a branch of philosophy called *sexosophy* and branch of psychology called *sexology*. Today there are university courses and departments and centers specializing in *Sexuality and Gender Studies*. It's big serious stuff, as we humans attempt to systematically understand ourselves and who we are, how we are motivated, and in this case how we are motivated by sex and gender and what roles it plays?

Analogously, you'll see no such category in Wikipedia or anywhere, other than my own publishing, for "*fearuality*." You'll find no such attention to "fear" in the same popular or academic way as "sex and gender." In order to challenge people's conceptualization of "fear" (and 'fear') I decided to buy a first year university course textbook on "Sexuality" and then go through it and cross out the word "sex" and replace it with handwritten "fear," and same with "sexuality" by replacing it with "fearuality." I also re-made the cover of the book so as to show it was a textbook on "Fearuality." It was a stunning experiment to do that. It amazed me how the analogy was so accurate, and truly how we had been talking about sexuality easily fit for how we could talk about fearuality.

I left this adapted textbook on a stand in the gallery for people to look at if they wanted, while or after they were looking at all my fear-plates on the floor on a tablecloth. I was in the gallery for the whole week to talk to peo-

ple about my work. Only one out of hundreds that came to the art exhibition mentioned this book. They seemed embarrassed by it. They didn't know what to say but "that's interesting."

I was convinced that a notion of "fearuality," even for the very progressive and well-educated, is a difficult concept to digest. Yet, if you think of it as similar to sexuality, then it ought not be difficult. However, there definitely seems to be a taboo in our culture to take "fear" so seriously, even though likewise it was a long taboo to take "sex" so seriously and make it so public of a topic on the agenda of education itself. The topic "sexuality" is still extremely controversial across many sectors of W. society, and around the world, and the conflicts over what and how to teach it in public settings, in health centers, in schools, is very "hot." Should it be something private or public as a topic of knowledge? I predict, one day, that will be also the case with teaching the topic "fearuality." A lot of powerful forces and people wish to have "sex" and "fear" left in their definitions and meanings to one authority voice and we are merely to "believe" it and live by it.

Of course, that is starting to break down, as traditional power over the knowledge about sexuality and our lives in general is crumbling. Yet, we still have a long way to go to be free of those oppressive powerful forces. I envision the day such will be the case with "fear" and we will not be afraid to discuss and educate ourselves on our fearuality *and* our sexuality. And in fact, they really ought to go together in any good education, especially if we want to understand how we are motivated and excited, and how we perceive, think and behave within these domains of relationships to fear and sex, and that includes all the ways that culture (and politics) and our own psychology acts upon sex to create gender complexities in identity and other problematic issues, and likewise how culture (and politics) and our own psychology acts upon fear ('fear') to create fearual complexities in identity and other problematic issues.

My own post-doctoral research led to publications in which I proposed a transdisciplinary *'Fear' Studies, fearology, and fearanalysis*. These were containers and methodologies for studying fear ('fear') the way I thought it ought to be studied in a postmodern context. I was convinced that old fashion concepts of fear were badly outdated, even many of the new ones in neurobiology and psychology of fear were looking sexy and new but were very old and traditional (modernist). My proposed methodologies are all based on a conceptualization, radical and imaginative, which is to be called *fearuality*. I thus, wish to write the first paper on this latter topic and introduce a few theoretical frameworks I find useful to locate this work and perhaps inspire others to take it up in the future. I look forward to dialogue with anyone wishing to do so.

## Some Frameworks for Fearuality Studies

I am not ready in my own thinking to write the full-volume on *fearuality*. It will likely take many volumes. What I am ready to do is show some of my biased interests in how to frame fearuality conceptually and theoretically. I present three frameworks to do this: **(a)** a political theory that I call *DCFV theory* (Domination-Conflict-Fear-Violence), and **(b)** a psychological theory, which I call a *meta-motivational values template*, and **(c)** a feminine post-Lacanian psychoanalytical theory I call *matrixial learning theory*. Immediately, you can see my rather eclectic transdisciplinary wandering here from politics to psychology to the psychoanalysis of learning (i.e., education).

My aim is to touch on important aspects of my own thinking over the decade and to encourage a synthesis of these three frameworks, and eventually to include others. 'Fear' has morphed and continues to morph and change as do we as a species (and society) as does culture itself. Fear ('fear') is not immune or stable or fixed outside of these larger contextual shifting dynamics. That's my point of fearology and fearanalysis, and any postmodern (and integral) study of fear ('fear') today. The biggest problem is that fear is too often defined and made meaning of in very narrow (pre-modern and modern) contexts, thus it is reductionistic and distorted, because it is simplified to contexts that are relatively un-dynamic and un-evolving.

### **(A) Political Theory: DCFV Theory**

In Fisher (2000)<sup>3</sup> and Fisher (2000a)<sup>4</sup> I set out to study the ways that people teach about conflict and how to best resolve it. I found that the literature on this topic was very biased in ideological formation, and rather conservative to put it bluntly. I saw that such curricula on what I called *conflict management education* was designed to more or less maintain, not deeply question or challenge, the political and cultural structures of the status quo in which "conflict" was arising and attempting to be managed. In the end, I suggested that this dominating approach to conflict resolution was only leading to more conflict, not less. Later, in my dissertation years, I would construct a concept of *fear management education* and suggest the same problem could be found parallel to what I found in conflict management education. The teaching on fear and its management was creating more

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<sup>3</sup> Fisher, R. M. (2000). Toward a 'conflict' pedagogy: A Critical discourse analysis of 'conflict' in conflict management education. Unpublished thesis. Vancouver, BC: The University of British Columbia.

<sup>4</sup> Fisher, R. M. (2000a). Unveiling the hidden curriculum in conflict resolution and peace education: Future directions towards a critical conflict education and 'conflict' pedagogy. Technical Paper No. 9. Vancouver, BC: In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute.

fear not less. There was something flawed in the "design" and politics that goes with it.

It is best you read those conflict management education critiques in their own right, as they pose complex issues far beyond what I can enter into here. DCFV theory was my way to attempt a correction to the biased domination in the field of conflict and peace studies in general and conflict resolution specifically. No one in those fields who I sent my work to at that time was interested in what I was finding and suggesting about finding a "better" framework.

The basic idea of *Domination-Conflict-Fear-Violence* (DCFV) theory arose out of my graduate years because it was evident that looking at "conflict" (or "fear") outside of larger dynamics going on was really a reductionism of the complexity of conflict (or fear). And that was ultimately distorting of important truths. I also argued such dominating discourses contain their own violence of what they exclude. I suggested then, and now, that there was like a taboo against really knowing what *conflict and fear* were really all about. That is, a taboo unwritten and coded, near to fully unconscious in the culture and ends up reinforcing a "fear of conflict and fear" itself.

So, with such a fear pervading and shaping our very methodologies and understandings of conflict and fear was problematic, philosophically and politically. I hinted continuously, and still do, that political forces (powers), with their 'propaganda machines' (pretending to be educative) are out to ensure that we the public do not well understand what conflict and fear truly are. It serves those elites and their institutional power-based dominating systems to keep us, more or less, ignorant in this particular domain of knowledge and knowing. Or, at least, it appears this is to their benefit (probably, only in the short-term).

So, to ensure that a non-reductionist, non-distortive methodology and knowledge is gained, as good educative education (*contra* propaganda) requires that we ought to construct a theory of conflict (and fear) in a more critical and holistic fashion. Thus DCFV theory arose from all of what I was reading for those years in my Masters degree. The CF part of the theory is what I call the "guts" of the internal-soft and less visible dimensions (i.e., the conflictual and fearful). The D and V parts are the more visible, typically most obvious/dramatic (symptomatic) parts of the dynamic I was mapping out.

Here is the very barebones of the *DCFV theory*:

The darkest and destructive-side of human nature and the human condition is predicated (and somewhat predictable) based upon (at least) four major concepts (i.e., phenomenon). We can *best* under-



stand the complex evolutionary dynamics of human relationships (from couples to societies to the world) by starting with *Domination*, as that which involves one entity dominating and another subordinating to them (willing or unwilling and/or knowing or unknowing). Domination exists and *always* will (more or less) because it is part of human nature (and foundational in Nature and Culture itself<sup>5</sup>), which does not mean that there isn't also non-dominating (i.e., cooperative) strategies built-in to natural and cultural evolutionary relations. In this sense of reality therefore, there is no agenda to try to eliminate Domination, at least, the priority of DCFV theory as practices is not to put focus of attention and energy on such a purification project (even if it may be worthwhile for some to do so). Thus, DCFV theory defines the darkest and destructive-side of relationships when *oppression* occurs not domination. Oppression is defined according to the rest of the theory's explication. With Domination there will be Conflict, typically symptomatized and problematized originally by the subordinated position, although dominant-subordinate power differentials (i.e., relations) are very fluid (as Foucault<sup>6</sup> has shown), though not to reject somewhat stable systemic 'structures of power' also exist simultaneously. The real problem then, pragmatically, is *how is the conflict being engaged (i.e., managed<sup>7</sup>)?* If it is managed well, then Fear ('fear') will not be constructed. If it is managed poorly, then Fear ('fear') will grow and the cycle of oppression begins. If Fear is not managed well,

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<sup>5</sup> My encompassing kosmological theory here (a meta-theory) involves *Natural*, *Cultural*, and *Spiritual* domains-- of which are far beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>6</sup> The late-philosopher Michel Foucault, is our first postmodern thinker to re-frame and theorize power with great significance, and he was interested in not the typical "class" categories as the focus for power-differential relations but argued "Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain [linkages] It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in this position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application" (cited in McHoul & Grace, 1998, p. 89). McHoul, A., and Grace, W. (1998). *A Foucault primer: Discourse, power and the subject*. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Note, I am using "managed" in conflict management education and fear management education not in the sense of managerialism (as Foucault has defined it as an oppressive form of control), but I use it in the sense of evolution's strategy of self-regulation of all systems that is naturally built-in to adjust to certain conditions, exogenous and endogenous. Arguably, systems "manage" their systems and of course, with the Cultural domain this gets more complicated and messy and often oppressive managerialism that results but my point is to say management as a process doesn't have to result in that oppressive form of an 'ism.'

then Violence results and such violence will increase the Fear and toxify the phenomenal oppressive outcomes of the relationship dynamics (e.g., a cycle of violence). C and F become core critical zones of working through so as to both prevent and/or exacerbate oppression.

DCFV theory points to the critical importance of Fear ('fear') as a zone of fearual dynamics, and as a location for fearuality and how it is shaped and played out, how it is changed and transformed, developed and/or stifled. One way or another, if we don't have a good fearuality experience and education, it will not mature as a foundational part of all our relationship dynamics not only with humans but all entities called "the Other." Many post-modernists and postcolonial theorists today have directly pointed to the critical issue of "fear of the Other" and until we resolve that one, the scenarios of the human-planetary future are not pretty.

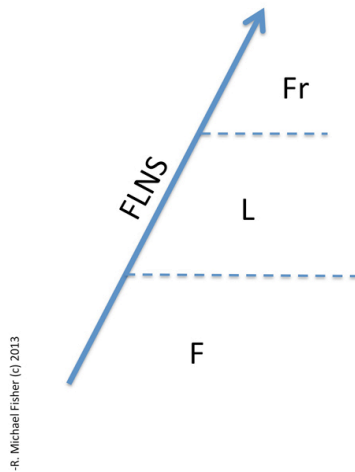
Theoretically, a growing healthy and maturing fearuality (like sexuality) leads to healthier non-violent, non-oppressive, loving relationships with all. That outcome is deeply a political one, as politics, at its foundations, is all about relationships of diversity, and the flow and distribution of power, and how we manage them collectively.

### **(B) Psychological Theory: Meta-motivational Values Template**

How can we talk about fearuality (or sexuality) without immediately inscribing our conversation and knowledge within what is the larger domain of the psychology of human motivation? I don't think we can. Sex and fear are motivational forces, that's a given. Sexuality and fearuality are deep, if not primal, sources of human perception, thought and action. From now on, I'm only going to focus on fearuality. Yet, in the model below, I will locate sexuality as well in relative position of its motivational primary role.

The following theory is meta-theory in terms of motivations (and values) and ought to explain and even categorize other less-encompassing theories of motivation. A good meta-theory guides us to a more holistic-integral picture of reality (at least in theory). It treasures the diverse plurality of many theories of realities and attempts to synthesize them to a unified theory. To this date, I have not done that work to support and validate this theory, more so, it is only a year old and I'm still working out the kinks. It is based on decades of reading and study in psychology and philosophy as well as many other fields, and is based also on my experiences and intuitions. The model or map below for the meta-theory of motivations and values offers a hierarchical (holarchical) approach that will be familiar to some readers as somewhat Maslowian (i.e., after Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation stages in the mid-1950s). However, the closer you examine my

theory, you'll see it has distinct differences and is much more complex than Maslow's, albeit, I am thankful to his work as well as Ken Wilber's<sup>8</sup> in deriving my own theory of meta-motivation.



The arrow is the first feature I wish to draw your attention to in this basic skeletal version, of a much more complex drawing (not for this paper).<sup>9</sup> It represents FEARLESSNESS (FLNS). This is the motivating spirit I focus on in a theory of fearuality. It is also a theory of Defense (Intelligence), which posits that organisms first and foremost must grow and develop defense systems and from their other major functions (e.g., reproduction) can take place. The hierarchical value built-in to living systems is defense, and for human beings I call this the *defensing being* part of our human nature. There is nothing wrong, in this sense, with a human being defensive, it is essential to the integrity of a cellular and organismic system, even in the sense that it has to defend-off the continual domination of entropy in the universe that decomposes life/energy into its simplest form by default.

Of course, defensing being can become skewed and pathological and "defensive" in an unhealthy and unsustainable way too. The manifestation of a healthy or unhealthy defensing being is going to be determined with what

<sup>8</sup> Any of the work of Ken Wilber's meta-theory called Integral Theory, will up-date you on my greatest influences for how I think about human consciousness, evolution and a kosmological foundation for it all.

<sup>9</sup> In more complex versions this arrow has its own levels of "consciousness" and in particular I think a fruitful theory along the arrow is to see it as a "line of fearlessness" much like developmentalists will study a "line of morality" or "line of cognitive" development. I had discussed this in a blog years ago, which is now erased (hacked into).

happens in the dynamics of F in the model above, which stands for FEAR. This is where I situate fearfulness of the organism. Often we will hear authors write and speak of the natural *fear* that evolution has built-in to our brains so as to help us detect and manage threats, danger, risk. Without it we would not survive, so they say. So that's how they define fear. You'll see I am expressing a larger (more radical) conceptualization of FEAR (and the other form of 'fear'). Without going into details on all this, I wish to show that this meta-motivational theory locates FEAR at the base foundation of all motivation. How well it grows and develops will determine what the next level of motivation L which is LOVE (and *loving being*) will turn out like. And so equally is the case, depending on how LOVE (where sexuality is situated) turns out then the next advance in motivation (values) is where FR, that is FREEDOM<sup>10</sup> will turn out.

This is a developmental and evolutionary model (over time). However, keep in mind that each level is always already existent as a deep structure, cosmic habit, or groove, depending on how you want to talk about them. Any new individual born has to negotiate first FEAR level, then LOVE level, then FREEDOM level, and the driving engine of all of that is FEARLESSNESS (as the path and transport station, if you will for the climb up the spiral of growth and development, that is, of evolution of consciousness). I call it the "*spirit of fearlessness*" in my book.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the simplified way I often speak about the dynamic we ought to be heading in life is "From Fear to Fearlessness."

What do I mean "From Fear to Fearlessness"? The most obvious picture shown above would rather say: from Fear to Love to Freedom. True. That would be more cumbersome to say and would leave out the term (and phenomena) of Fearlessness. So, in practical terms, there are several points I am making in this meta-motivational (values) theory, and first is that there is a template built-in to all of us, in soft and hard structures, which is a values-template that has motivational drive forces. The anatomy looks like the above diagram (obviously only a schematic simplified and imagined one here). The template records from the moment of conception a set of complex relations (linkages) to the Mother and Womb environment. The relationship dynamics of Mom-Child-Womb (We-I-It perspectives<sup>12</sup>) to

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<sup>10</sup> "FREEDOM" in this use is the "Spiritual" sphere, which politics is interested in but also are the religions of the world, where spiritual enlightenment is often seen as the highest freedom of all. Of course, this is a condition, more or less, "free of fear" as many talk about.

<sup>11</sup> Fisher, R. M. (2010). *The world's fearlessness teachings: A critical integral approach to fear management/education for the 21st century*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

<sup>12</sup> I put these perspectives in because that is another way of talking about the same thing, more abstractly, and it fits the Integral Theory of Ken Wilber's model of

Fear, Love, and Freedom are being *recorded* on the template that will determine greatly the motivational dispositions of the child (self).

Second, and I want to focus on *fearuality* here, and Fear is the foundational<sup>13</sup> level of motivation and values (i.e., defending being). The dictum I use is that *when fear arises so then does fearlessness*. Fearlessness is the self-regulating spirit that works to adjust the entire motivational system of the organism to not stay in fear (FEAR, or 'fear') for very long.<sup>14</sup> The theoretical basis for this is the principle many researchers have argued exists, called *homeostasis*. I won't go into the complications of all that and its problems as the only theory for self-regulating living systems. But you get the jist of the meaning of the dictum (representing an evolutionary logic): *when fear arises so then does fearlessness*.<sup>15</sup> But we still are needing to answer the "From Fear to Fearlessness" path that I believe is so important to point out in the diagram.

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development and reality. In that all holon systems have (at least) these three major perspectives, all important together to maintain system integrity/health/ sustainability.

<sup>13</sup> If I had more space, I would argue that Freedom is more significant, and that the entire model (and fearlessness itself) runs from foundational to significance. These two terms are very useful to distinguish, as Ken Wilber does in his Integral Theory. Without these distinctions, we fall into nasty problems of which is "better" as a stage or set of values at a particular stage in this hierarchical model. Again, this is too complex to entertain further here.

<sup>14</sup> Many motivational psychologists and social psychologists have claimed that their are two motivational pathways in the primal foundations of the living system and one is moving toward Maintenance and the other toward Growth, and the system has to negotiate those (oppositional) tendencies in order to function; either extreme of the dual motivation (bipolarity) will cause pathologies, they argue and I agree--referred to as a "dialectical spiral of meaning and value construction" (Pyszczynski et al., 2011, p. 391)--also found in Spiral Dynamics integral theory (see Pyszczynski, T., Greenberg, J., and Arndt, J. (2011). Freedom versus fear revisited: An integrative analysis of the dynamics of the defense and growth of self. In M. Leary and J. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of self and identity* (2nd ed.) (pp. 378-404). NY: Guildford.

<sup>15</sup> I caution readers to a simple logical deduction from this dictum that ontologically would locate *fearlessness* as a derivative of *fear*-- a far too common assumption I read in the literature, often expressed as "one doesn't have courage without fear" and thus we don't want to try to eliminate fear, it is positive and natural, because it produces *courage* (and, in my way of theorizing, courage is one form of many of the spirit of fearlessness--all of which, one way or another are attempting to manage fear). Be very cautious of the popular dictum "Without fear we wouldn't have courage." That is not at all what my own theory of fear and fearlessness (in the above diagram) points to.

I'm getting to answer that, but thirdly, the diagram (theory) points out that there are different, distinct, but interrelated stages of meta-motivation, FEAR, LOVE, FREEDOM. The theory says, without these distinctions and their hierarchical unfolding understood and taken into account, we will not manage motivation period very well, either in ourselves, in our collectives, or as a motivational expert and educator. My profession (as fearologist) is centered on educating people and systems better about fearuality. That means they have to understand FEAR as a critical foundational stage to their fearuality and that that learning leads to the better-side of the development of LOVE (sexuality, as one part of this, but also caring, loving, compassion, etc.).

The theory points out, that we make a lot of mistakes in the realm of motivations (especially today) because we are obsessed with Love (loving) as the foundation of human motivation and solution to everything. It is not, according to this model. Love is the middle stage only.

The theory I present says that we won't get the level Love right if we don't have the level Fear right, to put it in rather gross terminology. We cannot do well in the higher stages of meta-motivation and their attendant values at each stage, if we don't do the fearuality developmental work (often it is today correctional work). This leads to my initiative of "From Fear to Fearlessness." What has happened, a long story, is that FEAR has been hijacked by LOVE, again to use a coarse-grained narrative. We are bypassing the essentials of a deep and healthy relationship to our fearuality and that messes up our sexuality among the other aspects of LOVE stage. Recall, that the FEAR stage is our defending being, our Defense Intelligence (and place of ensuring organismic security; many think LOVE does that, but that is not totally accurate and is part of how a LOVE interpretation hijacks the lower more primal survival Defense Intelligence system; there are equally good parts of the brain specialized for each of these<sup>16</sup> and validate what my own theory of meta-motivation is claiming).

I am calling for a rehabilitation of the stage of FEAR, and thus fearuality so as to get us back on the primary motivating spirit/engine of motivation in general and that is to get us back on the path of listening to and being

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<sup>16</sup> I am referring to Paul McLean's "triune brain" concept and theory, where the Reptilian evolutionary part of our brain and intelligence is near the brain stem and lower parts of the skull--these would be at the FEAR stage of meta-motivation; and the Mammalian part of our brain and intelligence, at the LOVE stage and involves feelings and empathy, etc. The forebrain is the Human thinking part of our brain and intelligence and is more at the FREEDOM stage. Remember that the oldest brain with the longest experience and history of survival (is the "elder") is the Reptilian brain (i.e., stage of FEAR, or what I call the basis for operating a *risk-fear ecology*).

guided ethically by FEARLESSNESS. It is only FEARLESSNESS that is the joining/integrating mechanism, if you will, for the health of the entire meta-motivational complex, all the way up to FREEDOM, which is always pulling on us, and pulling on us to move away from pathological fear ('fear')-- that is, an immature, distorted, and often pathological fearfulness.

So, realigning not with LOVE is the solution I present and which this theory predicts. Realigning with FEARLESSNESS is the critical correction first and foremost, then we can re-calibrate how Love and Freedom get negotiated and developed. And today, Freedom is often very twisted and pathological, for example in terrorist-based "freedom fighters" and terrorist-based counter-terrorism by States which present themselves as "freedom defenders." Be very cautious of the pursuit of *freedom* and *love* these days.

The criticality of the developmental-evolutionary model I present here is obvious. Be very cautious of what others are trying to tell you about motivations at all stages, and one of the reasons is that the stages themselves have been hi-jacked and dissociated largely from the spirit of fearlessness. I cannot go into this in more details, but you may now see at least why I wrote an entire huge volume on the world's fearlessness teachings for my first large book.

### **(C) Feminine Post-Lacanian Psychoanalytical Theory: Matrixial Learning Theory**

This third strand of my presentation in this paper is by far the most difficult to get hold of and apply. It is my newest thinking as well and so this explanation here is necessarily tentative, if not awkward.

The concepts (theories) of the *feminine* and *matrixial* are crucial, because up to this point, the other strands of informing fearfulness have been rather masculine and phallic conceptualizations and theories. Such masculine and phallic lenses are not bad in and of themselves, but because they have (arguably) been so dissociated from the feminine and matrixial paradigms for so long,<sup>17</sup> it is inevitable they are riddled with pathology. The masculine and phallic are typical of patriarchal culture's of knowledge/power/fear, and I am a man and live in such a culture, many critics today are calling a "culture of fear."

Therefore, it is not at all surprising to me our motivational theories are permeated with the very masculinist, phallogocentric, male-dominated views.

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<sup>17</sup> If we take the work of Marija Gambutus, and interpretations from Riane Eisler, this dissociation is some 5000 years in the Western world of civilizations and cultures.

Most motivational theorists are men of this culture and persuasion, whether they know it or not. Instead, I am presenting something very radical, very primal and foundational and that puts us in the zone of FEAR (but not in the typical way of thinking about fear).

You likely hear a feminist theory critique in all of this section for the first time, and that is true. Again, there is no space to go into all the nuanced discussion of what is feminine, feminist, womanist, and matrixial. I can only offer a brief grazing of surfaces to help elucidate the point I am making--and that is, that we need this third strand (at least) to have a good meta-motivational theory for human beings and a good understanding of fearuality. In many ways, this section won't make a lot of sense if you don't take off the masculine lens, and attempt to see motivation through a feminine lens. Ideally, we want both lenses, but the masculine (rationalistic) lens is so dominant, we need a strong 'turn' to the feminine lens to barely come out from under the entire conceptual, theoretical systems of the masculine and patriarchy (which, arguably, continue to have a 'thin' and 'distortive' if not demeaning attitude of the feminine).

The main theorist I draw upon, with her vast amount of writing, art, and lectures, is the psychoanalyst Bracha L. Ettinger. She is slowly becoming known for her powerful matrixial theory of subjectivity (i.e., which includes but is not limited to self-identity, self-concept, self-esteem). It is fundamentally a relational theory, not an individual self-psychology theory<sup>18</sup>.

The mother-child-womb dynamic (especially before birth) is the affective ontological ground foundation for matrixial theory. I also want to note that Ettinger arrived at the theory from her artworking (arational) processes as a painter primarily. Her psychoanalytic theory study and teaching, her practice as a psychoanalyst, also inform matrixial theory. They are all about relations with 'Other'; and relations of care, compassion, and healing. I recommend you look up Ettinger's work on Wikipedia and other sources, for I will not direct you to any one of her works at this point. Hopefully, the following will guide you into this, accompanied at times by the work of the art historian and critic Griselda Pollock, who is the articulate interpreter-scholar extraordinaire of Ettinger's tome.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ettinger calls it a theory based on development as *copoiesis*, rather than *autopoiesis* (the latter, the pre-dominant theorizing today).

<sup>19</sup> Since the first moment I read Ettinger's work, over 2.5 yrs ago, I told friends that she will be the next 'Freud' in terms of grand impact on society, but only if we eventually study and understand her work and its importance, instead of repress it. Time will tell. Pollock and Ettinger see matrixial theory as post-Lacanian, and that refers to the branch of psychoanalysis led by the late psychoanalytic theorist Jacques Lacan, which was post-Freudian. Basically, the big guys in psychoanalytic theory have not well understood the feminine (matrixial base of reality).



### ***Psychoanalysis & Fearanalysis***

I have always struggled with the expansive vocabulary required to read and understand the subtleties of psychoanalysis. I am not trained in it. I also don't think it has all the answers, nor is the only important wave of the four-to-five waves of psychology.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, it has grown slowly to be one of my favorite, foundational psychological theories to draw from to understand fear ('fear') and fearuality.

For near a decade I have seen the importance of psychoanalysis as 'rooted' and a primal psychology of interpretation, that looks at the predominant aspects of one's psychological make-up that is determined heavily by parental influence and the cultural assumptions and values in which those parents transmit to the child more or less. It is the first psychology to really understand oppression and repression dynamics and the dynamics of the unconscious and conscious, and this is foundational material and keeps a political resonance to its findings. I labeled my own critical analytic work as *fearanalysis* in the same vein, although with obvious differences in that I don't focus just on parent-child relations, or culture or dreams and sexuality.

The sexuality focus, certainly for Freud, in psychoanalysis cannot be overlooked. I am convinced it is a big-piece of the puzzle to explain human motivation and many of the outcomes arising in and around our sexuality development. Fearanalysis is one methodology I use and it is based on a conception of fearuality.

Psychoanalysis is a psychology of encounter-events in the primal and early stages of life. Unfortunately, most of it is based on the dynamics of that which goes on after the child leaves the womb, and Ettinger focuses on when the child is in the womb (for approx. 9 mo.). That is a key time of all of our lives, and it is the most universal experiences we share with one another and thus, it has the potential to be a matrixial gaze upon the human condition, rather than the phallic gaze that predominates after the "phallic cut" of the child's entry into patriarchal culture and the masculine Symbolic world of words/language (as Lacan called it).

Matrixial theory says that we are intimately born in two-ness right up to the birth and cutting of the umbilical cord. It says we develop a matrixial set of

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<sup>20</sup> The psychological community in academia has identified the four waves of psychology (in somewhat of a developmental order) as: Psychoanalysis, Behaviorism (now cognitive-behaviorism), Humanistic (including existential) and Transpersonal, while some, including myself have called the fifth wave Integral. Unfortunately, there is an important new branch called Critical psychology which everyone seems to be leaving out of the waves, because it is the most radical politically.

senses, ways of perceiving, feeling, aesthetics,<sup>21</sup> thinking and communicating all in the context of the womb, and this invisible relationship of a non-I (the baby) to an I (the mother). This is about a relationality of strangeness in the sense of neither the baby nor the mother see each other in womb time (excluding the ultrasound photos). Yet, such a compassion is formed, as Ettinger argues in this time and sets the template for all further relations, if the template is not severely damaged or discarded (forgot).

The "fear of Other" from a matrixial standpoint, perspective, is a non-subject and odd notion. There is no such relationship foundationally in the mother-child-womb dynamic, other than some fear that is placed around pregnancy and birth and traumas around the mother's life, but there is no foundational "fear of the Other." This matrixial material is what I would call the early-stage platform of LOVE in the meta-motivational model earlier.

The healthy matrixial template is a condition of "no fear" (as I have argued in my book). I am speaking now from the child's point of view. If there is stressors put onto the child physically and through the blood stream, and subtle energies picked up by the fetus of the mother's fear and the culture's fear, the child fetus processes it fluidly and flexibly in most cases-- meaning that FEARLESSNESS is totally working well and full-stream, thus what could be called the condition before birth as "no fear" (one of the several forms of fearlessness).

This matrixial template is the template thus not only for LOVE (in the early sub-stages of that stage) but it is the template for "fearless" which is the highest possible form of FEARLESSNESS, which would occur at the end or near end of the arrow's top point in the diagram earlier. Of course, fearless is a much more developed and matured capacity of fearlessness than no fear in the womb. They are far apart in the dimension of time, evolution and experience. But they have a similarity, and that is, they are not fear-based paranoid orientations (paradigms). They are operating well beyond fear and its effects and affects, and beyond 'fear' as well because the culture has not had the chance to construct 'fear' patterning in the child very well as long as it is protected in the womb and also does not have a "self" vs. "Other" consciousness (dualism) yet. There is little to no 'fear'-based conditioning for one who has reached FREEDOM and the fearless standpoint either, because culture's influence has been healed through and transcended to a large degree on their journey.

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<sup>21</sup> I am particularly interested in the work of the psychoanalyst-theorist Christopher Bollas and the aesthetic template he argues is developed in these early stages of life before the child uses word-symbolic-language (as we know it).

Ettinger's theorizing is very clear to posit that the phallic gaze/orientation, and paradigm for living in the world is primarily fear-based (she'll also talk about them being guilt-based and shame-based)--all because of the vast amount of trauma that comes from the post-natal post-womb world.

Babies eventually, more or less, get hurt and oppressed, and suffer. Freud knew this and so did all the psychoanalysts and they wanted to know how that traumatic experiencing influenced and shaped the individual's psyche and functioning mentally. How did it lead to pathologies (e.g., mental disorders)? Fearfulness is also part of all this complexity. The role of fear and the way it is shaped and interpreted by all players, by the culture, by politics, by the biological psyche and by experiences in relationships, including the environmental contingencies of one's development. The way fear becomes pathological is critical to our fearfulness. Also, Ettinger says historical trauma (like the Holocaust) affect and connect as 'strings' of subtle communications and feelings across generations, and will influence the sensitive child, especially once it leaves the womb if it is a Jewish child. Then there is what some call adultism<sup>22</sup>, and I am a strong advocate for that category of oppression to be added to sexism and other influences that shape the sexuality and fearfulness of human motivation.

What Jean Laplanche argued as a recent psychoanalytic theorist, according to Pollock,<sup>23</sup> is that art, dreams and other arational processes are extensions and containers for processing primal fantasies as interpretations of psychic material (often traumatic fear-based material and energies). We need to work through these to heal and transform them so the fear involved in them does not become overly conflictual, destructive, toxic, and dissociative. Laplanche, like Freud, reminds us of what the child has to encounter, as it comes into the womb and then into the world and is bombarded, more or less, by all the unprocessed primal fantasies that are repressed and not worked through by adults around us (including the cultural climate of fear as well). This is incredibly demanding on the child's psyche, just as it is demanding when the child has to encounter its own "sex" and "sexuality" (i.e., gender partitioning) along cut and dry lines like either male or female, so which are you going to be. For a child who has no idea what that means symbolically, conceptually, nor is able to reflect on it and communicate the conflictual aspects with a parent or therapist, there are enormous pressures on the child's self-regulating system to handle all this oncoming material.

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<sup>22</sup> The child psychiatrist and critical thinker Alice Miller has written extensively on this "poisonous pedagogy" (fear-based child-rearing) that is so pervasive.

<sup>23</sup> Pollock, G. (2011). What if art desires to be interpreted?: Remodeling interpretation after the 'encounter-event.' *Tate Papers*, 15.

Psychoanalysis has thus focused often on this problem of how a child negotiates the tensions and taboos around sexuality located in the parents and culture at large. Now, add to that negotiation the more foundational negotiation of fear ('fear') and fearfulness and how one is supposed to behave. One example I thought of was the problem of negotiating one's "mother's fears" as I know myself was huge for most of my life and it occupied a lot of my attention and cost a lot in therapy as well. This all affected my life trajectory and has its up and down sides. That shaping of my life was based on my fearfulness, not that I knew it at the time I was doing all that processing.

To close this discussion, the major point that matrixial theory points us to is a healthy fearfulness at core, where mother-womb-child is one of the safest environments a human will ever experience, and yet, at the same time it is not risk-free, and this is especially so during the birthing process itself, especially if the process is not a "natural birth" paradigm but rather a fear-based mechanistic and medical (masculinist) one--the latter, critique made by many midwives, doulas and other natural birth advocates and feminists for decades. Matrixial theory asks that we take into account the experiences and philosophical thinking, as well as the research that comes from the natural birth (mother) movement. Arguably, it is the most attuned to primal level matrixial psychology, and it is the most adamant that human reproduction totally (including sexuality) ought not be built on a fear-based paradigm.

#### **A FEW WRAP-UP THOUGHTS**

Why is the fear-based paradigm so prevalent then in general, and it starts with contemporary birthing knowledge, practices and policies of the "Authorities"? Why? Because we haven't yet understood the fear psychology of the entire pedagogical matrix of our Western society and its history and discourses that continue to dominate and shape everything we do, including our motivations and values. Theoretically, a psychoanalysis of the stage of FEAR needs to be done with everyone. But first you have to acknowledge fearfulness (i.e., the stage of FEAR) is primal, and if messed up, it will mess up the later developmental stages of sexuality (i.e., the stage of LOVE). I don't know of anyone, even the natural (mother) birthing movement theorists who have figured this out yet. That's why, from the start, I believe the arriving at the concept of fearfulness, theorizing around it, is truly a breakthrough in understanding human motivation and all the outcomes that come from that.

Of course, time will tell how much of a breakthrough this is, or if it is even so. Again, I welcome dialogues on this. We all have a lot to learn from each other. In general, I believe the most important way to advance our understanding and methodologies around the relationship of fear and humans, is

to think of how we understand and study the relationship of sex and humans. We need a new fear management/education that begins with a concept of fearuality. I have found this to be very freeing of all the old patterns and habits of thinking about fear. It gives us a little more distance from a "scary" and "hot" topic in the culture. It gives us a way to transgress the taboos around knowing about sex and fear and all the conflict that goes with this, and all the oppression-repression that perpetuates our ignorance and sometimes arrogance. I think our arrogance is a form of 'fear' itself, and the most dangerous, as I often hear it (more or less) expressed as a critique of fearology work: "*I don't need to learn anything more about fear, I already know enough.*"

Finally, my presentation and bringing forth the critical concept of *spirit of fearlessness*, and the dictum of *when fear arises so then does fearlessness*, is the 'arrow' in the diagram above that is the only way I believe to really stay on track and to mindfully excavate our meta-motivational layers. Again, most of that writing is in other publications. May the spirit of fearlessness be with you!

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