

# RADICAL LOVE

## IS IT RADICAL ENOUGH?

R. MICHAEL FISHER  
CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL INQUIRY  
AND INTEGRAL EDUCATION

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### *Abstract*

The author introduces and applies critical fear analysis from his own critical repertoire to the seven articles on Freire's "radical love" in the Special Issue *IJCP* 5(1), 2015. He concludes that the articles offer some useful insights on love but do not adequately nor fully engage the dialectic and/or dialogical Love-Fear dynamic found in most wisdom literature and major religions around the world through time. He provides his critique based on four Love-Fear models for inquiry that demonstrate linear binary, dialectic, and trialectic modes. His conclusion is, that without a Freirean dialectic (e.g., Love-Fear as meta-motivational forces) applied to the understanding of "radical love," an inadequate radicality will be gained. The latter discourses will ultimately fail enhancing an effective critical pedagogy of love as counterhegemonic within today's political "culture of fear" context.

*Keywords:* critical fearanalysis, radical love, Love-Fear dynamic, meta-motivation, Freirean dialectic

This article is a response to the Special Issue on “Radical Love,” *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 5(1), 2015. After reading the seven articles in the Special Issue, which examine Paulo Freire’s notion of “radical love” as core to critical pedagogy and the goal of *conscientization* (i.e., *conscientização* or critical consciousness), a critique emerged based on a specific focus regarding how *fear* is directly discussed and conceptualized in relation to direct texts discussing *love*. In any oppressive society the goal of the educator ought to be to look in-depth (outer and inner), while guiding others likewise through dialogue, to inquire critically below the constructive normative surfaces of existence and be willing to enter into the fear/terror (e.g., taboos) by which oppressive societies sustain their structures via “dominated consciousness ... full of fear and mistrust” (Freire 1970, p. 166). Such fear and mistrust impedes *conscientization* at every turn. Radical love ought to be part of this counterhegemonic and liberation process. However, after reviewing the seven articles, arguably, love is not enough. In essence, there is the proverbial ‘elephant in the room’ unacknowledged. I question and call for a more complete understanding of conscientization, radical love, and critical pedagogy in the context of a post-9/11 era. I proceed with a working hypothesis that implicates the elephant in the room as *fear*.

## LOVE-FEAR DIALECTICS

Before I begin a closer and critical reading of the biased discourses in the seven articles, and the problematics of Freire’s conception of radical love, it might prove useful to utilize some dialogical visual images to begin to initiate my argumentation. Freire’s work is all about dialogue, be it through images, texts, peoples in conversations or other learning exchanges. I am attempting here to offer images to provoke more explicit Love-Fear talk amongst educators and those we serve. The reason for capitalizing *Love* and *Fear* will quickly become symbolically and theoretically explicit. Why are Love and Fear primary to attend to? There is a long history of use of these concepts or principles, secular and sacred, as near-universal binary ethical categories. For example, the philosopher MacMurray (1935) expressed this well: Now there are two, and I think only two, emotional attitudes through which human life can be radically determined. They are love

and fear. Love is the positive principle, fear the negative. Love is the principle of life, while fear is the death-principle in us. (p. 58)

This echoes not only Freire's ethical binary conception, where he recognized love and true radicalness as generically more biophilic and fear more necrophilic (Freire, 1997, p. 83) but also echoes the findings of Freud's *Eros* and *Thanatos* drives, and what is popularly cited in biblical terms as "perfect love [God's] drives out fear" (1 John 4:18). Dass (2010) concludes: "The ego is based on fear, but the soul is based on love" (p. 11); the popular spiritual psychiatrist, Jampolsky (1979), similarly taught the ethical dictum: "love is letting go of fear." One other example: "The two emotions, love and fear, are correlative and opposite, just as heat and cold, light and darkness, good and evil... and an excess of one expels the other" (Moses, 1905, p. 239).

This near-universal, if not archetypal, dimension of these two value spheres or worldviews, calls for us to hypothetically entertain them with the power they deserve using capitals at times to make my case. I assert Love and Fear are emotional attitude-sets with a concomitant mind-set in regards to human nature and Life (*a la* MacMurray) and thus, qualify as meta-motivations (Fisher, 2010, pp. 167-70) shaping most everything we do including evolution, history, and human development (compare dual-motivation theory in Pyszczynski, Greenberg and Arndt, 2011). In Fisher (2012a), I summarized a growing recognition of this Love-Fear dynamic across diverse texts, validating its critical importance on the path of liberation. As well, I documented a variation on this theme expressed by diverse educators, who critique the current "culture of fear" as dominating much of the organizational politics of Western institutions (Moïsi, 2010), especially State-run education regimes (Fisher, 2007; Fisher, 2011). The culture of fear ought to be taken as an oppressive meta-context for analyzing, countering and improving education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (e.g., Fisher, 1998, 2016).

Beginning with Figure 1, the common *radical love* assumption in the Freirean articles is the formulation of a strong philosophical declaration that Love is greater (>) than Fear. Similarly, Ryoo et al. (2009), writing about critical spiritual pedagogy, unproblematically highlight "the importance of love over force and love over fear" (p.

141). This assumption, like in the quotes above, is related to the belief that Love *conquers* Fear in a decidedly one-way dynamic and that this dynamic is *good* on multiple implied dimensions. I have seen in my hometown (Carbondale, IL) this very image on auto bumper stickers in the last few years distributed by a local Sufi group.

I begin to problematize the following sequence of images/text by asking questions and/or attuning to feelings and/or emotions, intuitions, and ideas.

## 1. LOVE > FEAR

*Figure 1. Two Meta-Motivational Forces in Relationship*

Inevitably, in dialectic fashion, the assertion and directionality of power/ knowledge, “wisdom,” implied in Figure 1 ought to be challenged with the most basic form of its logical anti-thesis in

Figure 2.

## 2. FEAR > LOVE

*Figure 2. Two Meta-Motivational Forces in Reversal*

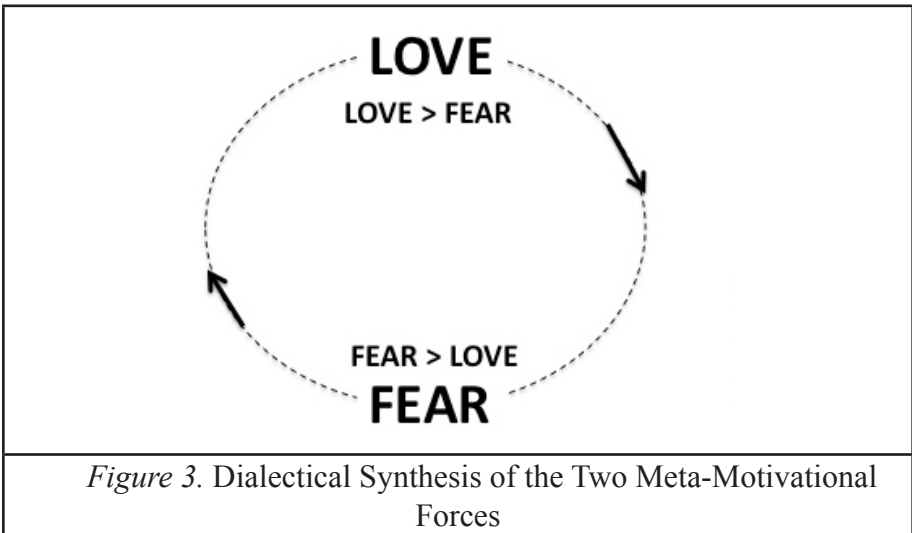
Arguably, a case could be made (e.g., Fisher, 2010), and it seems closely true to my experience with human beings after 64 years on this planet Earth, that Fear is greater than Love. As Proteus poetically acknowledged (Blunt, 1881, p. 84):

The very courage which we count upon  
A single night of fever shall break down,  
And love is slain by fear.

Analogously, this is related to the claim that Fear is the greater power and, under certain conditions, *conquers* Love. The implication is that the outcome is *not* so good—unlike in Figure 1—and rather, it is bad/evil. I have not seen auto bumper stickers with the slogan from Figure 2. The integrative postmodern and/or poststructuralist thinker may see too many problems set within the binary form Love and Fear as polar opposites, dualisms, worldviews and enemies. Yet, for me there is a worthy philosophical necessity to dwell, at least strategically, with the ethical juxtaposition in binary forms, which are, as I shall show, also

somewhat dynamic and dialectic, not fully static—that is, if we think of flowing meta-motivational forces on such grand scale as are being expressed here.

Figure 3 offers a way to dwell with the juxtaposition of these great forces. The way is dialectical and dynamic as a “whole system.” We move off the linear-dynamic of one subject having to ultimately be more powerful and dominating than the other. The ‘circle’ flow idea presents living as an organism at any moment more or less somewhere along the dynamic—more Fear, more Love; more fear-based motivation, more love-based motivation—an endless cycling as simply “the way it is.” Dare we call the dynamic ‘natural’ and yet, it is clearly an image of a formative dialectical/dialogic relationship, that Freire has always put at the forefront of his critical philosophy and theories of pedagogy, *conscientization*, and the dialectical process of oppression and its unwinding *via* liberation.



Dialectical here, in general, meaning simply: you *cannot* have one without the other, Freire would likely say. But did he ever say that in regard to his own philosophy and theories or claims about love and fear or Love and Fear?

And finally in Figure 4, I present my own, albeit oversimplified, version of a synthesis, or “solution,” to the problem set forth implicitly in this entire set of images.

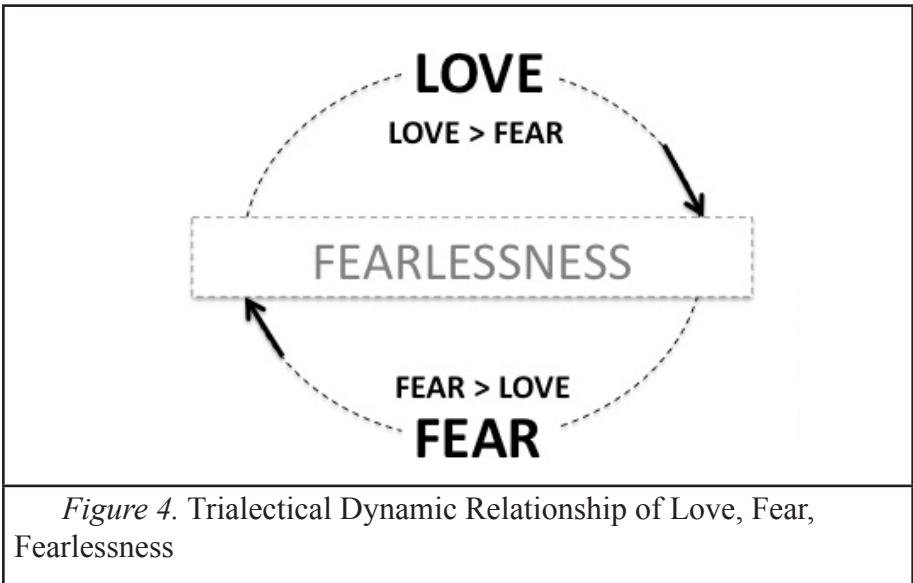


Figure 4 is one way I have both conceived of the human Love-Fear Problem, and concomitantly pointed to its solution. It is constructed upon a trialectical dynamic that integrates the dialectical but also transcends it, into what is arguably a truly integral formation that is closest to reality.

## TOWARD A CRITICAL FEARANALYSIS OF "RADICAL LOVE"

When in graduate school studying curriculum and instruction, I came across an indictment by Albert Camus that poetically sums up the 20th century and fit my critical boomer-temperament and further validated my quest to understanding everything I could about fear. According to Corradi (1992, p. 267), Camus wrote in *Combat*, one of the underground newspapers in France (c. 1946):

The 17th century was the century of mathematics,  
the 18th century of physical sciences, and  
the 19th century biology.  
Our 20th century is the century of fear.

And one could easily add regarding a post-9/11 era: Our 21st century (is shaping up) as the century of terror. It appears this “progression” (*aka* regression?) is a dialectical reality of modernity in a nutshell, at least, as the existentialist Camus would interpret it. I interpret this as both an existentialist and fearist perspective (Fisher and Subba, 2016)—that, fear has to be given center attention as both motivation and effect of our current hegemonic Western rational knowledge enterprise. We need a global ‘Fear’ Studies that re-envision(s) the definition(s) and meaning(s) of fear and fear management (Fisher, 2006).

bell hooks (2000), claimed with dismay regarding the tendency in many societies, and America in particular, that: “Cultures of domination rely on the cultivation of fear.... In our society we make much of love and say little about fear” (p. 93). That, I would agree, is the norm, based on my experience for decades of trying to get educators to partake in a serious discussion about Love and Fear or about how fear-based much of our mainstream curricula and pedagogy is. Eventually, I named this radical textual discourse analysis and other emancipatory practices (Fisher, 2012b), moving from *fear to fearlessness*—as a methodology called *critical fearanalysis*. The analogous nature of which can be found, in part, in the methodology called psychoanalysis. A critical fearanalysis is thus a complicated analysis of how we construct discourses *on* fear and *of* fear (Fisher, 2006, pp. 52-53) that perpetuate oppression, or the culture of fear dynamic. It also searches for ways that *fearlessness* acts as a counterhegemonic process (Fisher, 2010).

After an initial fearanalysis of texts, the Special Issue on “Radical Love” in *IJCP* 5(1), demonstrates the parsing out of love-talk and the unfortunate displacing of equal attention to fear-talk. This imbalance is further problematized in the context of: What and who constitutes critical pedagogy along this Love–Fear continuum of meta-motivational forces? How has Freire, and how have his followers, come to acknowledge or even face the elephant in the room—that is, fear?

Similar to that of hooks, my experience has shown that the vast majority of people, educators especially, do not like to *see*

this elephant, fear, in the room beneath human progress; rather, with optimistic excitation they prefer to access, think and speak about education as caring, hope, courage—and “radical love.” The fearanalyst, working a forensic craft (Fisher, 2015b), suggests that rhetoric may be the lighter surface of something deeper, darker and unconscious both individually and collectively. A former self-described love-centered, seasoned, education professor and poet, my former doctoral research co-supervisor, made a confession that much of his desire for love has been largely avoidance of facing the fear beneath it (Leggo, 2011). Paulo Freire and Parker J. Palmer, eminent critical educators, have both written of the “courage to teach” but only do so because of the *fear to teach* as its dialectical experiential ground (English & Stengel, 2010, p. 538-39; Palmer, 1998).

## HOW “RADICAL LOVE” DISCOURSE IN CRITICAL PEDAGOGY SUCCEEDS AND FAILS

First, the focus in this section is on reviewing education literature in regard to the Love-Fear dynamic and, secondly, on what the seven articles on Freire’s “radical love” concept say and enact as discourses. Overall, they succeed in putting forth a compelling set of diverse notions and applications about the pivotal role of love and particularly radical love in critical pedagogy. Unfortunately, as indicated in the examples below, the discourse in the seven articles follow the form of Figure 1—with an emphasis and attempt to understand Love which ends up displacing possibilities of at least equal attention to Love’s dialectical partner—Fear (Figure 3, Figure 4). My hypothesis in this article: the biased form of Figure 1 neglects the possibilities of a deeper understanding of radical love, which would be possible primarily through engaging the critical forms of analysis and conscientization required in Figures 2-4.

Despite my own long-haul efforts to spread an interest in the Love-Fear discourse, or paradigm, in education circles, there has been only rare interest shown (Moore, 2013; Starlin, 1985) and even less actual writing by other professional educators. A search of the academic education literature indicates that Lin (2006) and Yeager and Howle (2012) have, like myself, gone beyond other professional Western



educators in the late 19th century (Barnard, 1876, p. 275; White, 1886, p. 325) and more recent scholarship (Leamson, 1999, p. 71), with the latter briefly mentioning the “love and fear” dynamic or synthesis as essential to balance and gaining respect and reverence towards parents/teachers in the pedagogy of children. A longer study of the interest in “love and fear of God” is forthcoming regarding religious education/ethics in the Abrahamic religious traditions. However, Lin (2006) and Yeager and Howle (2012), much like myself, take a much broader critical paradigmatic perspective on the direction of education with direct, albeit still limited, attention on the two meta-motivational forces. Yeager and Howle (2012) wrote,

What we [universally] have in common is the simple, innate ability to tell the difference between love and fear, peace and war, and harmony and chaos. What we do not yet [always] share [in common] is an immediate awareness of the effect of repeatedly choosing one *or* the other [by which to behave in the world]. Everyone has the innate ability to access his or her intuition, although not all have this ability on a conscious level. Therefore, not everyone can access this [discerning] ability readily as an immediate, in-the-moment resource. If we did, there would be no hesitation in choosing love instead of fear, peace instead of war, and harmony instead of chaos. (p. 291)

Walsh quoted in Lin (2006) wrote of the radical-ethical-educational imperative, that is, “to have peace or not is to choose between love and fear” (p. 19). Lin (2006) and Yeager and Howle (2012), somewhat like myself, and very similar to others outside of the field of Education, have adopted, knowingly or not, the first phase of a critical fearanalysis of critical pedagogy. This first phase takes into account Figure 1 as a significant analytical tool for transformation of a world based on Fear as negative force, for example a cause and consequence of wars, to one based on Love as positive force, as a cause and consequence of peace—compare Lin’s (2006) defining of this affective and ethical paradigm shift. Again, Figure 1 and its antithesis Figure 2 represent Love *vs.* Fear as binary, either/or, more than Love *and* Fear (Figure 3, Figure 4) as dialectical, both/and. The former is an ancient

conceptual, dualism, frame of meaning carried on in discourse by a plethora of diverse contemporary thinkers mostly outside of education, some of which I have already cited in this article.

From a critical fearanalysis, I now look at the discourses on “radical love,” *a la* Freire, in the *IJCP* 5(1), 2015. It behooves us to self-reflect on our own relationship to Love vs. Fear, Love and Fear, and Figures 1, 2, 3—and, perhaps as radical-leaning as Figure 4, which is unique to my own project in transforming some fundamentals of critical pedagogy. The simplest beginning of a critical fearanalysis is to document how text(s) represent and discuss fear—even when the main topic may be something else, as in this case Freire followers writing about “radical love.” The second approach is to see what Paulo Freire himself wrote about fear that is pivotal to critical pedagogy and conscientization at its core. We want to compare these. Critical fearanalysis sets no rigid rule of which of these beginning steps one does first in a critical discourse analysis.

In order to keep this fearanalysis very concise due to the limitations of this brief article, I want to cite Freire (1970) in his classic emancipatory text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Of course, there is no doubt, as the *IJCP* 5(1) authors verify, Freire wrote much about love, including radical love, and a lot less about fear (cf. hooks’s complaint earlier). However, in the second sentence of his Preface into the next few pages, Freire (1970) wrote,

I have encountered both in training courses which analyze the role of *conscientização* [conscientization or critical consciousness] and in actual experimentation with a truly liberating education, the ‘fear of freedom’ [relentlessly emerges in teachers/facilitators and participants/learners].... Not infrequently, training course participants [using critical pedagogy] call attention to “the danger of *conscientização*” in a way which reveals their own fear of freedom.... Some...confess: Why deny it? I was afraid of freedom. I am no longer afraid! (p. 19)

Men [sic] rarely admit their fear of freedom openly, however, tending rather to camouflage it—sometimes unconsciously—by presenting themselves as defenders of freedom....*conscientização*

threatens to place the status quo in question, it thereby seems to constitute a threat to freedom itself. (p. 21)

Opening his classic text, a consciously crafted fear-talk is ever-present before love-talk in the Freirean discourse. No doubt a biophilic Love as a positive-path and philosophy is implicit as a meta-context for much of Freire's motivation; yet strategically, his critical pedagogical analysis on fear *contra* freedom forefronts a negative-path and philosophy to liberation. I suggest it is because his very notion of critical consciousness is aimed at what gets in the way of freedom, or liberation—the elephant in the room—fear (e.g., fear of freedom, of which Erich Fromm was keenly interested).

The strategic fearanalysis, in which Freire is implicitly engaging, as a negative-methodology to liberation is not surprising because of his theological background, including Christian liberation theology, of which there are two originary (not the only) ways to God (i.e., the Good, the Ideal, virtuous life); according to Fr. Fox (1986), a creation-centered theological scholar and emancipatory critical educator, there is the “*via Positiva*, a way or path of affirmation, thanksgiving, ecstasy [drawn to love and light as a cataphatic God]” (p. 33). *Via Negativa*, however, is seen as a way of “befriending darkness, letting go” [drawn to emptying, silence, pain and fear, the void as an apophatic God] (Fr. Fox, 1986, p. 127). The latter has resonance with Jampolsky's (1979) “*love is letting go of fear*” dictum. The latter is also coherent, analogous and consistent with Freire's search to find what gets in the way of freedom—this dual motivational theory is also found in other psychosocial and political literature (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Arndt, 2011). Fox (1986) concluded, “There is no *via Negativa* without a *via Positiva*” reflecting his dialectical sensibility to working with these great ethical and emancipatory paths (p. 130).

In other words, Freire's strategic critical consciousness theory and experience with critical pedagogy is arguably, articulated within the *meta-context of fear*—that is, an overwhelming resistance to freedom/liberation and radical love. The other strong point Freire makes, to which I shall return at the end of this article, is that love and liberation intentions can be concealed—“camouflaged” as Freire puts it in the above quote—in critical pedagogy work. I suggest it is *fear*—Fear,

as fear-based motivation—that so conceals, camouflages, and (mis) directs the best love-intended emancipatory pedagogical work into something denigrated, if not propagandist ideologism (e.g., Love-worship). Carl Jung, *via* his enantiodromia principle, warned of this archetypal psychosocial dynamic, that in the conscious pursuit of the good or ideal, the opposite often results (de Laszlo, 1959, pp. 89, 247, 323). Yeager and Howle (2012) in the quote above draw our attention to the critical literacy development required to be able to distinguish between Love and Fear as great meta-motivational forces—with great consequences for peace or war, good or evil, respectively.

I read the seven articles in order to see what balance and integration there is between love-talk and fear-talk when the subject of investigation is “radical love.” Keeping in mind Freire’s (1970) opening *via Negativa* approach to critical consciousness, conscientization, it did surprise me somewhat how meager and shallow is the conscious and dialectical fear-talk in these seven articles. I mentioned earlier they characteristically followed Figure 1 dualism, both implicitly and sometimes explicitly, in dealing with the Love-Fear dynamic. As well, they avoided the *via Negativa* path discourse and followed the *via Positiva*, therefore more or less, representing Freire’s “radical love” concept as all positive, good, and just the cure we need today (Dell & Boyer, 2015, p. 112). The most classically religious and explicit expression of the hegemonic *via Positiva* discourse in the seven articles is that of Colonna and Nix-Stevenson (2015) who assert that critical pedagogy and radical love are eternally intertwined. “Simply,” Nix-Stevenson states, “if radical love is the light, then critical pedagogy is the source of its illumination” (Nix-Stevenson in Colonna & Nix Stevenson, 2015, p. 22).

Among the seven articles, what I do appreciate in Kennedy and Grinter (2015), for example, is their critique of most teachers who merely espouse how much they “love” children, learning and teaching in their educational discourses but do not go deeper. Following in line with Darder (2002), a *la any* Freirean approach, critical pedagogy, Kennedy and Grinter (2015) suggest, requires educators to “critically scrutinize their underlying experiences, thoughts, and beliefs [i.e., prejudices] of love” (p. 43). Yet, scantily is fear even mentioned in

these seven articles and more rare is “love” juxtaposed with “fear” in order to dialectically and critically scrutinize any notions or beliefs about love in general or more specifically radical love.

My own dictum is: The dialectical form of inquiry and knowing (Figure 3, Figure 4) suggests one cannot know Love without knowing Fear and *vice versa*. I am currently in early stages (Fisher, in progress) of developing a Jacobsian conscientization notion, based on Jacobs (1998) with this dictum (Figure 4). This takes an integral-radical metaphysical and Indigenous step beyond Freirean conscientization, where fearlessness is given its due attention as counterhegemonic to a building hegemonic culture of fear as meta-context.

Arguably, an example of such an implicit juxtaposition of Love and Fear can be found in Bryant and McCamish (2015), where (paraphrasing Darder, 2002, *a la* Freirean approach), they assert to practice “teaching as an act of love” (Freire’s claim)—“It requires courage...A passionate love of teaching and a sincere love of people are vital to Freire’s vision of liberation pedagogy” (p. 30). Bryant and McCamish pick up on the need for *courage* when they also quote Darder (2002) on how “to be passionate and to love in the midst of all our fears and anxieties, and imperfections” (p. 38). From a critical fearanalysis perspective, “courage” is a medium-level form of a fear management system (Fisher, 2010, pp. 136-42). Thus *fear as context*, a looming background of “all our fears and anxieties,” is implicated in the need for, and emergence of courage—similar, but distinct, from Fearlessness in Figure 4 (see also, Fisher, 2010, pp. 151-79). Logically, fear (*via* courage, as fear management) is juxtaposed and made dialectically essential to the capability to love as Freire and Darder call for—as radical love. In other words, one would require radical, moral courage, *a la* Henry Giroux, to overcome fear—analogously, as would freedom require radical courage that overcomes fear of freedom (cf. Freire’s quote above). Fear is a necessary context for courage and freedom. In these passages, from the seven articles, I look for how much attention goes toward Fear in proportion as to Love—in this case, radical love. Textual analysis, of course, is limited to text and discourse analysis and one does not know what an actual teacher may do under varying circumstances in the classroom or other pedagogical

locations. It would be an interesting research project to interrogate those educators who have particular *via Positiva* (Figure 1, dualism) biases in their discourse on radical love and how they operate in pedagogical sites under varying conditions compared to dialectical discourses by educators on Love and Fear—another study perhaps, for another time.

There was one outstanding and refreshing article of the seven that was explicit in the dialectical juxtapositioning, albeit in no way was it balanced, of Love and Fear—that was Douglas and Nganga (2015). I think the major reason this article moved so easily into a critical dialectical form (Figure 3) was because of the opening emphasis and framing of their thought around epistemology (Dillard, 2003). They are interested in critical pedagogy and anti-oppressive pedagogy that acknowledges the need to analyze “how we know reality... the ways in which reality is a deeply cultured knowing that arises from and embodies the habits, wisdom, and patterns of its contexts of origin” (Dillard as cited in Douglas & Nganga, 2015, p. 60). They also acknowledge Freire’s approach is not mere methodology of teaching but a “social philosophy” (Douglas & Nganga, 2015, p. 61). I would argue it is a social philosophy grounded in a long tradition of, at least, Western theology that distinguishes the critical importance of the ways we know Love and Fear—and their dynamics, if we are to understand both oppression and escape from it. In their lead up to the explicit theology of Love and Fear relevant to their article and Freire’s radical love, they invoke the work of Cunningham (2004) on the analogous distinction between “false love” and “true love”—all of which to me harkens back to the Freire quote earlier on how love is easily “camouflaged” and distorted by fear-based motivations. Douglas and Nganga (2015) wrote, “In real love, we choose not to speak in the [hegemonic] language of competition and violence, but in that of cooperation and compassion” (p. 63). Colonna and Nix-Stevenson (2015) validate this directly by claiming “this idea of radical love is love over force, fear, and apathy” (p. 7). This all echoes Lin’s (2006) and Yeager and Howle’s (2012) quotes and many others, who write that a love-based way of life leads to good nonviolent things and a fear-based way of life yields the opposite. I interpret “false love” (like

Whitfield's "false self" vs. "true self," due to trauma) as fear-based—that is, "unauthentic love" and "co-dependent" (Whitfield, 1987, p. 10).

In Douglas and Nganga (2015), one of the in-service teachers in their study on radical love articulates well the theoretical problematic in their own experiential voice:

I question whether the term radical love is even appropriate to use to describe our daily human interactions. [while being a Christian myself] My discomfort is rooted in the belief that *love* is one of the most abused concepts in the human experience.... rooted in my belief that much of what we do as humans is actually rooted in selfish-ness and fear, rather than love. (p. 73)

Finally in Douglas and Nganga (2015), in pursuit of better understanding epistemological and spiritual understanding of Freire's radical love, there is some conscious in-depth dialectical discussion of Love-Fear dynamics (Figure 3), albeit, wrapped in religious and spiritual contexts both Christian and Buddhist. Because of its rarity in educational discourse and critical pedagogy, I cite their discussion at length as follows:

1 John 4:18 suggests that "perfect love casteth out all fear" [Figure 1]. In this Biblical text, there's the suggestion that the opposite of love is not hate but fear [echoed in many speeches by great emancipatory leaders, e.g., Mahatma Gandhi, Aung San Suu Kyi, Martin Luther King, Jr., etc.]. While both hooks (2003) and Hahn (1993) suggest that fear is an impediment to love, hooks is intentional about high-lighting the interconnectedness of spirituality, education, and love. Similarly, Hanh (1993) declares that "[T]he usual way to generate force [change] is to create anger, desire and fear. But these are dangerous sources of energy because they are blind, whereas the force of love springs from awareness, and does not destroy its own aims." These theoretical conceptualizations have interesting connections to Freire's understanding of *love*, and more specifically, *radical love*. Freire's notion of love is not entirely dissimilar from the perspectives of popular traditions. In fact, he asserts that 'love

is an act of courage, *not fear*.... a commitment to others.... to the total cause of 'liberation' (1970, p. 78). (p. 64)

Notable as a rarity in educational discourse, Douglas and Nganga (2015) interpret Freire's (1993) writing on dialogue, hope and critical thinking as "never dissociated from *fearless* action—all of which are always more potent than" (p. 65) (in Freire's words:) "false love, false humility, and feeble faith" (p. 92) (italics added for emphasis). My own pursuit of a critical pedagogy of fearlessness (Fisher, 2011) is one that includes discerning "false love," fear and its camouflage, disguises, and conceptualizations of emancipation through a spectrum of consciousness and concomitant fear management systems including *bravery, courage, fear-less, fearlessness* and finally *fearless* (see also Fisher, 2010), which, arguably, can only be confidently derived from Figure 4 as a form of inquiry into Love-Fear dynamics.

## SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

Unique to the seven articles analyzed, Douglas and Nganga (2015) have certainly moved their analysis into a Figure 3 form—that is their success, but their failure quickly follows in that they do not mention "fear" in this same meta-motivational context again in their article after the quote above. Their dialectical critique is weakened and radical love is left still largely unchallenged as their article was intended. At least, they did not fall into the trap of accepting Freire's radical love concept without critique, as is the characteristic of most all the articles comparatively. However, like all other articles in the Special Issue of *IJCP* 5(1), Douglas and Nganga (2015) remain to use fear individually, psychologically and tepidly, and thus have somewhat fallen prey to gross reductionism, arguably, a fear-based epistemology itself.

Fear, as I have implied, via a critical fearanalysis methodology throughout this article, cannot so easily be reduced to psychologism, without doing great epistemic violence to its immense status as a great force 'equal' to Love. As well, fear (Fear) cannot be extracted in any justifiable way from its embedded relationship to the "culture of fear" context, especially after 9/11, which so many educators, including critical pedagogues, have already well described, which I have studied



and summarized (Fisher, 2007; Fisher, 2011; Fisher, 2016). Like Freire himself, *none* of the critical pedagogues in *IJCP* 5(1) included specific mention of the meta-context of a culture of fear, the *via Negativa* approach, and/or provide contextualization where Love-Fear was given its dialectical due attention to help us sort out what Freirean radical love is and can be.

As a critical fearanalyst, Figure 3 and 4 would be the form I would look for in any emancipatory text/discourse, especially in education. The discourse on radical love is implicitly meant to be radical and for good reasons, as it extends beyond the normal ways societies and educators may conceptualize love. I applaud the seven articles and this Special Issue of *IJCP* for stretching us, more radically, in the direction Freire would have wanted. However, it seems to me from this brief critical discourse fearanalysis that the radical did not go far enough. Figure 1, and less so Figure 2, as a form for critical inquiry, which dominated the seven articles, is partial and leaves the dialectic, trialectic and dialogical too constrained—thus impeding a truly radical positioning (Figure 3, Figure 4) regarding the Freirean tradition. I think these seven articles indicate a troublesome fear-based form in engaging Love without critical fearanalysis. Conscientization demands, as Freire once said of critical pedagogy as well, that it “cannot fear the analysis of reality or, under pain of revealing itself a farce, avoid critical discussion” (as cited in Oldenski, 2013, p. 64). I would add to Freire, that critical pedagogy ought not fear analysis of fear (Fear) itself! The “elephant” (fear) needs to be put on the table for all to see for what it really is. But is our table strong enough to hold it?

I believe this analysis has opened the dialogical and dialectical spaces further on the Love-Fear dynamic that ought to be part of any discussion of “radicalness,” which Freire (1997) said, “does not fear change when it is needed” (p. 83). Critical pedagogues can assert and practice love (Love) but only will they do that well, in emancipatory ways, if Love is always put under fearanalysis in context of the times and remains open to change itself—dialogically, and dialectically with Fear.

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