Fearlessness Psychology:
An Introduction

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In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute
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Abstract

The author tells of his resistances to and his love of “psychology” since his youthful years until the present. He sets up the most basic (inadequate) starting place for his new psychology or psychology in a ‘new key’ by placing his inquiry and explorations upon the reference of an “Indigenous Perspective” (or worldview). He calls this “fearlessness psychology” of which it immediately by name alone challenges that most all other psychologies available to humankind are fear-based in their conceptualization and in their offerings and thus no wonder the Fear Problem continues to blossom. He lays out the problematics of all he is doing here and claims that his entire exposition in this technical paper is necessary to go through—he believes it will communicate itself with a wider audience because of this—but his critical philosopher-self is constantly critical of just about everything he sets out—and, yet, there’s no room in this introductory paper to deal with all his philosophical critiques of his own work (and others). This he suggests, a conflictual tension throughout the paper, is probably a really good way to proceed creating a new psychology—which, he wishes he didn’t have to call a psychology per se. With that, the author proceeds to engage a fascinating array of ideas that potentially will change

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the way “Psychology” is conceived in the first place. The future, if it is to be at all healthy, sustainable and sane, ought to take this Fisherian path and the sooner the better. For it is worth, an improved universal ethical referent is needed, says the author and fearlessness psychology is one way to nourish that imperative and transformative option. A better wisdom and compassion, he argues is likely a consequence of this new psychology—which is not really a psychology.

Preamble: Philosophy Meets Psychology

In recent years I have particularly been aware of using terms like “philosophy” and “psychology” and especially when I talk about fear/fearlessness dialectical relations. The latter is my expertise. The disciplines of Philosophy and Psychology are not my expertise nor my situated field of study. Yet, I believe from 1989, with the founding of the In Search of Fearlessness Project as counterhegemonic to the dominating ‘Fear’ Project on this planet, that I was constructing some kind of philosophy of fearlessness—and, secondarily, some kind of psychology of fearlessness. Yes, likewise, I was involved implicitly, and theoretically, in what I thought was some unique offering on a philosophy of fear and psychology of fear. As I honed this work and realized I could not study “fear” from only a discipline, not even from a few, it was certain that “fearology” would be born under my imaginary as transdisciplinary. I have written much on this already, which I will not repeat here.

The arising field of Psychology, unfortunately, is so amazingly powerful in dominating much of the Western world (but beyond as well). It has political, economic, and religious implications, never mind how it impacts our day-to-day relationships and life. I certainly know much of the “findings” in that field but I have not chosen to specialize in it, albeit, I often wished I would have—as “fear” (an emotion or feeling) is so immediately grasped and held in the securities of the field of Psychology. I wanted from the start of my scholarly pursuit to free “fear” from the grip of Psychology—but in the explorations I took, it was also obvious that Psychology grew out of Philosophy (and somewhat distantly out of Theology and religions). So, one can also find a significant body of philosophical work on emotions (with “fear” being one of them²). None of this work I found adequate to my sense of what needed to be revealed in the evolution of consciousness on

² I fundamentally disagree “fear” is just one other emotion like all the others named by these philosophers and psychologists and theologians.
the topic of “fear” (and fearlessness). Yes, note, I take a developmental-evolutionary perspective on my studies (which I’ll explain later in this paper).

So, goes the story of my journey on the edge-of-the-edge of the mainstream and disciplines of thought. I also find my thinking is on the-edge-of-the-edge of common sense and general populist thinking about these topics—so, it is not surprising that I (the radical) eventually labeled myself “in exile”—as a citizen, critic, researcher, therapist, and teacher in regard to this most powerful of all human experiencings—the fearing experience. I was all along, and still am, without a conceptual ‘home’ to stand and sit in—to work from. It’s been an insecure and unknown journey for me that’s for certain. Constantly, I am under subtle (and not so subtle) attacks from those who don’t understand me and/or don’t want to understand me. Knowledge/power, said Foucault, shaped discourses on everything in history, and I agree. No more powerful is there a politics of knowledge/power that revolves around, and is in competition with, ‘how best to know fear.’” And, all that is about ‘how best to manage fear.’ It’s a hot topic.

Some six months ago, I thought it was time to write this book (another one of many not finished) on the topic of my “Philosophy of Fearlessness” (or Fearlessness Philosophy)—but it did not seem to go too far. I was not satisfied with many things about it and it was such a huge project to take on and I didn’t feel ready. This would have been a way more focused book than my tome The World’s Fearlessness Teachings (Fisher 2010). Many things shifted and my thinking took to conceptualizing something more manageable, which I thought would be much more effective for the world—that is for an audience.

Psychology seemed more popular for sure—and Philosophy much less marketable. I didn’t want this book to go by the way-side like so many of my manuscripts have. That was the rather practical solution I came up with—write a Fearlessness Psychology text. Soon, I realized my inner critical integral philosopher didn’t like just about everything of how I was starting to think and write about this ‘new psychology.’ However, thankfully, my inner philosopher agreed that the world really needs it but—so many problems exist in actually developing it—even at the ideas-level never mind a praxis. I won’t articulate all that mess in this Technical Paper. I merely want you to know that I disagree with lots of what I am about to write—but write it I must. There is some necessary function to me working out my thoughts on fearlessness psychology and also to having it be more understandable for a wider audience—at least to begin to introduce my
basic views on a ‘better’ psychology for the 21st century. I think it could be labeled a “sixth force” psychology (see Fisher, 2010a) to have evolved on the planet.

A Fearlessness Psychology, barely taking shape at this point, is actually well-ingrained in nearly everything I have ever thought and written about fear and fearlessness for 30 years. It is part of my bones and blood, so to speak. All my philosophical and psychological views on “love” equally are saturated in a fearlessness psychology. No wonder so rare I find a soul that has really ever understood my thinking on “love.” Nor my thinking on fear/fearlessness. But that’s another side-tracking story. So, in that sense fearlessness psychology, is already—ready and willing in my theories—and in my teachings. But, it is still not clear enough articulated for me or my readers. I want to give more effort to focus on this project. It is open-ended and in-progress. Your feedback is welcome.

Let me start by admitting my most fundamental assumption (hypothesis, theory)... and that is, our current (W.) Psychology, psychologies, and psychological thought and ways of being (including therapies) are sadly and insidiously fear-based (more or less). They thus, do more harm at times than good in terms of their participation in the ‘Fear’ Project (‘Fear’ Matrix3). They are constructed upon a matrix net of fear-based thinking and a worldview, Four Arrows calls the “Dominant Worldview,” which is what most all us Westerners have been born and raised into—and carry its mandates out into the world like a ‘fish swims in water’ (typically) without questioning and critiquing enough the essence of what that Dominant Worldview consists of.

If one hasn’t studied in depth and experienced the contrasting worldview(s) to the Dominant, then there are not legitimate grounds for much of a critique of the Dominant. Albeit, a lot of what has happened in a good direction (in part) has been importing Eastern philosophies and worldviews to challenge the Western,4 ever since the 1960s especially. However, something more than just Eastern by contrast is needed, I believe, and so do a lot of other postcolonial critics. In a recent book on Four Arrows’ life and work, he and I more or less conclude that the Western Dominant Worldview consists of.

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3 I have written about these topics elsewhere and won’t repeat them here.  
4 Some of this challenge also came from “feminist,” “mystical,” “esoteric,” and “spiritual” writings from all around the globe. I too, believe this is not good enough for the full reevaluation and corrective needed today in the Dominant Worldview. I won’t be able to go into my arguments around this in Technical Paper 79 but perhaps will write about this critique I have of “spirituality” in the future.
Worldview (in opposition to the Indigenous Worldview) is fear-based (Fisher, 2018). Now, that’s where one really wants to take a serious look at what is going on. I’ll return to this theme, under the title I like to give to the great dramatizing and conflict going on—that is, the Indigenous-Western-Encounter (IWE).

Introduction

Worldwide, there are probably 50+ types of named/categorized psychologies (e.g., cognitive-behavioral, developmental, psychoanalysis, neuro-, industrial, organizational, social, existential, critical, depth, ego-, humanistic, evolutionary, transpersonal, integral, spiritual, etc.). No one to date has coined “fearlessness psychology.” I will argue why the time has come for such a psychology to help us as a species in the 21st century. I’ll share some bits of what this psychology actually ‘looks like.’ However, there will be far less to satisfy in terms of a complete picture of fearlessness psychology and worse, there’ll be no ‘instruction book’ feeling to any of this. That’s a ways down the line in development.

As I said above, right off the top, my position is that fear (and fearism-t) have to be central to any human psychology in order for that psychology to be truly useful to an emancipatory aim. By emancipatory, or liberational, I am going to suggest that “fear” is essential to give sufficient attention to in the quest to better understanding human nature, human condition, human potential and existence and beyond that, to understanding fearlessness, and the movement from fear to fearlessness (as telos) in outcomes--this is core to a healthy, sane and sustainable society.

Background Context

If you follow any of my publications and teaching since late 1989, you’ll see that I have promoted a counterhegemonic movement called “In Search of Fearlessness Project” (later called “Fearlessness Movement”) as a means to organize itself to challenge and undermine the ‘Fear’ Project, the latter which dominates and toxifies the planet. I will not repeat all that background here. It is arguable, that even though I had studied many disciplines of knowledge, had many career tracks, and had been a life-long learner before 1989, there was a ‘gap’ that I intuited in human understanding. I felt

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5 Fearism (and fearism-t) are concepts that readers ought to check out because they articulate in a criticalist way everything I am saying here (see e.g., Fisher & Subba, 2016).

6 It is a worthy debate if one could apply a fearlessness psychology to all creatures.
it was so significant that unless we ‘fix’ the problem of this ‘gap’ in our knowledge and practices, our species and many others would become extinct before too long. The ecological and human crises, I saw when I was a teenager and young 20s person, were always the background of all my post-secondary schooling. They formed the context of meaning for my own existence and became a concern and purpose for my life. But it was not until the jolting awakening in late 1989 did I realize that fear and fearlessness would be central to my research and search for solutions to that ‘gap.’

I ‘loved’ psychology from the beginning, and I learned from all kinds of psychologies and schools of thought. But it was the great insight of Ken Wilber, integral philosopher and psychological theorist (of the “fifth force”), that articulated a powerful theory that *all psychologies*, that had developed and were coined, were more or less specifically emergent from a particular *level of consciousness* (on a spectrum of multiple levels or stages of evolution) and were designed/meant to solve the problems of that level of consciousness, from simple and primal to more complex and mature forms. He referred to this, as have some others as a post-postmodern *spectrum* psychology (or later, *Integral Psychology*)—of which I have drawn much of my own views for decades. Again, I won’t go into that here as it is detailed, more or less, in nearly all of my prior publications.

What Wilber and others since have argued is that when psychology becomes *psychologism*, that is when Psychology becomes a (pathological and ideological) problem itself. It becomes typically arrogant, and this can happen when any one type of psychology (or therapeutic school of thought) claims it is universal and the “better” psychology to explain existence than any other type of psychology. Psychology can also assert this arrogance, and often does, by suggesting its value over sociology, anthropology, humanities, arts, religions, etc. I have written on my love and hate relationship with Psychology before, and more recently, see my blog Fisher (2019) where I first introduce “fearlessness psychology.” To summarize my concern with Psychology as a discipline is it has for too long (especially in the West) tried to be a “science” and that somehow such a position would make it unbiased and value-neutral (so-called). That’s a big lie it tells to itself. Such is a hidden curriculum of values and assumptions perpetrated without letting people know what is behind psychology and Psychology.

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7 E.g., see Wilber, K. (1977/82).
8 [https://fearlessnessmovement.ning.com/blog/a-new-psychology-fearlessness-psychology](https://fearlessnessmovement.ning.com/blog/a-new-psychology-fearlessness-psychology)
My big critique is that psychology is continually (for the most part) unaware of its own “cognitive pathologies” (e.g., psychologism) of which Maslow (1966) detailed as a psychologist himself.9 Few if any psychologists today know about Maslow’s or Wilber’s critique, never mind my own. My quick point is that Psychology with its pathologies, biases, unreflexivity (for the most part) and its curricular hidden domination (i.e., psychologism) have led it to be very powerful in influencing societies everywhere, especially in the last 150+ years or so, as we live in a Psychological Age. Cognitive-behaviorism as one psychology (therapy) of the many, has in particularly stolen itself to become the biggest power and most commonly relied on psychology of the day. For these, and many other, reasons my learning led me to be very critical of psychology (psychologies) and Psychology. I actually began to avoid associating with it for many years and called for the “death of psychology” (Fisher, 2010).10

Only now am I returning to my love of psychology/therapy and beginning to put all my work on fear and fearlessness (e.g., philosophy of fearlessness) into a package called “fearlessness psychology” because I think the latter is much more easy for most people to understand and apply than philosophy and so much theory. However, to be clear, I always integrate, and rightfully so, the philosophical with the psychological (and others fields of knowledge) and they ought not ever be torn apart as if they don’t have an intimate relationship ongoing. But in this return, there is something unique going on for me. It is outside my comfort zone and has brought a totally new reference to critical analysis for me—that is, the Indigenous Perspective. Above I have shown how the Critical/Integral Perspective (e.g., Wilber) has given me the tools and viewpoint to critically analyze Psychology (and psychologies)—and, that is philosophically incredibly valuable. However, it is not enough, and I am critical of the Wilberian approach overall as other integral approaches too—because they miss the powerful “Indigenous” and “Indigenizing” project—that is, the postcolonial critique. We are now dwelling in the postmodern era and knowledge/power has to be reassessed especially in the W. Dominant Worldview. So, bring in the Indigenous and premodern and pre-Western Dominant worldview, I say, as does my colleague Four Arrows and others—and, especially bring this Indigenizing challenge to the world of fear management/education. Yes.

I’ll set up as best I can, albeit, in skeleton only, why the Indigenous and Fearlessness projects, in my view (and Four Arrows) totally overlap and

10 See also a recent teaching video I made on this topic (Fisher, 2019b).
interlink in purposes to ‘better’ the ethical basis upon which humans operate. Psychology ought to be thus included in the transformation I am about to speak of—via a fearlessness psychology. And, not the focus here, but I want to say that all things “Indigenous” and “Indigenizing” also can be revisioned, I believe, in a useful way, by this ‘new’ psychology I am putting together for the very first time. I am embracing (with Four Arrows and some others) that there is good evidence for fearlessness being core to the ancient Indigenous People’s ways—to generalize. It is healthy, sustainable and sane—it is compassionate and wise in how it guides the harmonious relationship (more or less) with First Peoples and the Earth/Ecology. I’ll use the example of recent writings on eco-fear and Indigenous peoples (and their worldview)—in order to build a ‘look’ at what the fearlessness psychology embodies.

Making It Simpler: Making It More Complex

First and foremost, decolonize your mind.¹¹ —R. Michael Fisher

What does “decolonize your mind” actually mean? That’s a topic of this section that is so vast and varied, I’ll be only able to touch on it briefly, but it is core to understanding what I mean by “fearlessnessizing” and that will be discussed here by juxtaposing it as a process of decolonizing in relationship to what I have come to understand is a process of “Indigenizing” (see Fisher & Four Arrows, in press). I’ll get to this later below, but let me first contextualize some things.

By this time, readers of this technical paper ought to have the clear basic assumption (hypothesis and theory) behind my work on fear/fearlessness and overall fear management/education as part of the developing initiative for a ‘new psychology’—that is, fearlessness psychology. If you haven’t really got this basis in my approach, that is, psychologies are fear-based (for the most part) and are thus contributing to the toxic and insidious global Fear Problem, rather than fully undermining the Fear Problem on this planet—then, go back and re-read the beginning sections of this paper before plunging forward.

¹¹ I have my own understanding of this term, and it is not fully unique to my thinking, as I owe appreciation (at least) to the Black African-American theorist and feminist critic, bell hooks, for the term and ethical imperative to “decolonize your mind.”
By this time, readers will see that I am not coming from some value-neutral (so-called) functionalist position in developing a ‘new psychology’—but rather I come from a criticalist (i.e., conflict position). I have written lots about this contrasting of analytical schemes regarding research and education and Fear Studies overall. I’ll not repeat that here. A best way to describe what is in this technical paper is (to be technically precise) a critical fearlessness psychology, which is based on a long tradition of honing my analysis of the world within the critical philosophy and theory traditions—a long story. You may or may not agree with this rather ideological starting point, that is fine, but I want you to know what it means before you critique it and choose (perhaps) to not integrate it in your own thinking and life, and in your critiques that may form of how I am going about this construction of a fearlessness psychology.

Too many critics like to throw their superficial views at me and my work, now for over 30 years, without understanding deeply enough the core bases upon which I approach the topic. I’ll obviously, not take their critiques seriously (much to their chagrin) if they don’t do that homework with sincerity first. I say this latter point because it is not merely some subjectivist personal opinion on my part, it is a view I have come to see and express through three decades of systematic work on the topic. I take a transpersonal view on this conflict.

It is so clear to me that people and their discourses on fear/fearlessness are mostly quite immature, superficial, and quite distorted because they do not have a strong critical (or holistic-integral) approach/context to knowledge period. That’s another critique for another time but it is relevant in that the topic “fear” (for starters) is very hot! It is very contested.

Most people, from populist to academic, do not agree with my take on the topic. Many want to attack my position on fear—because fear has great power—or should I say, Fear has great Power in this particular “human world” we live in and remember. And, history shows, that where there is fear there is power—and, the abuse (mis-use) of power/fear is everywhere—it fills history if you do any critical analysis of the history of fear, for example. I have seen this intellectually and experientially in my own career and just living as a human being. But this technical paper is not about that academic and/or autobiographical critique I have about how

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12 I am re-translating this dictum from ancient history, from pagan traditions like Wicca (thanks to the work of Starhawk, is where I first heard this expression and wisdom).
people are generally both ignore-ant and arrogant\textsuperscript{13} to a large degree when it comes to their expressing views about the topic.

What is really important, more so than the problems above, is that the Fear Problem continues to reproduce itself deeper and wider to this very day—and its toxic oppression upon the world (e.g., \textit{via} fearism-t) is killing us. Without the ‘best’ intervention, which a critical fearlessness psychology is positioning itself to be, there is not a good outcome ahead. So, to begin for you to study and learn what fearlessness psychology is, you have to learn how I have come to shape “fearlessness” and then equally how I have come to shape “fear.” I approach these topics with great systematic care, aware of their power to corrupt—distort knowledge about fear/fearlessness itself—and, all that I have discussed and theorized as the problem of “epistemology of fear.”\textsuperscript{14}

I am giving you plenty of opportunity to attune to my contexts for my understanding (and \textit{meta-contexts} for organizing knowledge, and reality)—and, I appreciate it is not always fun to have to study something becoming continually complex. A short story: eight months ago I founded The Fearology Institute to teach my work to all kinds of serious students of fear/fearlessness around the world. I attempt to teach the basics of how I understand “fearology” as a means to pursue a better (more holistic-integral and critical) understanding of the topic of fear. Well, I have learned so much about my students and their inabilities in particular to really learn about a new imaginary of fear for themselves. It is not all their fault for these handicaps. Unfortunately, for the most part, they are so controlled by the predominating, and largely unconscious, ideological discourses, and imaginaries of the past—of past thoughts and schools of thought about fear and its management. One student who had particular trouble with my teaching and with the course requirements in some places, wrote to me:

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\textsuperscript{13} If you look at my work on \textit{Phobos-Thanatos} (\textit{a la} Wilber) you’ll see how there is a strong integral philosophical critique that \textit{Phobos} is “arrogant” and \textit{Thanatos} is “ignore-ant” in (a pathological) orientations to Reality—for lots of reasons, of which fear-based thinking is one (note: \textit{Phobos-Thanatos} is the transpersonal and metaphysical basis for my critique of the ‘Fear’ Project). These “forces” are meta-contexts of the invisible (Shadow) for most everyone (see e.g., Fisher, 1997).

\textsuperscript{14} Again, I will not repeat this discussion here, you can find it in most of my publications; suffice it to say, it is infiltrated as the core problematic of all fear management/education discourse and knowledge, as far as I am concerned. Not near enough people take into consideration the epistemology problematic on this topic (e.g., see Fisher & Subba, 2016, Chapter 3).
Dear Sir, “You had admitted elsewhere that it’s difficult for people to understand your work because of the technically involved [aka complexity] in your approach to research, you should consider changing your approach to a more simpler one than put it [aka complexity] on the student.... Since Fearism/fearology is a new field of study, I think much time should be spent on clarification of concepts than theorizing.\textsuperscript{15}

The student of fearology in this case above is saying that I am doing too much “theorizing” in my teaching about fear/fearlessness and not enough clarifying concepts. They also prefer me to simplify, and not be too complex. I understand that concern, but the reasons are many for my choices to stay with a complex theorizing about fear/fearlessness and thus, here also to stay with a complex theorizing about the nature and role of a ‘new psychology’ called fearlessness psychology.

It is not justifiable, on many grounds, epistemologically being one, ethically being another, that the study of fearology be reduced to simplicity because it is not fun or too hard for learners. Learners cannot, in my view, be subjectivist dominators in the process of learning about fear/fearlessness. The topic of fear and the Fear Problem has to be first priority. It is a transpersonal affair I am on about and that means so much, and it is not to be reduced to personal whim and attitudes and conveniences. That said, I do not want to come across ‘cold’ with students where they may perceive I do not care about their learning challenges. I really do care a lot about that and yet I have to set my priorities on the ‘bigger picture’ of the advancement of Fear Studies as well. I am very cautious of any unnecessary curriculum or learning simplification just because it makes things easier. My research tells me that one of the reasons that fear (‘fear’) has us in its grip—and has had so historically as well, is because we tend to want to make fear simple. Sorry folks, that’s not going to do anymore. That’s a problem of the Fear Problem itself.

I also want to help learners through processes of logistically simplifying and organizing concepts, ideas, etc. to improve learning outcomes. Yet, be clear, that every time I teach and invite others in, there is an expectation of

\textsuperscript{15} This comes from a student in The Fearology Institute who has written and published books on fear (from a personal comm. May 27, 2019). It is an example, that I have found over and over again from my critics long before The Fearology Institute.
“transformative learning” not merely accumulative and maintenance learning and learners being stabilized in their comfort zone or the status quo. Pedagogically, I want a “complicated conversation”\textsuperscript{16} in the curriculum and not one that is overly watered-down, as I find most all students prefer. Readers of my work have this complaint often as well. Yes, it is hard to learn how to think about fear differently, and much differently—in fact, to think about it radically different than anything you have known. That’s where I start my work, with that assumption that I began this paper with. If our psychologies are so fear-based themselves, I am saying they will distort the very understanding of the psychology of fear itself. I am equally saying this is the case with philosophy (and worldviews) that are behind what thinking and values we bring to psychology. I want us to have a complex and critical reflective analysis when we approach the topic of fear/fearlessness. And, that’s obviously not everybody’s cup of tea to be so dedicated and systematic. I don’t teach pop psychology and self-help approaches to the topic of fear management/education—and, that is why it is radical—but there are good reason for my radical approach, of which I’ll begin to let you in on below.

Radical, is not a light topic that I throw out without a lot of critical background and thought. To be radical in approaching the topic of fear I ask everyone to critically reflect on the “context(s)” that Dr. Fisher uses to frame his approach to fear/fearlessness and all that manifests from that approach. I could argue, at great length but won’t do so here, that no “clarification of concepts” about my work can come about without a series of methodological imperatives regarding knowledge itself (never mind knowledge about fear)—that is, constructivist, contextualist and integralist (i.e., postmodern) analysis. I’ll focus on contextualist (contextualism) as so important in my work. My basic assumption (hypothesis, theory) re: a fearlessness psychology earlier in this paper articulates how I see the very context that frames the meaning of fear (and psychologies available) as corrupted from the start. How do I come to that conclusion about the context problem in knowing fear? That’s thirty years of work, sorting out, and still sorting out. There is no simple way to talk about fear, and pretend we are learning something new about it, if that contextualist methodology—and set of critical practices, is not engaged right from the beginning of the inquiry on this topic. In this short paper, I cannot go into all of that, but am giving you a skeleton view of my context of analysis of fear (and fear management/education). I am actually re-educating the reader in the moment I

\textsuperscript{16} I borrow this term and imperative for our postmodern complex societies, from the progressive iconic curriculum theorist Bill Pinar.
do that because I am dropping a “fearist lens” (a la Subba) on top of the topic of the study of fear and fearlessness. I am also dropping a “fearless standpoint” lens on the study of fearlessness (e.g., Fisher, 2010). Again, these are contextual (and historical) backgrounds that will help you understand somewhat where I am coming from in my venture to improve fear management/education and produce a powerful fearlessness psychology.

Context(s) analysis is a step up from “concept” analysis, because it takes a big view, a wide and deep view of the very production of concepts themselves—and, in that sense “fear” is a core concept of everything I am thinking and writing and teaching about. So, my context has many dimensions and angles, which I’ve already shared earlier that I use a “fearist” context based on Subba (2014) and his philosophy of fearism, but long before that I used a philosophy of fearlessness (and paradigm of fearlessness) etc. Again, I won’t go into all that here, you can read my and Subba’s work for more contextual background of our approaches to the topic. Context is key in the epistemology of fear (i.e., of knowing how we know about fear). Contextualism is also a praxis that accounts for historical, political and ideological backgrounds to the topic (of fear, in this case)—it is about about paying attention to the invisible formations and architectures that precede the very talking about fear (in this case) and similarly, with fearlessness. See, my friends, it is complex when you do a good systematic job of inquiry in asking about how to better understand fear/fearlessness and my work on a fearlessness psychology. Starting here with the Indigenous context, is a huge topic that is part of postcolonial (and neocolonial) criticism and a tradition with great power and importance in today’s academy in some departments like the humanities and political sciences, sociology, anthropology, and education, etc. Unfortunately, in the faculties of psychology it is rarely mentioned that a postcolonial and/or neocolonial methodology and context is important to understanding human psychology.

That is the real problem with Psychology (become psychologism, as an ideology of the Eurocentric traditions in the West). Bottom line, the Indigenous challenge I start my fearlessness psychology off with is a challenge that is going to be rather unfamiliar, strange and even a bit terrifying to most people—it will take any non-Indigenous person into a very uncomfortable zone and stretch beyond their Dominant Worldview. I’ll go into this more as this paper unfolds.

I just want to have you reflect on your own bias as a learner, especially if you are a non-Indigenous person per se, and by that I mean not brought up in an Indigenous culture, the latter which we could generally call “First
Peoples’ traditions and ways of being with their essence core of values and methodologies of knowing in pre-industrialized pre-Western (modern) paradigms. I am looking to the roots for the radical critique of W. Dominant Worldview and its influence on Psychology overall—and a psychology of fear, specifically. That impacts how “fearlessness” is also understood. There are so many biases to be unpacked and examined critically. Remember my basic assumption is that psychologies and studies on fear are already corrupted, for the most part, by the largely fear-based W. Dominant Worldview and I want to learn what a fearlessness psychology can be—and, Four Arrows and I agree that Indigenous Worldview is inherently fearlessness-based not fear-based (Fisher, 2018). This context of Indigenous is not the only one I use to understand fearlessness and critique knowledge about fear that predominates, yet, it is an important one and thus gets focus in this technical paper, with all limitations of that acknowledged.

Contexts of Indigenous & Indigenizing: Fearlessnessizing

Echoes return in this paper: What psychology have you ever learned about that has at its opening pages said: “This is radical. This requires that you first and foremost decolonize your mind in regard to psychology and the learning about psychology.” This means transforming everything you have learned, including ‘who you think you are and what you know as truth.’ Indeed, that’s not likely what you heard (or want to), or learned or even thought of learning when you studied and/or merely read anything on psychology, therapy and self-help literature. It’s a rather terrifying venture to Indigenize if you are not an Indigenous person. At times, I have framed my work onopsychocultural therapia or for ease of speaking about I use “cultural therapy.” I put the whole (W.) “culture” (society and civilization)

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17 I realize there is a problematic messy-nest of issues on what to call and who to call “Indigenous”: and that’s a topic, somewhat beyond scope of this paper, albeit, Four Arrows and I do address some of these concerns in the book on his life and work as he has encountered these issue for over three decades per se, and he is an expert in Indigenous Education, whereas I am certainly not and rather new to this field and methodologies in the context of postcolonial and neocolonial (i.e., decolonizing) traditions (see Fisher, 2018) and see Smith (1999).

18 See e.g., Four Arrows (2016), pp. 6-7 for a listing of the universal characteristics of the “Indigenous worldview” he has gathered from the literature and his experiences.

19 See therapia (philosophical) in contradistinction to therapy (psychological) in Fisher (2010), pp. 84, 151, 186); see cultural therapy in Kumar, Fisher & Subba,
on the couch, so to speak. That’s a contextual (‘big picture’) change-
project, radical project and largely an unknown as to the legitimacy of it
and what will come of it. Nonetheless, I am compelled to do this kind of
fearwork and liberation process because my studies and experience over
my life-time (I am now 67) have led me to this pursuit with as much gusto
now as when I began it in earnest over four decades ago in developing my
critical faculties about our society and culture (the W.) and it started with
how we treated Nature. Yes, I was an environmental and eco-critic way
back to my late teens and early 20s. Back then I felt something was seri-
ously wrong with our ‘psychology’ that was so-called ‘normal.’ Today, I
label our Dominant Worldview and the psychology it produces as, more or
less, near-psychotic.

As for today, to get a more full-scale awareness of my contextualizing of a
‘new psychology’ you will really want to embrace and/or study that my
work is a complex mixture, integration at its best if possible, of the follow-
ing contexts and methodological and ethical imperatives re: the study of
fear/fearlessness and this emergent fearlessness psychology:

(a) critical (conflict) tradition (e.g., a la Freire’s critical
pedagogy),
(b) feminist,
(c) post- and neocolonial,
(d) postmodern and post-postmodern (e.g., integral and
developmental/evolutionary),
(e) Eco-Ego Camps and psychologies of Integral Theory (a la
Wilberian) approach,
(f) decolonizing and dehypnotizing (e.g., a la Four Arrows),
(g) Indigenous-Western-Encounter (IWE),
(h) aesthetic-artistic (and matrixial, a la Ettinger),
(i) arational and affective modality,

2019, pp. 77, 79, 80, 87, 100-07, 112, 123, 130). Note: multiculturalists (and psy-
chological-therapists) today may use “cultural therapy” but they are using it very
differently (very shallowly), with only slight overlap with my use.

20 See e.g., Fisher (2016); in many ways Sigmund Freud (at least, in the W. world)
was the first to do this (in psychology) as well, even if he did that more tangential-
ly, implicitly, than I do.

21 See e.g., Fisher (2019b). There are others from the East (e.g., Alan Watts), psy-
chiatrist critics (e.g., Thomas Szasz, R. D. Laing, Gabor Mate, Alice Miller, etc.)
and Indigenous scholars and others who have said as much about the unhealthy
state of what our W. society (and Psychology) call a “healthy” state of psychologi-
cal being.
(j) process-oriented\textsuperscript{22} and
(k) depth psychology oriented.

Anyone who encounters my work and who doesn’t (somewhat) understand these contexts and/or is actually against them (consciously or unconsciously), is going to be lacking and/or resistant to my work. I get a lot of resistance.

For the moment let me pull out the arational because it is one example and I offer this initial teaching on the arational, in contrast to the irrational and especially in contrast to the rational (dominating way of knowing in the Dominant Worldview), in my new teaching video (Fisher 2019a). The arational consists of all experiences humans have, like affects, feelings, emotions, anxiety, arts, aesthetics, dreaming, altered states, trances, intuitions, psychic phenomena, etc. Fear, arguably is also arational in some forms but easily slides into becoming irrational when “hurt” is accompanying it. Arational is not necessarily irrational\textsuperscript{23} (the latter, which is about “hurts” and unhealed painful memories, unwarranted fears, that are incorporated into and saturate the arational modes of experiencing and expression). How would we know (asks the epistemologist of fear) ‘fear’ if we used rational, arational and irrational contexts and methodologies of knowing (of study)? Good question. I merely point it out here—and, it is particularly relevant because more than most other cultures or worldviews, the Indigenous Worldview is decidedly arational-based at core. The Western Dominant Worldview is decidedly (especially, in modern era) rationally-based. However, philosophically, this needs to be unpacked critically and I and others have made the case that what is so-called “rational” (Reason) in the W. worldview and philosophies and psychologies (even called “scientific” at times)—is more or less, irrational when it comes down to a more intense radical analysis.\textsuperscript{24} That’s a dangerous disguise of the irrational beneath the surface of so-called “rational.” This makes this very hard to detect, just as “fear” likewise, has disguises.

In much of my work, this distortion of “rational” inquiry and thinking and research already taints the investigation and outcome as fear-based, more or less—and, even pathological. This is an issue when such rationalistic

\textsuperscript{22} See e.g., Fisher (2019c).

\textsuperscript{23} Unfortunately, it’s characteristically mis-diagnosed by “rationalists” of all kinds, going way back into the history of philosophy (especially, in the W.).

\textsuperscript{24} See e.g., Fisher & Subba (2016) “Cartesian anxiety” at its base (i.e., fear-based way of knowing) but called “rational” (pp. 66, 92).
approaches (e.g., Psychology) attempt to dominate what the truth is about fear and how best to understand it and apply fear management/education. The Indigenous perspective and critique, with its diverse branches, is still more or less based on a major challenge to non-Indigenous people and their ways.

For example, Four Arrows, a mixed-blood scholar and colleague, makes the case often that Indigenous people throughout their history of colonization often thought the ‘White People’ (foreigners) were “fork-tongued” and “insane.” In that same vein of thought, a really important critique from the Yoruba cosmology, philosophy and psychology—from ancient tribal Africa points to the “lack” and the “fear” at the center core of Eurocentric cosmology, philosophy and psychology (Ani, 1996). Thus, the Indigenous Worldview and its advocating critics have lots to teach us Western modern peoples. They have a Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK-1) but also, lesser talked about, they have a Traditional Egological Knowledge (TEK-2). It is this combination of TEK-1 and TEK-2 which I will be building into my basis for a critical fearlessness psychology—that is, a psychology for the 21st century which is integrative of the ‘best’ of what our ancestors have to teach us—and, yet, also transcends those traditional psychologies and ecologies and up-grades their wisdom and compassion with other sources (see my sources in my work as contexts on p. 17).

Coming from a matured Indigenous worldview critique, Four Arrows (2016a) wrote on my fearwork with Subba,

You are about to eavesdrop on a most important dialogue. Poetic, provocative and exciting, this engagement with “fearism” might also be, well, frightening. One thing that emerges from this radical conversation between the two most eminent fearologists in the world is that each of us must make vital choices that determine if and how we might escape the growing dangers that relate to our inability to manage fear effectively. And making such choices can be a scary proposition for many. (p. xiii)


26 Traditional Egological Knowledge, a term I just coined here, is really psychological knowledge (not just about “ego”) that Indigenous communities and ways of being have to offer us moderns today—and, in fact, may be absolutely crucial to our survival overall as the Anthropocene era creeps up and immanent extinction is facing us and life on this planet in the next decade.
True enough, Four Arrows echoes my own experience of exposing people to my fearwork and to fearism and fearlessness. The vast majority are not seemingly ready to engage it very deeply and/or they think they know what we are onto but show in their descriptions of it and arguments that they understand it very little, and usually distort its fundamental contexts and positionings on reality and the topic of fear. Four Arrows, then goes on in his Foreword,

I believe that the Dominant worldview, one that now largely embraces both the East and the West, has made us afraid of fear.... Some degree of expertise in learning how “not to be afraid” is a requirement for manifesting courage and ultimately even a kind of fearlessness in the world.... As a Cherokee-blooded man, and an Oglala relation and Sun Dancer, I rejoice in seeing this dialogue between the Eastern and Western aspects of the Dominant worldview [brought out in the author’s critiques] because such expertise has always been a major part of the Indigenous worldview, a set of precepts about the world that guided humanity for 99% of our time on Earth [in relatively, good relations]. A number of surviving Indigenous cultures [and some disparate individual Indigenous people] are still connoisseurs of fear, such as the Cofán of Ecuador and Colombia.... The anthropologist Michael Copek, who studied the Cofán, wrote, “distinct conceptions of fearlessness structure the complex relationships” that have allowed them to take on the many challenges they face (Cepek, 2008:334). For most Indigenous People’s worldviews, fear is only made a reality by our choices.

Indeed, that 99% of our species time on Earth was in a state of “primal awareness” as Four Arrows maintains. And in that time great mastery, or more accurately “expertise” at “becoming connoisseurs of fear” (Jacobs, 1998, pp. 156-7) advanced to bring about various forms of fear management/education or adaptive fear management systems to survive and thrive in/with the environments they lived. Fear is at the basis of species and individual adaptation, via what I have called Defense Intelligence. Below,

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27 These Indigenous precepts boil down to what Four Arrows’ theorizes as his CAT-FAWN fear management model—a whole other large topic, but I will touch on it later in this paper.
28 Excerpt from Four Arrows (2016a), pp. xii-xiv.
I’ll articulate further my own fear management systems theory from a spectrum evolution of consciousness (and culture) perspective. But for the moment, I wish to bring about one of the primary things the Indigenous perspective and its learned fear management system (FMS-2) has to offer to humanity today. It offers that, according to Four Arrows,

Primal people offer an excellent model for becoming connoisseurs of Fear. They know Fear well enough to appreciate it as a fine wine rather than as a bitter poison.30

Their daily lives so connected to Nature and a relational-focused way of participating in the world and researching and knowing brings me to the point of great interest where it is suggested that if one really wants to learn about fear then study plants and animals—they have learned to survive and thrive for hundreds of millions of years before human beings showed up on the planet in evolutionary scale-time. Four Arrows teaches “wild animals [and plants] must be experts in Fear” and he concludes, as with all living creatures that know this primal wisdom that “Fear serves as a warning from the spirit world” to attend to things, and stay ready and make good choices to return to connectivity-in-harmony and balance to the ecosystem as a whole, including the individual’s life systems (i.e., equilibrium) (Jacobs, 1998, p. 158). This is the basis of a holistic way of being. We humans have much to learn from the real experts on fear management. Four Arrows wrote,

To achieve expertise [as a connoisseur] about Fear requires cultivating an enhanced ability to use it for becoming happier, healthier, and more spiritual individuals.... The trick is being “expert” enough about Fear to be aware of its many faces, to know if the information being processed by our concentration is valid using primal awareness [natural intuition and sensing] and reason, and to use it constructively as a tool.31

There are tricks, illusions, delusions, disguises, lies and false information given about fear in the modern world especially, as cultural practices can lead us the furthest away from becoming connoisseurs of fear—but that’s beyond what I want to get into here. For when fear becomes hard to detect, for when it morphs as ‘fear’ within cultural productions and manufacturing

31 Ibid., p. 157.
fear—as in fearmongering and perpetrating itself in systems-structures and discourses via a hidden curriculum and toxic ideology of fearism-t, then things are more complex and it is hard to find a referent of security for the “valid” truthing required when we experience fear(fulness). The Indigenous perspective says that current (especially urban) life is infused with fear at such high levels that people and systems under the Dominant world are insane. Fear-based ways are used to manage fear—as if it is going to help. It surely isn’t, at least not in the long-term. The Fear Problem grows. So, turn, says Four Arrows, and the Indigenous Worldview, to where we contemporary humans can access a primal wisdom in the “wilds”—amongst the creatures who are our ancestors with way more experience managing fear than we have. Return to the Natural referent, before the “point of departure,”32 what I call feareferential pivot in which to provide a universal deep ethical compass on reality and fear’s relationship to it. Which is all about the self-fear-other relational ecology (or “ecology of fear”33). Four Arrows (2016) wrote,

‘Other-than-humans’ represent the ultimate teachers of courage.... Every life form from trees and rivers to insects and fish model varying degrees of courage or fearlessness (p. 56).

Every form of life has the “spirit of fearlessness” as I teach. You won’t find that kind of radical teaching, that kind of radical fear management/education in the Western Dominant Worldview (or East either)—and, in fact mostly the philosophers in the Western world see “fearlessness” as insanity (from Aristotle onwards)34—and, that raises the issue of who is able to judge insanity in the first place—and, especially, the discernment, from these worldview perspectives, shows there are great contradictions we are faced with in our analysis and decisions about our practices today. That’s why a serious Fear Studies agenda is required. The whole field is ripe for this new awareness. Humanity, argues the Indigenous perspective, is ripe for a renewal and ‘correction’ of its fear-based ways and distortive understanding of fear and fearlessness. Turn to the primal creatures and awareness via Nature, via Indigenous peoples and their wisdom.

33 I am developing this “ecology of fear” as primal/foundational, within a universal meta-motivational evolutionary and developmental perspective and context, where “Fearlessness” is core to the “spirit of fearlessness” and/or path of fearlessness that flows through existence (e.g., Fisher, 2012).
Decolonizing our minds, first and foremost, is to observe carefully the *primordial reality* of which Four Arrows has introduced to us in this paper. It is also a primal viewpoint, and a fearlessness-based one, as I have been arguing, albeit, not in as complete of a way as is possible but that would take a book length to argue. This is just an introduction paper. Now to be really specific as we search in this discussion for examples as well, where we maybe get a glimpse of what “fearlessness psychology” looks like as a decolonizing experience—and a reality of emancipation from the oppression of the ‘Fear’ Matrix.

Okay, some 25 years ago I was working at the In Search of Fearlessness Centre and Research Institute in Calgary, AB, when it was time to go for lunch. It was a beautiful sunny day and I liked to go out back in the alley where a lot of plants and insects and birds were. But this time, I went to the alley and parking spots there and found a horrible smell of tar and oil and saw that the owner of the property had all that gravel and semi-natural area paved over flat and black as could be. I left disturbed by the mentality (the psychology) behind such a gesture at the back of this building. Who cares if it is paved back there? I had to go back inside for my lunch, stirring with thoughts of how this mentality of the paving over everything is like fear. It really is. Fear in the toxic form of an ideology of fearism (i.e., Culturalism) wants to clear away all “wildness” and diversity, it wants to dominate the Natural sphere and will kill everything in its path to achieve its “perfection” of anti-life. And, that’s called progress?

Three days later or so, I went out back to the garbage can and to my surprise and delight I saw hundreds of shoots of grass and especially dandelion flowers blooming—having worked their way right through the black guck covering them and returned to their source, the light, the sun, the right way to be. In a nutshell, the plants exhibited the *fearlessness psychology* in contrast (if not opposition) to the human’s *fear psychology*. Of relevance to this paper, the latter psychology is one based near entirely, if not unconsciously, in a deep *terror of Nature*. At least, that was one way I saw the pavement event and attempted killing all “wildness” without any sacred awareness—it is the fear of Nature or “ecophobia” that many have argued about in the Eco Camp of activists movements and philosophies—it is this fear that is fast destroying planet Earth’s ecosystems, and leading to excessive CO₂ levels etc. Indigenous Worldview is bringing us TEK-1 as ‘corrective’ and more people are thankfully listening to the wisdom of Indigenous elders and others in this regard, but not enough.
The dysfunctional psychology—or fear psychology—is producing a self-fear-other relationality many have argued is pathological, paranoid, even psychotic. Who would see the pavement example, this way I have? Not many, because the fearanalysis I practice (e.g., Fisher, 2016) looks deeper into all human events and phenomena beyond what our W. society typically asks of us. I mean the W. world typically accepts such violence as ‘normal’ and every day. Just as it accepts toxic mis-use of fear (fearmongering) as ‘normal’—that is, a normalization of fear—and a weaponization of fear. The critical thinker in me problematizes anything assumed (superficially) as status quo, which is what Paulo Freire, the great critical pedagogue of liberation, taught. Problematize all things in an oppressive society.

I’ll never forget that image and reminder of how powerful the “spirit of fearlessness” is even when things look pretty bleak and dead. Thank you to Nature for that lesson on the ‘spirit’ in all living systems—and, in Life itself—in the ways of Resistance to Oppression—of how to respond to fear (in the hearts and minds of the wounded), when it is mis-used against Life. Elsewhere, I have believed it best to talk about ‘fear’ within fearism-t as the context for such destruction. We cannot merely talk about “fear” in common sense terms or what the psychology of fear tells us. These latter conceptualizations and context for understanding fear have led, I believe, to great ineptness in dealing with the global Fear Problem.

Back to the Indigenous Worldview as core basis for an ethical paradigm shift towards a ‘new psychology’—and, if you wish, for an overall review (and critique) of Four Arrows’ Indigenous-based theories on fear and its management, and on fearlessness see Fisher (2016a; 2018). His own critical consciousness work in pursuit to “Indigenize” the entire W. civilization project is important to understand (e.g., see Four Arrows, 2013). He and I have come to collaborate in our thinking and critiques re: conscientization of the public sphere—where we recently argued that Indigenizing is near equivalent to Fearlessnessizing (Fisher & Four Arrows, in press)—a point, I’ll return to at the end of this paper.

I am not about to assume that Four Arrows or any others coming from an Indigenous-based perspective are all correct in their thinking about fear and fearlessness and fear management/education. Interestingly enough, “fearlessness” is rare as a concept or theory in Indigenous writing and they prefer to talk of pragmatic bravery and courage. Four Arrows and I agree that perhaps it is not necessary for Indigenous people to theorize about or talk about fearlessness but to merely live it. We both also agree it is useful to distinguish a lunar-feminine approach to fearlessness and a more solar-
masculine, and ‘balance’ of the two is healthiest.\footnote{These points about Indigenous, Four Arrows and my own thoughts on “Fearlessness” are discussed at length in Part II (Fisher, 2018).} In our work together we also found we have a different take on fearlessness with some overlaps, so there is no fixed agreed upon Indigenous or Western conceptualization of what exactly fearlessness is, and likely no such fixed definition or meaning ever will be found and agreed upon everywhere.

So, Indigenous offers a referent for doing fearwork and understanding and practicing fearlessness, it is not a final solution better than any other. I think they have lots to offer, that’s my point. I don’t believe anyone or any culture, religion, ideology, philosophy, has all the hold on the best truths we need today about fear. That said, I have a good deal of trust in the Indigenous Worldview and articulations of fear management that I have seen, especially, as I believe Four Arrows is a world leader in this within the Indigenous-based scholarship. Later, below I’ll give another reading from an Indigenous-based perspective on fear management using the concept “eco-fear” as is being used in academic scholarship about the environmental problems we face today.

So, let me turn to Four Arrows’ award-winning radical book, which I am one of several co-authors, Teaching Truly: A Curriculum to Indigenize Mainstream Education. The iconic critical pedagogue, Henry Giroux, called this book “masterful and liberatory.” I agree. What is most profound is the way Four Arrows divides the whole curriculum of general education, based on subjects in the mainstream, and locates them on the Indigenous “Medicine Wheel” pattern. He proceeds to then guide all teachers, through each subject area to attend to teaching say “mathematics” with first a lesson or two on anti-Indian ideology that has dominated North American history and oppressed the native peoples and still does, and has destroyed or made invisible much of their wisdom about “mathematics.” He then asks lessons on premodern “mathematics” be inquired into by the teacher and students in this process of Indigenizing Math. I love the critical postcolonial and neocolonial critique as foundational to teaching math, or any traditional subject matter. Seventy-five percent of the topics covered in the three out of four directions of the Medicine Wheel overlay, are offered, but it is the last quarter (25%) where I got involved in this curriculum design and book.

The “fourth direction, the South (and the color White), emphasizes spiritual and emotional awareness that helps guide us back to the introspection and
reflections of the West,” Four Arrows writes. He entitles the chapter in this South section of curriculum “From Fear to Fearlessness” as part of the Indigenizing of “Religion/Psychology and Spirituality.” Note, “Psychology” is inherently and intimately connected to “Religion” and for Four Arrows and his Indigenous-based critique this is essentially a critique of W. Christianity (and, the Judeo-Christian and Abrahamic religious traditions). I won’t go into this all for you can read Four Arrows’ views on how Christianity as part of the globalizing arm of colonialism has been what he calls an “anti-Indigenous ideology.” It was and still is in ways, part of the “Education” that took Indigenous families into their grasp, separated children and put them into “residential schools” of White-man’s worldview.

One has to ask also what has that “Education System” done to the psychological foundations of the oppressors (White-people) as well as with Red-people? Genocidal actions by these white governments is not an exaggeration. But that’s not the point of this paper, as my interest is to link that genocidal and anti-Indian violence and the terror(ism) and fear(ism) behind it to a deep fear of Nature (and of Eternity) and all things Indigenous in the core of the W. Dominant Worldview—and in the Psychology (and educating) that is born with that worldview.

“[F]earlessness is a foundational idea for teaching psychology and for living an authentically spiritual life according to Indigenous spiritual understandings” (Four Arrows, 2013, p. 251). You start to see perhaps why a revision of psychology (psychologies)—as fear-based psychology—is core to reversing the impacts of colonialist religion (i.e., Christianity) in the West and everywhere for that matter. I like how Four Arrows opens the chapter in the South section of the curriculum with a quote from Mohandas Gandhi, “Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality...”. What I interpret that as is both a move to shift the paradigm/psychology of fear (of religion/god,) etc. to a new (more natural) paradigm/psychology of fearlessness. Gandhi, from Four Arrows and my point of view was already re-

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36 Four Arrows (2013), p. 11. Note: “West” means the Western Dominant Worldview and its cultures operating under it, more or less. Four Arrows, as mentioned earlier, also believes much of the contemporary East is also so dominated by the globalizing influences of this toxic fear-based worldview. It is now ubiquitous and has captured and inhibited many Indigenous peoples themselves who have (usually by force) “modernized” to Western ways via “integration” schemes of the dominators.

37 This argument is found in detail in Fisher & Barnesmoore (2018).

Indigenizing his own nation of India which had been long under British colonial (modernist) domination. He knew the entire psychology had to be changed to get the people back to their healthy empowered independence. Today, this applies to North America, where the oppressor-colonialist has a different name—Fear’s Empire\(^{39}\) rules. The psychology of that empire of fear has to be overturned, by Indigenizing and Fearlessnessizing—just as Gandhi forefronted the concept of “fearlessness” as a spiritual gift and as a resistance to the old regime of domination and fear brought by empire consciousness and actions. Gandhi was fearlessnessizing as part of his liberation platform (see e.g., the Satyagraha movement and how important understanding fear/fearlessness was to nonviolence). Gandhi was bringing forth TEK-2, as I see it. He was asking an entire Indian civilization at the time in the 20th century to integrate what had been lost, that is, TEK-2 (Traditional Egological Knowledge)—that is, a new psychological basis for human health, sustainability and sanity. As Four Arrows has added, along with my own critique, that any serious transformation of Fear’s Empire is a conversion away from an exchange-economy to a gift-economy (a sacred economy) based on the “gift of fearlessness” in contradiction to “out-of-control predatory capitalism” (Fisher, 2018, p. 128). Unfortunately, few truly seem to have understood the Gandhian (r)evolutionary fearlessnessizing and TEK-2 process that he promoted.

Four Arrows, Ed McGaa (Eagle Man) and myself articulate in this South section of curriculum the most powerful intervention into Education and Psychology as topics. I believe this 25% intervention is the underpinning to do well to ensure the success of all the other 75% Indigenizing of subject matters in the book and design of curriculum transformation. I have written an extensive review on the book in this regard (see Fisher, 2013; see also my own sub-chapter focusing on fearlessness as sacred ground practice in Fisher (2013a)). Fearlessness, and the fearlessnessizing process,\(^{40}\) within this Indigenous context of critique and transformation is the foundational orientation for a ‘new’ fearlessness psychology—which, as Four Arrows and I are more or less arguing is already available within Nature and the history of Indigenous Peoples via TEK-2. Now, let me describe why TEK is so important, along with my additional variation on that.

\(^{39}\) This term I borrow from the sociologist Benjamin Barber, and empire consciousness from the eco-critic David Korten.

\(^{40}\) I have recently written about this in application to the nation of India (see Kumar, Fisher & Subba, 2019, pp. 185-212).
Traditional (Indigenous) Knowledge: TEK-1 & TEK-2

A long discussion would be required to situate my own conceptualization of “Fearlessness” as an advanced level in evolution of a fear management system (FMS-7) and view point—upon which is a referent for discerning critically upon the entire spectrum/field of fear management/education. I’ll leave that up to readers to investigate in many of my publications (e.g., Fisher, 2010, pp. 131-78). My primary articulating methodology is an “integral” one that is inclusive of integrative and holistic approaches but transcends their limitations (e.g., see Wilber, 1995). The kosmosology behind my fearwork is based on the Wilberian (neo-platonic) perspective that the natural telos of the universe (or at least, Life on Earth) is based on two driving meta-motivational forces (and their shadow-sides). This is technical I realize but it is the philosophical (metaphysical) foundation for why I have introduced TEK-2 into the more common notion(s) of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (which I now call TEK-1). Note, this is a transpersonal-integral perspective on Life, or what Wilber calls the ‘Big Picture’ universal perspective or standpoint.

Wilber articulates two forms of “Love,” in the formative patterns, energies and movements called Eros and Agape (using ancient Greek archetypal terms). Within a large Spiral of Evolution of Consciousness, Eros is the Ascending current of forces that expands to bring diversity into unity (a Solar-direction) and in complementary tension with the Ascending current is the Descending current that brings a return of the many from the one/unity (an Earthly-direction). When everything is working fine in harmony and balance these two forces imbue “Love” into all Creation working as complementary, but at times looking as if they are opposite directions one Ascending and one Descending—but, they are both two-sides of the same circular, spiral, Movement of Reality. Now, the really interesting dynamic from a fearist perspective is how does “Fear” come into this Reality? Wilber explains: when the differentiation of evolution occurs in the Ascent growth-path (Eros) there is a susceptibility of dissociation (which has several causes, one of which I call “woundedness” generically). If the dissociation is maintained and not repaired or “healed” it will turn off from the Love Path (cycle) and spin its own arrogant path away from Love, and that is the beginning of the movement meta-motivational force of Fear (Wilber calls Phobos)—and when this ‘infests’ the Descending current then Thanatos also takes off into dissociation messing up Agape. It’s the

41 This is based on Plotinus’ metaphysical philosophy more specifically, according to Wilber.
beginning notion for pathology and I later articulate from this Wilberian meta-view a theory called the ‘Fear’ Project (= Phobos-Thanatos) (see Fisher, 1997 for greater detailing of this metaphysics of “Fear” or ‘Fear’).

Once the Path of ‘Fear’ is understood behind my work, then the Path of Fearlessness can be understood as the ‘corrective’ self/system regulation built-in to evolution—and, thus, from that a fearlessness psychology could be derived. It is much more complicated than I am showing here, but the point being that Wilber gives two simple terms to this dynamic of Ascending and Descending currents in evolution—respectively, he labels them EGO and ECO—referring to them as Camps of thought that flow in discourses from the currents of the Spiral. Because these Camps get “split” via the ‘Fear’ Project (= when healthy differentiation in growth becomes more or less unhealthy dissociation in growth). The ‘big’ problem in why pathology continues in evolution, according to Wilber, is because the EGO and ECO Camps do not see their own biases, and privilege their own perspective on things and their own solutions to the problems they interpret—in other words, they cannot see their own shadows or that they are the Shadow itself. In my language, they are good healthy directions of interest in knowledge and knowing—ECO-logical and EGO-logical but they are both, more or less, fear-based themselves. Fearlessness is the path which can get them to better “heal” and re-route their biased arrogance and ignorance. Again, that’s a long story I cannot go into further.

EGO Camp folks see transcendence as the ‘golden’ purpose of Life and Spirit and Evolution—let’s just transcend all this messy pathology by going to higher levels of consciousness—and ultimately the nondual level where all dualism (and fear) is vanished in the eternal bliss of Oneness.

The ECO Camp folks see transcendence as the problem (evil) of which has left humans beings so ‘star-struck’ in their ascending that they do not know how to return to the basics of what is under their feet—a humbleness and a connection with Mother Earth—they are the folks who have instigated the best and worst of the ecological/environmental movements as ‘corrective.’ In extremes, both the EGO and ECO Camps create more pathology in their attempt to solve pathologies. They each blame each other for the worst problems. Wilber describes the dynamics and pragmatic ways this “battle” takes place, and it is at least 2500 years old in his view.

ECO Camp is very consistent in appeal as it embraces the Indigenous concept of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). There is a vast growing literature on this and more and more examples of the value of TEK as it brings ‘corrective’ ways of valuing Nature to a W. Dominant Worldview
that has left Nature behind and steps on it as a mere “resources” for its higher (so-called) aspirations of transcending the Earthly basis to a tower vision of existence one that even leaves the planet to explore and live on other planets—this is the Ascender image in its upward mania of growth. My point (as with Wilber’s) is that both Ascender-Descender paths of growth and dynamics are essential to ‘balance’ not fight one against the other. ‘Fear’ Projections from Ascender to Descender and from Descender to Ascender pit them as ‘enemies’ and that’s not helpful. A truly integral perspective (and FMS-7 perspective) sees their relationship more clearly and offers a Path of Fearlessness as the way to that ‘balance’. That is why TEK-1 (Ecology) needs TEK-2 (Egology)—or to put it simply, the Ecological perspective and wisdom needs the Egological (or Psychological) perspective and wisdom. I argued earlier in the paper that Gandhi was instituting not so much a TEK-1 but a TEK-2 intervention based on Indigenous traditions.

Wilber’s big critique is that although there is immense pathology created via excessive EGO Camp biases and privileging (including a pathological “spirituality” that goes with it especially in a lot of the ‘new age’) — there is an even more destructive and now heavily dominating ECO Camp bias and privileging (including “eco-spirituality”) that is the “Descender” voraciously reducing all the verticality in Reality which the Ascender’s value and help to pursue, to a “flatland ontology” of surfaces (e.g., postmodernism is the classical example of this, as well as all anti-hierarchy movements). The Descenders, says Wilber have gone-too-far. My point, is that TEK-1 needs to balance with TEK-2 if we are to create a truly integral and ‘balanced’ way of living and being on this planet in the 21st century.

Indigenous-Western-Encounter: Mapping the Territory

Just because Four Arrows and I are clear that any new psychology (and spirituality, religion) need to be put through an Indigenizing and fearlessnessizing ‘corrective’—we are not naive that one merely shifts from being primarily Western to primarily Indigenous. That imaginary of transformational change at this scale is likely not helpful in the immediate term although maybe it is a good guiding vision in the longer term. Similarly, I have documented for decades the way people of Love want to transform

42 Wilber (1995) distinguishes between ‘natural’ hierarchies (what he prefers to call holarchies) from ‘dominator’ hierarchies (pathologies)—the latter, are fear-based the former are not.
the world of Fear by just adding more Love into the world. One could adopt a similar strategy of just adding more Indigenous into the W. Dominant world—but I am doubtful either strategy is realistic in the immediate. I have suggested all along that fearlessness (as path) is the best way to go and I situate that trialetic relationship as Love <--- Fearlessness <--- Fear. Fearlessness is the ‘grease’ for the transformation. We need a ‘new’ fearlessness psychology, and an integral one that brings TEK-1 and TEK-2 into ‘balance’ and all of these ‘Big Picture’ aspects are really part of the important ‘mapping’ that is involved in change which really brings a new direction for humanity. The old maps to guide us are failing badly.

In this short section I wish to introduce the Indigenous-Western-Encounter, which I could just as easily phrase as the Love-Fear-Encounter. The issue of pragmatic and theoretical concern is how to get these realities of the encounter (real conflict, real battle) back into the minds of people’s and to not create an overly-simplified solution or vision that does not have the “technologies” to make the transitioning, to bring about the change and the greater transformation required. For Four Arrows he is not content with typical educational reforms brought about in policies by leaders and educators who are totally embedded in mainstream education—yet, he knows that there are not enough Indigenous resource people to carry on the necessary re-education—the essential Indigenizing. So, he is out to teach everyone to be able to teach (more or less) good Indigenizing—and the psychology and ecology that go with it (TEK-2 and TEK-1, to use my terms). I also am suggesting a similar fearlessnessizing is required and that ought to at least cover the ecology and psychology domains as well. I’ll get to that issue later with my discussion of “eco-fear.”

So, to conclude here I am suggesting the Indigenous-Western-Encounter (IWE) has to now be the adopted frame of reference of the conflict going on. This is my conflict perspective applied on this vast scale. It is not a perspective unfamiliar to most postcolonial and neocolonial thinkers and critiques. IWE ought to articulate Psychology, Education and all the other aspects of the basic socialization process of human beings. It is easy to blame the W. Dominant Worldview, making it all bad and downhill ever since the “point of departure” (a la Four Arrows) and not take another perspective on reality and evolution. For me, that’s too binary and looses creative possibilities too much. It has a purpose though to wake us up to the “battle” going on and its destructivity. I prefer the “integral” solution and the notion of Ascender-Descender-Encounter as part of the entire kosmology by which consciousness has and is evolving. Growth and development, in otherwords, is always “messy” and has dissociations within it, for lots of
reasons as systems are complex and breakdown. My view here is evolutionary you might say, not a culturalist perspective (this latter, the most common) when it comes to the big encounters we face, Ascender-Descender, Love-Fear, Indigenous-Western, and so on. The integral evolutionary perspective, guided by an authentic Fearlessness (FMS-7) perspective and theory, is my way of offering the gift of fearlessness back into the conflicts and battles, debates and violence that so often arises because we lack a good enough mapping of the ‘Big Picture.’ Culture is not everything, and worse, it has been long susceptible to become a “culture of fear” not much different, only in degree, from Fear’s Empire. Again, I am not a “culturalist” in my orientation to understanding Evolution, the Spiral of Life. I include the best of the culturalist perspective on things, but I refuse to be pulled only into a culturalist orientation—of which much of the current TEK discourse is embedded, unfortunately. That’s why I introduce IWE as something larger (to include TEK-1 + TEK-2), and something that won’t go away, and something that may be adopted by all peoples. Then, we have to work with it (conflict)—in that sense, we have to ‘work together’ and make ‘mappings’ of the directions we want to go as a species—on this planet in these precarious times. We each need each other, just like the ECO Camp (Indigenous-based, Nature-based) thinking needs EGO Camp (universal notions of development of consciousness in vertical dimensions).

The overly-dominant psychology that has become an ideology of psychologism (infiltrated with anti-Indianism ideology and fearism-t) is no longer good enough—in fact, it has proven to be disastrous. The W. Dominant Worldview alone is deadly, with some good elements, and the Indigenous Worldview can really help but it too has its limitations. Let’s move on now to the last part of this paper where I show how a study of “eco-fear,” as a heuristic model, has the potential to fall into the imaginary of either the W. Dominant Worldview (which calls it “ecophobia”) or the Indigenous Worldview that calls it “reverential fear.” I argue for going beyond this either/or argumentation to an integral perspective likely to be more effective—and I mean effective in the analysis of and solving of the global environmental crisis currently cascading and threatening most all life on the Earth.
Study of Eco-Fear: Indigenous-Western-Encounter

Alex & Deborah (2019) have a fascinating paper involving environment and literature debates which have the focus on “ecophobia” \( (a \ la \ Estok^{43}) \). They foreground taking a contrasting position on the nature and role of ecophobia as it has been presented, which I would suggest is the W. Dominant Worldview perspective. Alex & Deborah take an Indigenous Worldview perspective and this creates an intriguing and important debate about the nature and role of fear (of Nature).

Estok (2018) has rightfully argued that anxiety and fears about Nature (in discourses and literary texts) need to be studied as a specialized sub-field of ecocriticism. He is concerned that much of that discourse perpetuates “fear of Nature” in pathological levels (i.e., ecophobia). I agree because fear is that important in shaping near everything humans perceive, think, and act out. Estok (2018) acknowledges my contribution to his notion of the *ecophobia hypothesis*:

> ... R. Michael Fisher, in his research on fear, understands that the ecophobia hypothesis ‘is a large calling for critical analysis and re-framing of the entire field of ecocriticism. (p. 7).

Estok, however, does not near go into any in depth consideration of my work on fear/fearlessness. I think that compromises his hypothesis and its value. Alex & Deborah also critique Estok (and others) in their limited view of the dynamic at base of the discussion—that is, “fear of Nature.” Alex & Deborah, preferring to distinguish the Indigenous-based “eco-fear” (as a “reverential fear” as natural and healthy) acknowledge my contribution to their critique:

> In indigenous communities, the deep relationship between the people and their land is maintained through sacralization of cultural and natural materials. If looked at closely, the process of sacralization of a natural/cultural material is manifested as fear, awe, and/or reverence creating a nexus of nature-culture-sacred. While eco-fear [the choice concept] belongs to an integrative ideology, ecophobia, on the other hand, is an extreme point [pathology] in the spectrum of fear…. R. Michael Fisher calls eco-fear a “deep fear of nature”…. He explains it as a deep-rooted,

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43 One of the leaders, not the only one, from postmodern literary criticism is Simon Estok (e.g., see Estok, 2018).
an extreme fear of disastrous events in nature” [but].... Fear of nature and what Fisher calls a “deep love for Nature and things wild” can certainly coexist, and it is not always useful to understand the fearful relation between humans and their ecology as ecophobia. Instead, eco-fear [or reverential fear] is a cultural tool that can be used traditionally [TEK-2] to establish the interconnection between humans and ecology. Traditional indigenous communities employ values, such as reverence and respect, as a cultural tool aiding physical connectedness with nature. In an Indian context, the indigenous communities are in a state of tradition-modern flux with eco-fear (with its sacred manifestations) violently transforming to ecophobia (a total denial of the integrative ideology).... Indigenous Reverential Eco-fear ... shows a sense of integration.... Fear [from an Indigenous Worldview] is one of the means used to offer reverence....

What Estok, Alex & Deborah, do not realize is that in the IWE context one has to talk about a fearlessness psychology of the Indigenous Peoples and their Worldview(s)—a point, I argued earlier in this paper. “Fearlessness” is not mentioned in the above authors or by others talking about ecophobia or eco-fear. Besides that limitation, there are great lessons to come from the critique of Alex & Deborah in that “sacralization” of fear itself is part of the Indigenous Worldview (and psychology). Four Arrows often writes that the purpose of fear is to move one to adopt a virtue—e.g., patience, courage, prudence, etc. That’s the Indigenous way, he claims. This is not typically the way of the W. Dominant Worldview which is afraid of fear, and wants to kill it ultimately, or conquer it. Such a perspective is not found in the Indigenous Worldview.

I would add to Alex & Deborah’s explication and defense of an alternative explanation to fear management in and across cultures, and especially in premodern cultures (i.e., Indigenous). The part I would add is that the animals and plants offer teaching on fear and its management, its transformation too (a point raised by Four Arrows earlier in this paper). I would also add that the very sacralization of fear they are talking about as so healthy to people-land connectivity, could easily be interpreted as a fearlessnessizing the fear experience, which is similar to making fear/fearlessness reverential in its basis—making it spiritually-based in conceptualization. The ecophobia literature, from what I can tell, is not much into dealing with spiritual dimensions, never mind Indigenous di-

dimensions nor fearlessnessizing. So much more could be said about the work of Alex & Deborah, and I recommend people read it themselves.

What is important in all this discussion is how foundations for a ‘new’ fearlessness psychology are integrative of past and present wisdom and knowledge (see TEK-1 + TEK-2). Alex & Deborah bring TEK-2 into the foreground as a ‘new’ psychology which is Indigenous and thus contextualizes the fear experiencing in a unique way. I would call it a leading people onto the path of fearlessness. This is what has been missing in the W. Dominant Worldview.

However, what I find missing in Four Arrows’ approach and Alex & Deborah in regard to fearwork, fear management/education, is a more nuanced developmental and evolutionary (i.e., integral) perspective and framing of the problems—of the Fear Problem on the planet. Albeit, that is a larger topic for another time. However, we the IWE context is taken serious and my TEK-1 + TEK-2 as complementary paths of knowledge and knowing about fear (and ‘fear’)—then, there will be a much larger conversation to be had and one that takes seriously the metaphysics of ‘Fear’ Project(ion) dynamics in the kosmos—that go beyond the battle of the IWE to the Ascender-Descender battle—archetypally.

I think any good fearlessness psychology is going to make great gains by giving “eco-fear” its due consideration—as foundational to a ‘better’ fear management/education and psychology for our times—and, no more is this imperative in the Anthropocene Era with massive extinctions and global warming—that is, with immanent eco-disasters everywhere. Eco-fear is going to keep getting hotter, correlated somewhat with CO₂ levels going up. It is a strange ECO-EGO correlation that needs an integral approach. We just have not seen the kind of ‘new’ psychology needed for this world we are heading into.

I believe there are lots of pieces to draw on, and the Indigenous Worldview is has great gifts, but we need so much more—and, we need frameworks of methodologies and perspectives that can work with the battles ongoing IWE and ECO-EGO being right at the top of the priority list not to be denied, or we will pay a great cost for remaining arrogant and ignore-ant. This all puts the Fear Problem, as I have articulated it for over 30 years right at the core as a starting point for a fearlessness psychology.
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