

Creating the new journalism classroom for a future in the balance: A not so modest proposal for a pedagogy of care, dialogue and critique

Créer les nouvelles salles de classe de journalisme pour un futur équilibré : Une proposition pas si modeste pour une pédagogie de soin, de dialogue et de critique

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ABSTRACT

Informed by the work of Paulo Freire, bell hooks, Amílcar Cabral and Grace Lee Boggs, this paper considers the role a journalism education rooted in the liberal arts can play in the age of climate change and COVID-19. By pursuing such an educational path, journalism students can acquire the requisite skills to thrive in a professional newsroom, while contributing to the sustainability of life on earth. The journalism classroom can become a place of imagination which militates against feelings of alienation. It can become a site of solidarity, compassion, and freedom dreams. It is in the classroom where journalism students can learn to question fearlessly, listen deeply, and recognize the value of the stories and critiques of their classmates and instructors. By employing a dialogical method of teaching committed to ending all forms of domination and grounding a pedagogy of care, a classroom ethos can be cultivated that will affirm and restore the humanity of students wounded by the ravages of a global pandemic and change a world in peril.

RÉSUMÉ

S'inspirant des travaux de Paulo Freire, bell hooks, Amílcar Cabral et Grace Lee Boggs, cet article examine le rôle que peut jouer une formation au journalisme ancrée dans les arts libéraux à l'ère du changement climatique et de la COVID-19. En suivant une telle voie éducative, les étudiants en journalisme peuvent acquérir les compétences nécessaires pour s'épanouir dans une salle de rédaction professionnelle, tout en contribuant à la durabilité de la vie sur terre. La salle de classe de journalisme peut devenir un lieu d'imagination qui milite contre les sentiments d'aliénation. Elle peut devenir un lieu de solidarité, de compassion et de

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rêves de liberté. C'est dans la salle de classe que les étudiantes en journalisme peuvent apprendre à poser des questions sans crainte, à écouter profondément et à reconnaître la valeur des histoires et des critiques de leurs camarades de classe et de leurs formateurs et formatrices. En employant une méthode d'enseignement dialogique qui s'engage à mettre fin à toutes les formes de domination et à fonder une pédagogie de l'attention, il est possible de cultiver une éthique de la classe qui affirmera et restaurera l'humanité des étudiants blessés par les ravages d'une pandémie mondiale et qui changera un monde en péril.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused devastation around the world, killing more than 53,000 people in Canada since 2020 and more than 6.98 million people worldwide (World Health Organization, n.d.). The pandemic also has disrupted the daily working lives of post-secondary educators and students. In addition to contending with COVID-19, human beings are facing a series of catastrophic global crises, including climate change, ecosystem degradation and resource depletion that pose chronic risks to their existence (Gurleyen & Hackett, 2016, p. 27). To confront these existential challenges, humans must devise new ways of being. They need a vision of the future that will consider a fundamental shift in their relationship with the earth and their fellow human beings (Boggs & Paine, 1978, p. 4). The central project of humanity at this fraught historical juncture in the 21st century can only be to make the planet sustainable for human life. Human beings must resolve how not to self-immolate and dispense with suicidal habits, like the habitual use of fossil fuel dependent products (Vaillant, 2023). If human society is to achieve that goal, journalism will have a critical role to play in that transformation. As G. Stuart Adam (2001) argues, “journalism is central to democratic life. Its health and the health of public life are intertwined” (p. 316). Journalism matters because of what it can do: a journalism dedicated to truth, accuracy, transparency, and non-discrimination can be a bulwark of democracy (Rosen, 1999, p. 21). It can make powerful institutions accountable, and serve the vital interests of vulnerable local, national, and international communities (McBride & Rosenstiel, 2014, p. 2). As climate change manifests itself in all its dystopian fury, for the sake of humanity journalists cannot afford to be neutral: there is too much at stake for journalists to be mere stenographers (Ward, 2008). As Kelly McBride and Tom Rosenstiel (2014) suggest, journalism should have a point of view (p. 4). That view must be moored to scientific truth. If journalism is to be a core element of an open society, a robust journalism education must be cultivated. As the world inches closer to climate breakdown, there’s a need for a journalism education that focuses on the practical and the abstract (Babic & Sharma, 2023). Journalism educators

must train their students to succeed as working journalists, but more fundamentally equip them to become citizens of the world.

As a journalism educator, I’m preoccupied with the role of my discipline and pedagogy in helping make the sustainable world we need for humans to survive as a species. How can the post-secondary journalism classroom become a site of transformative possibility (Harewood & Keefer, 2009)? How do you create a space of imagination and what Kelley (2003) calls “freedom dreams” which militate against feelings of social alienation? How can the journalism classroom become a model of compassion and healing (hooks, 2003, p. 43)? How can it become a space of liberation, not indoctrination? How can the journalism classroom counteract forces of domination (hooks, 2003, p. 1)?

This paper offers a new direction for journalism education. It identifies an approach to teaching in the classroom that seeks to meet the needs of journalism students living in a fraught moment in global history in which the future of human existence lies in the balance (Ward, 2008). Taking an autoethnographic approach, I argue that by employing a dialogical and dialectical method of teaching grounded in a pedagogy of care, what Martin Luther King (1957) called a “beloved community” can be created within a journalism classroom. This community is rooted in dialogue, dignity, struggle, compassion, and hope (hooks, 2003, p. 35). It is a place where the educator seeks not merely to “transmit but to transform” (Boggs & Paine, 1978, p. 9). This journalism classroom is a sanctuary for liberal arts education where students and their instructors embark on a quest to build a sustainable world and become new people.

A pedagogy of care in the journalism classroom works against dominator culture. As bell hooks (2003) writes, it “resists participation in forms of domination that reinforce autocratic rule” (p. 91). She adds that, “committed acts of caring let all students know that the purpose of education is not to dominate or prepare them to be dominators, but rather to create the conditions for freedom” (p. 92). A pedagogy of care doesn’t seek to indoctrinate students but rather to liberate their critical minds. It is a pedagogy that neither patronizes nor panders. It values compassion, acts with

empathy, and demands accountability (hooks, 2003, p. 92). As devoted practitioners of a pedagogy of care, journalism educators work to ensure that their students master the technical aspects of the craft while receiving a broad liberal arts education. The goal is to help their charges become agents of change and stewards of the Earth. Being a caretaker means you do what's best for "the greater or common good in terms of environmental sustainability" (Carmichael et al., 2023, p. 10). The world's future depends in part on journalists committing themselves to the fight against climate change, climate change denialism and ecosystem degradation.

A dialogical method of teaching is rooted in a liberatory pedagogy and is an epistemological position (Freire, 1993, p. 74). In the dialogic classroom, discipline and rigour prevail, yet the teacher and the student are among equals. The teacher employing a dialogical method seeks to illuminate rather than manipulate their students and demonstrates a willingness to relinquish their position as "the authority" while fulfilling their pedagogical responsibilities. Students and teachers can avoid dogmatism by being dialectical in their thinking. Dialectics is the concept of the continuing evolution of ideas. Dialectical thinking is "thinking about the nature of thinking" (Ho, 2000, p. 1064). The dialectical thinker views issues from multiple perspectives and wrestles with contradictions to generate new knowledge (Ho, 2000, p. 1065).

Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire notes that "dehumanization is a distortion of the vocation of becoming fully human" (Freire, 1993, p. 26). To Freire the *raison d'être* of the dehumanized subject must be to restore their humanity. As the Asian-American social activist and philosopher Grace Lee Boggs argues, human beings should preoccupy themselves with becoming more human (Boggs, 2016). This suggests that they display the most evolved qualities a human being can — a "fuller humanness" (Murphy, 1999, p. 35). A liberal arts education pushes journalist towards that goal.

LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

There has been an ongoing philosophical debate about whether post-secondary education should focus on specialized curricula for specific vocations, or a more general knowledge foundation known as a liberal arts education (Godwin & Altbach, 2016). Over the last century, the debate about what journalism students need to know and how they ought to learn it has centred on whether journalism education should focus on vocational training or the liberal arts (Skinner, Gasher & Compton, 2001). This paper contends that a liberal arts education is best suited for the journalism classroom of the 21st century.

A liberal arts education marries Socrates's belief in the value of the examined life with Aristotle's reflective citizenship (Nussbaum, 1997). To Martha Nussbaum, a liberal arts education "liberates the mind from the bondage of habit and custom, producing people who can function with sensitivity and alertness as citizens of the whole world" (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 8). It imparts fundamental skills including critical thinking and effective communication that are essential for democratic citizenship and participation. It celebrates compassionate imagination, values improvisation, promotes independent thinking, and seeks to produce creative and engaged citizens with broad interests and a range of aptitudes who are not tethered to habit or custom. A liberal arts education strives for breadth and depth of knowledge, recognizes the interconnectedness of the human project, champions global citizenship and acknowledges the value of a multidisciplinary approach in a world of complexity. As Godwin and Altbach suggest,

Major global challenges like climate change and public health crises, cannot be resolved with disciplinary knowledge in a vacuum. Instead they require critical leaders, broad thinking, and problem solving strategies that can only be provided by a combination of disciplinary lenses. (Godwin & Altbach, 2016, p. 21)

An emancipatory journalism classroom seeks to restore the humanity of students wounded by the ravages of COVID-19, providing them with the gumption to confront the world's existential challenges.

ROLE OF JOURNALISM IN MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO

Journalism has claimed to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable (Zerbisias, 1993). Yet, as John Pilger (2007) argues, mainstream journalism has often served to affirm the powerful and the institutions they run, while giving short shrift to the plight of “the wretched of the earth” (Fanon, 2021). Marginalized communities are often dehumanised in the mainstream media through the distortion or omission of their stories (Bayoumi, 2023). Indeed, usually the mainstream media’s “view from the ground [has] value only if... reinforced [from that] on high” (Pilger, 2007, p. 1). Noam Chomsky (1989) buttresses Pilger’s claims, asserting that while the mainstream media purports to be in service to the public good, it protects the privileged “from the threat of public understanding and participation” (p. 26). Mainstream news reporting “in the West” tends to parrot the line of the economically powerful and “conform to the stream of disinformation from Washington and London” (Pilger, 2007, p. 2). Some innocent people who are killed are “worthy victims,” others are not (Bayoumi, 2023). Some massacres are “worthy of our compassion,” others are not (Pilger, 2007, p. 2). Some atrocities can be admitted, acknowledged, and referenced but others are “superficially recorded, let alone documented, let alone acknowledged” (Pilger, 2007, p. 4). The mainstream media seems able to extend solidarity to some, not all. There’s often a noticeable silence when it comes to exposing the imperial atrocities and excesses of Western powers.

MY PEDAGOGICAL AND JOURNALISTIC JOURNEY TO HERE

I was born into a family of educators and writers who were community activists. My parents,

John and Hyacinth Harewood, were columnists for *CONTRAST* – the largest circulation English-language Black newspaper in Canada in the 1970s and 1980s. At a time when stories about Black people in the White Canadian mainstream press were often about sports or entertainment, or centred on pathology, *CONTRAST* and other Black Canadian community newspapers like Ottawa’s *Spectrum* and Montreal’s *Community Contact* represented Black people in multiple dimensions. They served as unapologetic defenders of the interests of Black communities (Walters, 2011, p. 190). One only need compare how the cases of deadly police violence against Black individuals like Buddy Evans, Albert Johnson, Anthony Griffin, Lester Donaldson, Wade Lawson, Presley Lesley, Vincent Gardner, Marcellus François and Raymond Lawrence were covered in the Black Canadian press and the White mainstream press in the 1970s, ’80s and ’90s (Walters, 2011, p. 173). Whereas the White mainstream press often failed to convey the full humanity of the Black men shot by police, the Black Canadian press painted a fuller picture of who they and their families were.

Much of the history of Black American and Black Canadian journalism has been about advocacy (Washburn, 2006, p. 6). Black Canadian newspapers like the *Canadian Observer* and Black American newspapers like the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier* employed journalism as a weapon of power to defend the rights and interests of Black people. Black newspaper trailblazers like Ida B. Wells and the *Canadian Observer*’s publisher J.R.B. Whitney tried to shield Black communities from dehumanizing and deadly attacks launched by members of the dominant White community (Mathieu, 2010, p. 102). They used journalism to chronicle Black life, highlighting community triumphs and tragedies, and telling quotidian stories about the miraculous and the mundane. They offered counternarratives to the dominant accounts of stories presented in White mainstream papers (Giddings, 2008, p. 173). As Cheryl Thompson and Emilie Jabouin (2021) suggest, Black Canadian newspapers like the *Canadian Observer* and the *Dawn of Tomorrow* served as outlets of resistance and promoters of Black Canadian culture. Journalistic work featured in

Black Canadian newspapers has often been restorative and empowering for racially marginalized communities struggling to carve out space in a confining world (Thompson & Jabouin, 2021).

CONTRAST championed African liberation, social justice, and social change domestically and internationally (Armstrong, 2016). It highlighted Black freedom struggles in Apartheid South Africa and Zimbabwe, and provided context to events like the 1979 revolution in Grenada. Several years before Grenada's Revolution, *CONTRAST* highlighted the persistent resistance to the autocratic regime of then Prime Minister Eric Gairy in a way mainstream Canadian papers did not. It devoted significant coverage to what the newspaper alleged was academic racism propounded by the polarizing University of Pennsylvania urbanologist and visiting professor Edward Banfield on the campus of the University of Toronto in March 1974. Banfield, a former advisor to U.S. President Richard Nixon, was expected to speak to a crowd of 200 people but was prevented from doing so by members of the Students for a Democratic Society and their supporters. It documented the activities of the White supremacist organization the Western Guard. In its inaugural edition in 1969, *CONTRAST* featured coverage of the Sir George Williams Affair, then the largest student demonstration in Canadian history, in which Black, Brown and White students occupied the downtown Montreal university for nearly two weeks to protest the systemic racism they insisted was endemic at the institution (Forsythe, 1971). In the 1980s *CONTRAST* editors lambasted British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's supine position on South Africa and called for sanctions against the Apartheid regime (Manna, 1989, p. 4). Witnessing my own parents' involvement with the Black press in Canada as columnists for *CONTRAST* alerted me to how journalists could use their platforms to shape the political discourse and affect change in the society.

The Black Canadian press invariably recognized the humanity of Black people by telling stories that foregrounded their complexity. This was in stark contrast to legacy newspapers like the *Toronto Sun*, the *National Post* and the *Globe and Mail* and columnists like Peter Worthington, Con-

rad Black, Margaret Wente and McKenzie Porter, who frequently displayed contempt for Black people and their communities. Indeed, Toronto Sun columnist McKenzie Porter habitually wrote patently racist pro-Apartheid articles in the newspaper, expressing his support for South Africa's White supremacist regime:

Left-lib denunciations of South African policy spring from the illusion that all men are equal. If the Whites of South Africa enfranchised the primitive Black majority social chaos would ensue. Within a decade the only civilized nation on the African continent would collapse. [see Bueckert, 2018a]

He later added, "although tens of thousands of African-born Blacks have been educated in Western Europe and North America most have acquired only a veneer of civilization" (see Bueckert, 2018b). In a July 24, 1985 column, Porter once again dipped into his satchel of White supremacist bromides and wrote, "for reasons palpable to every reader of history... the average South African black, clad though he may be in collar and tie, still embodies some vestiges of a recent Stone Age past" (see Bradburn, 2018). Porter would later opine that Archbishop Desmond Tutu was "not very bright" (see Bradburn, 2018). Tutu, in fact, possessed three academic degrees, including one from the University of South Africa and King's College London, and was awarded the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1994, a 23-year-old White hairdresser named Georgina "Vivi" Leimonis was gunned down outside a trendy Toronto café, Just Desserts, during a botched robbery. The predominantly White mainstream news coverage of the Just Desserts shooting highlighted how race was "made" by some of Canada's most widely read newspapers and journalists, to pathologize and demonize Black people (Benjamin, 2003). In their survey of how Canada's English language press trafficked in racial bias and contributed to the racialization of crime, Henry and Tator (2002) concluded that, "the media have constructed Jamaicans as people from a crime-ridden and poverty-stricken country ... who consistently present Canadian society

with myriad social problems” (p. 168). The alleged Just Desserts shooters were Black and of Jamaican descent, and they were eventually convicted of Leimonis’s murder. More than 50 per cent of the articles written about the Just Desserts shooting linked it to various social problems and the race of the convicted individuals in the case (Brown, 1999). In the shooting’s aftermath, federal politicians referenced mainstream news reports to assist in their amendment of the Immigration Act (Bill C-44), which made it easier to deport landed immigrants with criminal records. The bill was implemented less than three months after the Just Desserts killing (Barnes, 2009, p. 443). Deportations to Jamaica increased by 36 per cent between 1993 and 1994 (Barnes, 2009, p. 440). Of the 355 deportation cases in Canada between July 1995 and December 1997, 39 per cent of the people deemed to be a danger to the Canadian public were exiled to Jamaica (Falconer & Ellis, 1998).

I came to journalism not because I sought a career in the industry. Like my idealistic fellow members of a maverick McGill University student organization in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Black Students Network, I was committed to changing the world. At the time, we were reading stories written in the mainstream press that misrepresented Black people, and betrayed a worldview rooted in prejudice and contempt (Henry & Tator, 2002). Campus journalism, in the form of university student newspapers like the McGill Daily and radio stations like CKUT-Radio McGill, enabled us to intervene, to present a counternarrative and challenge the status quo. In our quest to unearth and fully represent the stories of people from our communities, journalism became an instrument of power, as it had for generations of Black journalists confronting the depredations of anti-Black racism and capitalism’s contradictions (Cooper, 2000).

I never studied journalism at a post-secondary institution. My journalism education happened primarily at four Canadian campus community radio stations where I hosted and produced current affairs programming focused on the Black Canadian and African diasporic communities: CKLN-Radio Ryerson; CKUT-Radio McGill; CHUO-Radio University of Ottawa; and, CKCU-Radio Carleton.

I also participated in community building projects that introduced ordinary community members to media production (Wagg, 2004). Influenced by the 15 years I spent working within the non-mainstream community radio structure, my journalistic project has sought to democratize, decolonize, and disrupt conventional newsrooms so that a greater range of our communities’ stories could be told. Community radio stations have incorporated decolonizing, democratizing and disruptive practices in a variety of ways (King et al., 2016, p. 211). They promoted social inclusion and empowered communities through media access and production (Correia, Vieira & Aparicio, 2019). At CKUT-Radio McGill, where I worked as the station manager between 1996 and 1999, station decisions were made by consensus within an administrative body that represented staff and volunteers. This approach to sharing power was an attempt to implement an inclusive, non-hierarchical way of decision-making. The more than 300 members of CKUT were a diverse bunch, representing dozens of ethno-racial and religious communities, and class backgrounds. Over three decades I’ve been an organizer and advocate for progressive change within Canadian newsrooms (Canadaland, 2020). As a professional journalist I spoke out about the lack of ethno-racial and class diversity within the spaces I worked.

THE HISTORY OF RACIST TROPES IN NORTH AMERICAN JOURNALISM

The pervasiveness of racist tropes in American and Canadian mainstream media over the centuries have amounted to a protracted misinformation and disinformation campaign (Kumanyika, 2018). These recurring distortions and deceptions have taught Americans and Canadians about the imagined inferiority of Indigenous and other racialized peoples (Anderson & Robertson, 2011, p. 11). Highlighting these tropes that have shaped public consciousness speaks to the influence journalism can have, and the need for a journalism education that adopts a pedagogy of care and centres the humanity of all people.

One of the most virulent anti-Black publica-

tions to emerge in the early part of the 19th century in North America was the *New York Enquirer*. Founded in July 1826, the paper was edited by Mordecai Noah, a journalist and diplomat. Noah attacked Black men relentlessly accusing them of lacking integrity and courage. He questioned the chastity of Black women, supported slavery, and opposed the emancipation of slaves. He referred to Black men as “an abominable nuisance,” and complained that Free Blacks in the city “swell our list of paupers” and “are indolent and uncivil” (Washburn, 2006, p. 17). In response to *The New York Enquirer’s* slander, a group of Free Blacks met in New York City to discuss how to “counteract Noah’s Anti-Black campaign” (Washburn, 2007, 17). Out of this meeting emerged a ground-breaking publication. On March 16, 1827, *Freedom’s Journal* became the first Black newspaper in North American history (Washburn, 2007, 17). Newspapers were now sites of possibility where Black people could read about themselves and be affirmed and celebrated. Even their daily enterprises, however seemingly mundane, were now acknowledged. Their humanity was seen.

The first Black Canadian newspaper was launched in Canada West in 1851. *Voice of the Fugitive* agitated for the abolition of slavery and organized the uplift of the Black community. Founded by Henry Bibb, a formerly enslaved man from Kentucky, and his free-born wife, Mary Bibb, the paper sought to be a champion of the Black Canadian community, which at the time it was under attack by the White news media. Throughout the 1850s, Canada West’s Black population was on the rise. The Fugitive Slave Law in the US caused thousands of Black American fugitive slaves to cross the border in search of safety. Although Canada presented itself as a haven for the formerly enslaved, historian Afua Cooper (2000) argues that White public opinion generally was opposed to the Black presence in Ontario and to Black migration (p. 305). White Canadians, many of whom were themselves recent British emigrants, tolerated Blacks scattered across Canada and the eastern colonies, but mass migration of Blacks into Canada was typically regarded with disdain. Governor General Elgin wrote that because of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, Canada would likely be

“flooded with Blackies” (Cooper, 2000, p. 306). In White Canadian mainstream newspapers in the mid-19th century, Black people were depicted as undesirable settlers, rapists, and lunatics (Cooper, 2000, p. 307). The *Hamilton Spectator* in the years 1851-1853 presented Black folks as criminals and suggested “slavery was the best thing for them” (Cooper, 2000, p. 308). The *Toronto Colonist* called for a poll tax to be applied to all Blacks (Cooper, 2000, p. 308). Historian Jason Silverman has noted that:

As a vehicle of public opinion newspapers were quickly imposed by Canadian whites for catharsis that is in lieu of an illegal physical attack, it was much easier and convenient not to mention legal to launch a written assault upon Black fugitives... Letters editorials and advertisement all revealed a blatant and burgeoning negro-phobia on the part of White Canadians... The more readily apparent the fugitive became in Canadian society, the more intense and vehement the anti-Black sentiment became in the White Press... With few friends in the White Press the fugitive slaves could hope for at best ambivalence and at worst vicious racist propaganda. (Silverman, 1985, p. 54)

Mainstream journalism’s anti-Black racism problem persisted into the 21st century. On July 4, 2004 the *Lexington Herald-Leader* issued the following clarification on its front page: “It has come to the editor’s attention that the *Herald-Leader* neglected to cover the civil rights movement. We regret the omission” (Blackford & Minch, 2004). As the United States marked the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the second-largest circulation newspaper in Kentucky was apologizing for its failure to adequately cover one of the seminal social movements in the nation’s history.

The truth was that those in charge of the paper at the time had chosen largely to ignore the sit-ins and marches that were regular features of 1960s social and political life in Lexington. Like many newspapers across the US South, the *Herald-Leader’s* strategy throughout the civil-rights

era had been to downplay the movement. Indeed, its documentation of the entire civil rights movement was so scant, that when some journalists at the *Herald Leader* tried to conduct research for coverage of the 50th anniversary of the landmark 1954 Brown versus Board of Education US Supreme Court decision, they couldn't find any stories in the paper's archives about what had happened locally (Blackford & Minch, 2004). Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the newspaper and its journalists were more committed to upholding White supremacy than truth and accuracy.

Robert Picard (2015) notes that while journalists extol the virtues of their profession, the self-styled usefulness of their role is debatable. The often-repeated notion that journalists "speak truth to power" presumes "they know what is true, that power listens, and that journalists don't have power and aren't part of the power system" (Picard, 2015, p. 5). As they embark on training young journalists, journalism's modern-day educators must be mindful of the historical harm journalism has caused, particularly to marginalized communities through its sins of omission and commission (Anderson & Robertson, 2011, p. 14).

JOURNALISM EDUCATION AND THE LIBERAL ARTS

As an academic discipline, journalism has been around for about 160 years. The first university journalism courses in the United States were offered in the 1860s (Folkerts, 2014). The first school of journalism, École Supérieure de Journalisme, was founded in 1899 in Paris, France. The first journalism school in the United States was established at the University of Missouri in 1908 (Dunn, 2018). By 1920, journalism schools or departments had been launched in universities across the United States, which quickly established itself as a major centre for journalism education in the world. Canada's first journalism school opened in 1945 at Carleton University. Numerous scholars have identified the liberal arts as playing a critical role in journalism education (cf. Adam, 2001; McCall, 1987; Lindley, 1984; Dennis, 1986; De Mott, 1984; Merrill, 1962; McCombs, 1974).

Two of journalism education's pioneering

figures in North America, Joseph Pulitzer and Willard Bleyer, both venerated the liberal arts in the early 20th century. Pulitzer, the crusading publisher and founder of the Columbia Journalism School, regarded journalism as an art that played a critical role in democratic life. While he championed the creation of a school of journalism that would teach students "the best methods of fact-gathering, representation, and judgement" (Adam, 2001, p. 333), Pulitzer believed journalists were, at their core, citizens. He wanted journalism students to study democracy and train themselves in the liberal arts to prepare them for the daily work of journalism. Bleyer, founder of the University of Wisconsin's journalism school, was an advocate of "integrating journalism within the liberal arts" whereas his counterpart at the University of Missouri, Walter Williams, emphasised hands-on training in a real-world environment (Reese, 1999, p. 72). Bleyer insisted journalism was integral to the success of democratic government and the welfare of the society. He felt the university could best prepare students for a career in journalism by providing them with a broadly based education (Bronstein & Vaughn, 1998, 17).

Mencher (1990) regards journalism as embodying Enlightenment values and manifesting the best of a liberal education in its use of a rational scientific approach. To Adam, the value of a liberal arts education is that it prepares the journalism student for life as a public citizen (Adam, 2001, 317). He adds that liberal arts disciplines promote ways of knowing that contain the methods used "to form consciousness, to make sense of things" and to make journalistic things (Adam, 2001, p. 335). Peter Parisi notes that a liberal arts education "preserves truth by perpetually subjecting conventional assumptions to critical analysis" (Parisi, 1991, p. 5). To Anderson (2014), the current crises facing human beings are so perilous that journalism education should avoid becoming hyper-focused on imparting basic journalistic skills and concentrate on helping emerging journalists engage in more critical reflection.

Not all journalism scholars support an expanded role for the liberal arts in educating journalists. Some see it as stifling the work of the journalist. They worry that journalism students will become

bogged down by thinking needlessly complicated thoughts, instead of writing (Meyer, 1986). These critics regard the fascination with the liberal arts in journalism education as debilitating. To them, it introduces a surfeit of academic, theoretical, and pedantic elements to what should be simple, straightforward journalistic practice. Lance muses that “the heady perfume of aesthetics” might “cripple the student’s news sense” (Lance, 1961, 87). (Medsker, 1996) argues for a strictly vocational approach to the study of journalism. She insists the value of journalism education lies in its the ability to do journalism, not to think about or critique the institution of journalism (Medsker, 1996).

Advocates of a liberal arts education cite its role in deepening democratic citizenship, promoting independent thinking and producing engaged citizens of the world (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 7). A liberal arts education should encourage journalism students to read widely, think deeply and write clearly. It should stimulate their narrative imaginations, hone their critical reasoning skills, and embolden them to pose incisive questions (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 10). Journalism graduates of liberal arts-focused programs should be nimble of mind and interdisciplinary in their intellectual approach (Nussbaum, 1997).

bell hooks suggests that critical thinking’s lodestar is the “longing to know” (hooks, 2010, 7). It is the inveterate desire “to understand how life works,” and to pursue knowledge not for transactional purposes, but for knowledge’s sake (hooks, 2010, p. 7). hooks insists that thinking ought to be a pleasurable activity (hooks, 2010, p. 8). For the journalism instructor, employing what hooks calls “engaged pedagogy” (hooks, 2010, p. 8) is about restoring the journalism student’s will to think. It means retaining a radical commitment to openness which involves accepting the possibility of being proven wrong. This pedagogical ethic, endorsed by hooks’ mentor, Paulo Freire, demands the full participation of the student and the teacher (Freire, 1993, 56). The instructor must then regard the student as a collaborator. Their collective goal must be “mutual humanization” (Freire, 1993, 56).

THE STUDENT AND THE TEACHER: CONFRONTING AND OVERCOMING DEHUMANIZATION

The teacher’s mission must never be to think for her students. To Jean Paul Sartre (1939), the goal should not be to merely fill students with knowledge. Rather, the teacher ought to shepherd her students through the process of learning how to think, developing their critical consciousness, pursuing truth, and preparing them to confront the contradictions of the world (hooks, 1994, p. 13). A teacher seeks to engage, motivate, and inspire her students, and help them to learn how to build community while militating against cynicism, defeat, and despair (hooks, 2003, p. xv).

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Brazilian theorist Paulo Freire critiques “the narrative character” of the teacher-student dynamic in the classroom (Freire, 1993, p. 52). He notes that in this conventional master-pupil relationship, the master, or teacher, is the omniscient narrating subject who imparts knowledge in the student, or pupil, who is the meek listening object. The teacher’s role, in this scenario, is to pour knowledge, or the content of the teacher’s narration, into the empty vessel — the docile student. Freire’s concern is that the reality the narrating teacher portrays is “motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable” (Freire, 1993, p. 52). He calls this “the banking conception of education” as it is akin to making a deposit at a bank (Freire, 1993, p. 53). The problem with the model is that it promotes passivity in the student, as they relinquish their power and are acted upon like an object, rather than acting like a subject who can impose themselves on the world. To the student, reality then becomes something which cannot be changed. To Freire this is dehumanizing because it denies the student their agency and ability to imagine a different world.

Freire advocates for a new classroom dynamic. He wants to reorder the space so that the teacher and the student approach each other as equals. In Freire’s (1993) classroom of solidarity “education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of

the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students” (p. 53). He argues “that education can only be liberatory when everyone claims knowledge as a field in which we all labour” (Freire, 1993, p. 53). This means that all members of the classroom, regardless of their station, have responsibilities. Freire proposes an emancipatory, problem-posing conception of education that encourages interrogation, values dialogue, and ends dehumanization.

A journalism professor who practices a pedagogy of care recognizes that his students aren’t submissive objects but active, self-assured subjects. They are not subordinates, but equals. He understands that as learners, journalism students are human beings with ideas, needs, and dreams. His job is to engage them in the classroom (Freire, 1993). Journalism teachers must recognize that students process information in many ways. Journalism students must realize that teachers are themselves in the process of becoming. Instructors must employ strategies to keep students’ attention and understand that their role as facilitators in the classroom is multifaceted: to entertain, educate, enlighten, and edify.

bell hooks (2003) speaks about caring teachers being “enlightened witnesses for [their] students” with whom they stand in solidarity and seek to serve their needs (p. 89). As part of my pedagogy of care I stressed to students attending my classes at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic the importance of self-care. I set aside time at the beginning and end of class for conversations about how they were coping with living through the largest global public health crisis in a century.

EDUCATION AS THE PRACTICE OF FREEDOM

The journalism classroom must become a site of struggle where ideologies of domination are dismantled. The patriarchal exclusion of women, along with the erasure and distortion of the histories of Indigenous and racialized peoples are examples of the harm caused by domination in the classroom. Knowledges which, for example, suggested Africa was a continent without history have been employed to justify colonial theft and abuse.

Some of the leading philosophers of the En-

lightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries including John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant believed Black and Indigenous peoples were inferior to White Europeans. In 1845 Hegel (2000) wrote that Black Africans were a “race of children that remain immersed in a state of naiveté” (p. 38). He insisted that Black individuals existed outside of history and that to be without history meant they lacked personhood. Montesquieu (1949) justified Negro slavery by virtue of their flat noses, their blackness from head to foot, and their lack of common sense. The ideas of these prominent philosophers have been taught in post-secondary institutions for hundreds of years and have shaped the worldview of generations of teachers and their students, including those in journalism. These works and philosophers embodied what hooks (2003) calls “White supremacist patriarchal capitalist values” (p. 1). If education is the practice of freedom, then it must work towards ending domination.

RADICAL CHANGE AND HUMAN RESILIENCE

As Brian Murphy (1999) notes, radical change and even the threat of radical change is usually considered to be a source of trauma (p. 82). Despite having to endure unexpected catastrophic events like war, the death of loved ones and natural disasters, human beings have proven themselves to be resilient, and managed to cope, survive, and even “thrive” on change. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, classes at the university where I teach were held online. While each of my classes had a set agenda, I decided to take a less structured, more improvisatory pedagogical approach to teaching. My goal was to make the online classroom sessions as dynamic as possible. I wanted the students in my virtual classroom to be intellectually challenged, while remaining engaged and having fun. As hooks (1994) has suggested, we should celebrate when students feel a sense of excitement in the classroom. Some students expressed concern about what seemed to them a haphazard approach to teaching that veered from the stated plan. I tried to show the students through the consistent demonstration of my teaching competence that they could trust me. I watched their

moods and tried to respond to their individual needs. Sometimes it was clear COVID-19 was taking its toll on their mental health, and they needed to talk. So, I allowed for extended classroom discussion. My primary objective was to connect with students and reduce their anxiety, sense of alienation and social isolation.

Engaged, caring teachers may remind students that change is part of the human condition, and that life is in perpetual motion. They may implore them to avoid becoming wedded to any so-called fixed reality. The current moment is but a phase. Students should not be “impatient for certainty” (Boggs & Paine, 1978, p. 58). They must understand that new sets of contradictions will always emerge. This is not a reason to lament. It is merely the historical process at work. There is no final answer.

THE CLASSROOM: A PLACE OF LISTENING, UNDERSTANDING, COMPASSION AND COMMUNITY

The classroom is a space of possibility where students and teachers can learn about understanding, communication, compassion, and community. As American educator Ron Scapp suggests, the teacher can create a classroom dynamic in which students learn to appreciate the value of listening and paying attention to others (hooks, 1994, p. 150). One of the responsibilities of the teacher is to help create an environment where students learn that in addition to speaking, it is important to listen respectfully to others. This doesn't mean that we listen uncritically and that there are no limits to individual expression in a classroom. But it does mean taking seriously what people have to say (hooks, 1994, p. 150).

The act of listening to another person's story involves entering into communion with that individual (Manyozo, 2016). It's a sign of tolerance, respect, and an affirmation of their humanity. As Freire (1996) argues, being tolerant is an ethical and political duty. It is through tolerance that we learn about the possibilities of “doing things and learning things with different people.” Listening is an act of solidarity. It “is a recognition that other human beings are equally rational, intelligent, and

equally competent to contribute to dialogues and discourses that we are part of” (Manyozo, 2016, p. 958). Listening is labour and requires an investment of time and energy. Listening deeply with intention is a discipline which can create space for genuine exchange and help build enduring relationships. Listening is also a sign of humility. When we listen to others, we entertain the possibility of our own fallibility. We gain expertise in the art of listening by doing it (hooks, 1994, p. 150). Practicing matters.

For the journalism student, listening is essential. It is arguably the indispensable skill that one can learn in journalism school. In the classroom, students can be alerted to the value of listening not just to their professors, but to their peers (hooks, 1994, p. 150). Students must be disabused of the notion that it is their teachers alone who are worthy of their attention. All members of the classroom community deserve to be seen and listened to (hooks, 1994, p. 151). Everyone has a story to tell.

A LESSON: DELIVERING AND RECEIVING CRITIQUE

Critique is part of the daily routine in a professional newsroom. The goal of critique is to enlighten and to change consciousness (Russian & Illouz, 2019, p. 177). Journalists who aspire to work there must become comfortable with the practice of giving and receiving critical feedback. “Feedback can be conceptualised as information regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding, provided by an agent” (Dijks, Brummer & Kostons, 2018, p. 1258). As Freire suggests, one has an ethical duty to subject oneself to intellectual scrutiny. One must open oneself to criticism, develop humility and the ability to admit when one is wrong (Freire, 1998, p. 98). Entering a dialogical relationship means one opens oneself to the world and recognizes one's “unfinishedness” (Freire, 1998, p. 121). Both the journalism teacher and student must recognize their inherent fallibility. Learning how to deliver and receive criticism is central to the project of creating a journalism classroom community grounded in a pedagogy of care. As all classroom members will eventually have their work critiqued, it is in their individual

interest to treat their peers as they would like to be treated.

In a video journalism class I taught, I assembled about 25 students in the school's television studio. Each student was given the task of reporting a breaking news story live to camera while their peers watched in real time. All presentations were recorded and then critiqued by members of the class, all of whom were seated in a semi-circle. Students admitted their nervousness and most acknowledged they'd never participated in a similar activity. I explained the value of having one's work publicly assessed by one's peers and suggested the experience would prepare them for what they'd encounter in a professional newsroom. Students responded positively to the activity.

What was palpable throughout the session was the respect students had for each other. They listened closely to their classmates. They seemed to sense the shared vulnerability people felt and thus treated each other with sensitivity and consideration. The care they had for each other was made clear by the gentle, measured tone they used when critiquing one another. They noted the strengths of each presentation, while not shirking their responsibility of offering critical feedback. They provided their classmates with constructive criticism praising their efforts, when warranted, while also identifying areas needing improvement. As the professor, I facilitated the process and tried to be aware of the different needs of the personalities in the room.

It's my contention that students lose focus and "tune out" during lectures due to the predictability of the journalism classroom routine. Students will be engaged in a class if they feel valued and can contribute to it in a material way (Barkley, 2020, p. 103). One way to foster classroom engagement is to build an active culture of critique. Through the group critiquing activity, students gained an appreciation for the rich pedagogical possibilities found in critical exchanges with their peers. They learned that they need not depend exclusively on their professor for instruction, and that their classmates had vital insights to offer about their journalistic practice.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

As learners, students must be encouraged to take risks. The act of risk-taking may be a disconcerting notion for those students who may have been instructed throughout their schooling to conform, defer and obey. To take a risk is to expose oneself to the possibility of failure. Ultimately, growth depends though on your willingness to risk (Boggs, 2016).

In a graduate class I taught called *Race and Diversity*, I discussed the significance of representation in media. At the time, I was still working as the anchor of the public broadcaster's local 6 o'clock news program. I told the students that in the early 2000s I had donned the African/Caribbean cornrow hairstyle while guest hosting a nationally broadcast television show on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) Newsworld called *Hot Type*. At the time, it was uncommon for a Black male broadcaster like me to wear what would then have been considered an unconventional hairstyle on CBC. I told students I'd consciously worn my hair that way to send viewers a message that people who looked like me belonged everywhere, even hosting a highbrow literary show on network television. I emphasized the importance of taking risks and doing things that daunted them. I then mentioned that I'd often considered wearing African clothing on the newscast instead of the standard European suit and tie but hadn't followed through. The sole Black student in the class immediately called out my hypocrisy and challenged my failure to wear African attire on air. The student's bold truth-telling inspired me to replace my standard European threads with African stylings on the newscast. The student pushed me to make the theory I propounded in class my practice as a journalist in the studio.

CHALLENGING THE WORLD AND OURSELVES

Our experience in the broad framework of the daily struggle we wage has shown us that whatever difficulties the enemy may create, the

aforenamed is the most difficult struggle for the

present and the future of our peoples. This struggle is the expression of the internal contradictions in the economic, social, and cultural (therefore historical) reality of each of our countries. (Cabral, 1979, p. 121).

Amilcar Cabral was one of Africa's foremost anti-colonial leaders in the 1960s and 1970s, and a protean figure of the Black Radical Tradition. He was a liberation philosopher, poet, agronomist, leader of the independence movement of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, and a moral force. His writings and political leadership influenced the global Pan-Africanist movement and the Black Freedom Movement in the US (Manji & Fletcher, 2013). The revolutionary struggle for freedom and independence that Amilcar Cabral waged in Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, like Freire's efforts in education, was a struggle against domination – capitalist imperialist domination (Cabral, 2016, p. 160). Cabral's crusading life provides a model for journalism educators and students. It reminds them that whatever their station, they're accountable for their actions and inaction. Cabral argues, "Here and there even among responsible workers, there has been a marked tendency to let things slide" (Cabral, 1965). He adds, "this battle against ourselves- no matter what difficulties the enemy might create – is the most difficult of all, whether for the present or the future of our peoples" (Cabral, 1966). According to Cabral, like Freire, no one should be above criticism. Everyone has a duty of care. Human beings and indeed journalism educators and students must engage in a struggle with themselves and the world. The goal always should be to change it.

CONCLUSION

Journalism can help strengthen the health and welfare of communities. Given the raft of existential crises confronting human beings including cataclysmic climate change, journalism education has a critical role to play in safeguarding humanity's future. Journalism students require an education rooted in the liberal arts that will equip them with the skills to contribute not just to the efficient running of a newsroom, but more critically, to the sustainability of life on earth. It is in this

classroom that they will learn to listen more deeply and recognize the value of the stories of their classmates. The classroom must become a place of accountability, where both the teacher and the student are wholly engaged in a dialogue in which they teach and learn from each other. A pedagogy of care must be the norm for all instructors in the classroom, as should a commitment to embracing flexibility and change, practicing spontaneity, and utilizing imagination. A new kind of education and dialogically based teaching practice, in which traditional hierarchies are dismantled, and domination abolished, must be adopted to build the classroom of the future and the new world that human beings need to thrive and ultimately survive. ■

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