Dealing with Dystopia:

Freire's Gnostic Cycle and Media Ecology in a Post Pandemic World

Lidando com a distopia:

O ciclo gnóstico de Freire e a Ecologia das Mídias em um mundo pós-pandêmico

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Introduction

Many people in different parts of the world have experienced the recent years as dystopic to varying degrees. Major events and related occurrences such as the Brexit vote, the Bolsonaro, Duterte, and Trump elections/administrations, Trade Wars, Black Lives Matter as well as Hong Kong and Belarus protests have seemed to coincide with the rising dominance of social media and increasing digital transformation (e.g., see CHAVEZ and BRAGA, 2019). Some have argued that recent events including the COVID-19 pandemic have been facilitated by globalization and other technological developments since the beginning of the 21st century (e.g., see ZAKARIA, 2020).

These impacts have struck home in many ways including the movement of academic and business conventions from in-person events to video conferencing. In particular, the Media Ecology Association (MEA) was slated to hold it's 22nd Annual Convention in Rio de Janeiro, but this event subsequently took place via the *Zoom* platform. There are many ways we all have had to adapt to these conditions and prospects for a post pandemic world particularly as such trends continue to accelerate (e.g., see STEFANILE, 2020).

Prominent media ecology authors have proposed means of addressing technological and societal malaise from McLuhan's *Mechanical Bride* (1951), the interpretation of Poe's *A Descent into the Maelstrom,* to Rushkoff's promotion of *Team Human* (2019). Other thinkers compatible with this tradition come to mind, especially those from the MEA 2021 Convention's host country, Brazil. In particular the work of the late Paulo Freire, renowned for his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), has special timeliness and relevance. But how do such constructs help us in the MEA move forward and reshape in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic?

In response, this article will attempt to contribute to the dialog needed to answer this question. It relies on 20 years of literature from the MEA's official journal, *Explorations in Media Ecology*, on a graph database of books/reviews, and other current sources. More specifically, the article begins by using pertinent references that explore the concept of dystopia as related to current circumstances. Next, article's attention turns to the work of Paulo Freire and discusses his notion of the Gnostic Cycle as put forth in his *Pedagogy of Freedom* (2000). In brief, this article presents ways that Gnostic Cycle and media ecology can complement one another in addressing the challenges ahead. By incorporating these kinds of considerations more deliberately, researchers and scholars might be better equipped to deal with technological dystopia and to help with advancement in the post pandemic world.

Dystopian definition

So, what does dystopia mean and in what ways has media ecology dealt with dystopic conditions to date? According to scholars, the notion of dystopia appears to have mainly evolved over the past 100 years. This section discusses the way the use of this term has changed and how it is being applied to contemporary events and situations. Similarly, it looks into the ways dystopia has been addressed in a

number of media ecology articles. By going through these works, this section also treats human conditions that have gotten more visibility during the COVID-19 pandemic and appear to call out for more attention.

Among a host of academics, Claeys has done much to investigate the origins of dystopia and the ways its meaning has evolved since the 1800's and particularly in the twentieth century (2010). For instance, he conveys that:

> 'Dystopia' is often used interchangeably with 'anti-utopia' or 'negative utopia', by contrast to utopia or 'eutopia' (good place), to describe a fictional portrayal of a society in which evil, or negative social and political developments, have the upper hand. . . mirroring the colossal failures of totalitarian collectivism . . . [and] . . . relying upon scientific and technological advances . . .

He goes on to highlight key texts that define the genre. Initially, those by H. G. Wells, but especially more, as most would expect, by George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World.*

More recently, Willmetts has written in an article devoted to Shteyngart's novel *Super Sad True Love Story* (2018) indicating that:

> In the last decade, a proliferation of dystopian visions have warned us of the potentially disastrous consequences of our increasing dependence on digital technologies that are rapidly eroding our privacy. . . exclude a concern for social justice . . . [and] entail quite different social consequences to those imagined by Orwell.

While he focuses mostly on the concerns about surveillance, the author points out trends toward people being treated less fairly while the overall collective good declines.

Seeger and Davison-Vecchione (2019) stress that articles such as those above show that:

> . . .dystopian literature [is] especially attuned to how historically conditioned social forces shape the inner life and personal experience of the individual, and how acts of individuals can, in turn, shape the social structures in which they are situated.

They go on to elaborate on why such references are worthy of attention to helping illuminate the gaps that occur between the aspirations for societal improvement and their realization in practice.

The ideas of utopia and dystopia have been used to some degree within media ecology to examine the logics and impact of new media. In one article, Beckham (2011) explores "the ways new mediation is at work in the production, distribution, and consumption of food and beverage." Within this exploration, she employs "utopian and dystopian imaginaries" that involve "working out the details of humanity's "best and

worst-case scenarios" in the narratives of food. Such narratives appear helpful in revealing different dimensions in the treatment of our consumables that impact lifestyle, nutrition and health. In another article, Adams (2018) describes ways ". . . the school is now entering its cyborgian throes of full algorithmic absorption and machinic assimilation." Namely, she examines the digital transformation of schooling and advocates that tomorrow's educators improve their abilities to discern its "formative and deformative dimensions" to enhance "care in the development of our young." Her concern is one of empowering teachers to leverage their "curative, consciousness-forming functioning related to computer resources while severely limiting their destructive aspects."

Other articles delve into such dualities related to a number of topical issues regarding digital media, hyper-capitalism, responses to policing, and health communication. Keshishian (2013) suggests that our mobile devices serve to "numb our minds to the ruthlessness of how the economic system itself operates" and better setting economic and technological priorities. Hoyt (2016) deals with brutality black men have faced and questions regarding digital activism in seeking justice. In her article, Bowen (2018) reviews the Bergers' *The Communication Panacea* relating "patient–provider experiences and to offer suggestions for enhancing the practice and engagement of medicine." She speculates that their general semantics methods would be beneficial in untangling pertinent dynamics. One matter she mentions that could benefit from this kind of focus would be coming to terms with an 'opioid crisis' affecting white people in the suburbs vs. the earlier 'war on drugs' targeted at black people in cities.

Since those articles appeared, Mullen (2020) makes a number of salient points in reviewing Rauch's *Slow Media*. She highlights ways the Slow Media 'vision seems utopian' but admits hopes for "the possibility for changing approaches to and practices of technologies to improve individual and communal experiences of well-being." However, she also acknowledges that "The year 2020 provides jarring contexts that are no longer background problems but are clear and present dangers to our social, technological, mediated, political, work, personal and communal lives." Moreover, those such as Friedman (2020) indicate that the disruptions experienced in education and the workplace so far are only the beginning; questions are beginning emerge about operating in a post pandemic world.

Thus, dystopia as a term has evolved and come to include the negative impacts of technology on human affairs. Media ecology has incorporated utopian and dystopian concepts in addressing topical issues as they have been affected by technological developments. Moreover, a number in the field have

been seeking ways to channel technical innovations in constructive directions while recognizing increasing societal challenges.

Freire's gnostic cycle

So, where does Freire's Gnostic Cycle come from and why could incorporating it more intentionally be useful as media ecology goes forward? First, this section reviews the educator's life and last book as these appear especially pertinent. It also summarizes the process Freire terms the Gnostic Cycle and discusses the reasons for its pertinence to the dystopian circumstances of today.

Freire was an educator who gained international fame for his work with the disadvantaged in Brazil and his articulation of his methods in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). After being exiled abroad, he returned to his country to serve as Minister of Education for the Worker's Party government in Sao Paulo. There, Freire was instrumental in the introduction of computers in the schools and attempts at various progressive reforms. When done with that work, he devoted time to a memoir (FREIRE and ARA, 1998) and then another manuscript on an update to his educational approach for a course he was slated to delivery with colleagues at the Harvard School of Education.[1] Sadly, Freire died before completing his writing and the course was not held; fortunately, his collaborators were able to conclude the remaining chapters so the work could be published and serve as part of his continuing legacy.

In the book, *Pedagogy of Freedom* (2000), Freire carefully explains the underpinnings of his efforts as an educator. Within that exposition, he briefly discusses what he calls the "Gnostic Cycle." According to Freire, the educator is involved in a 3-part process of research, learning and teaching (See a depiction devised for this article in Figure 1). While it is important to elucidate further Freire's intent, it is significant to emphasize how the teacher is engaged with students enabling their ability to act on and effect their world---this article will later return to this important active element.

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[1] Freire's memoir is a helpful companion to his last more philosophical work in that it provides context in terms of the educator's life as well as related places and circumstances in Brazil.
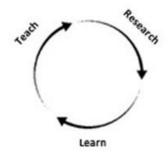
Figure 1 – Freire's Gnostic Cycle

Regarding the Gnostic Cycle, Freire does not indicate a reference or an exact definition of the phrase in itself. There are the Gnostic Gospels, but he does not appear to make any religious attributions. More likely the phrase itself is derived from "gnosis," the Greek noun for "knowledge."[2] While no further is said about this derivation, the educator spends a number of passages working to articulate his meaning.

In describing the Gnostic Cycle, Freire goes on at length as the three aspects seem inextricably bound; he says (p. 35) that

. . . it is as necessary to be immersed in existing knowledge as it is to be open and capable of producing something that does not yet exist. And these two moments are accounted for in teaching, learning, and doing research. . . Thus, the teaching-learning process, together with the work of research, is essential and . . . inseparable. . .

Continuing with his thought, he reiterates and so doing clarifies to a degree including the active aspects:

. . . Once again, there is no such thing as teaching without research and research without teaching. . . I continue to search and re-search. I teach because I search, because I question, and because I submit myself to questioning . . . And in so doing, I intervene. And intervening, I educate and educate myself.

As he concludes this reflection on his process, Freire teases out more subtleties:

I do research so as to know what I do not yet know and to communicate and proclaim what I discover. . . To think in critical terms, is a requirement imposed by the rhythms of the gnostic circle on our curiosity, Ingenuous curiosity, from which there results, a certain kind of knowledge.

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[2] For example, see Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, and Roderick McKenzie, (1961). A Greek-English lexicon (No. 483.23). Clarendon Press.

Later (p. 75), Freire takes up the questions of where this research, learning and teaching should be directed; he indicates:

> There are insistent questions that we all have to ask and that make it clear to us that it is not possible to study simply for the sake of studying. As if we could study in a way that really had nothing to do with that distant, strange world out there . . . For what and for whom do I study?

The educator comments further about the need to channel curiosity, rebelliousness, and resistant attitudes into the transformation of society. Accordingly, this transformation implies two actions, i.e., "denouncing processes of dehumanization" and "announcing the dream of a new society." As Freire extolls 'to change things is difficult but possible' . . ." He goes on to specify:

> It is of no importance whether our commitment be in the area of adult or child literacy, health, or the inculcation of new technical skills . . .it's a question of working in some given area, doing so as to awake the conscience of each group, in a constructive, critical manner. . .

More toward the end of the book (p. 95), Freire explicates how this work eventually translates into "becoming a citizen" and the "struggle for re-creation of a kind of society that is both humane and just."

As expressed in the passages above, Freire's work as an educator and his Gnostic Cycle seems to have qualities that could be helpful as dystopic and emerging conditions are confronted. Given the current disruptions in education as well as other sectors, it appears the type of research, learning and teaching he describes will become increasingly important. As the need for further critical thinking and investigation as well as adoption of revised concepts and practices becomes more apparent such a schema can help make such activity more visible and valuable. For this reason, it appears that further emphasis on Freire's work within media ecology could prove salient at this time.

Media Ecology and the Gnostic Cycle

How do media ecology articles to date relate to Freire's work and the Gnostic Cycle? Within media ecology literature, authors already refer directly to Freire's work in a number of cases. This section features examples of these references and looks at other authors who appear to line up with his "knowing process." It then proposes that compatibilities between media ecology and the Gnostic Cycle might be leveraged and built upon in future work.

Not surprisingly there are media ecology articles that allude to or quote Freire pertaining to education, particularly lately in the Pedagogy section of *Explorations in Media Ecology* (EME). For instance, Duffelmeyer (2002) quotes the educator about "reading the world" when dealing with student teachers' need to cultivate critical computer literacy----paying attention to technology development, its uses and effects. Mentioning Freire's use of literacy as conveying "power to the people" and humanization, Berger (2004) argues that media literacy, because of its overuse, be replaced by the term media criticism, and attempts be made to turn schools into institutions that are dedicated to media criticism. Fry (2019) refers to the educator's advocating students' involvement and use of their knowledge in describing the "Tribe Game" as an introduction to thinking in media ecology terms. Later, de Miranda and Pischetola (2020) cite Freire on teaching as a way to enhance students' possibilities for learning autonomously as subjects when treating communication choices in education to make it more of an open ecosystem (e.g., regarding laptop computer learning in the grade school classroom).

There are also other media ecology articles that relate to research, learning, and/or teaching that do not refer to Freire, but may relate to his Gnostic Cycle none the less. With respect to research, Anton (2014) looks at ways media ecology has incorporated a phenomenological approach; scholars like Ong and others have sought to recognize and articulate how various features of human life, have been culturally and historically effected as social environments by different forms of communication. Rose (2014) relates Postman's approach to social research as one undertaken not in order to amass data but 'to contribute to human understanding and decency' and 'improve social life'; his aim was to ask penetrating questions, and strive to create meaning that would promote insightful discourse about media. She also mentions Grosswiler's analysis of 'media ecology research methods' that reveals a diversity of approaches, from philosophical enquiry to experimental research. Rauch (2014) discusses new rituals where people refrain from media use (such as restricting smartphone utilization at certain times) and where un-pluggers not only critique mainstream culture but also enact an alternative vision of life. Her article is representative of observations of a deliberate attempts at conscious media use. More recently, Thompson and Adams (2020) have treated the inclusion of nonhumans in human and social science studies via interviewing digital objects; their concern has been offering means with which researchers can probe effects on the way humans think, act and dwell together with their devices in the world.

Regarding learning, Ramos (2004) suggests ways young adult perceptions of literacy are shaped by the present media environment; she stresses the need to reconcile both oral and literate modes of learning and thinking for youth to succeed and maintain an interest in their educational futures. Steiner (2006) describes how the late esteemed professor James Carey nurtured a community of educators and students to participate in learning that spanned the worlds of journalism, scholarship and professional practice. Jarc (2017) describes assisting undergraduate students in tackling media effects in their lives by having them create podcasts where they become more critical of their media consumption habits and hone their analytical skills. Later, he elaborates on student involvement in producing a wiki, using the web-based, collaborative publishing platform, to develop digital literacy and subject matter expertise; through such vehicles students also learn how to leverage technology to build a constructive cultural environment (JARC, 2019).

Related to teaching, Williams (2004) explores advances in cognitive neuroscience and associated intuitive literacy capabilities necessary to navigate in today's visually dominated culture; he presents processes that educators can use to teach intuitive literacy so that students can better negotiate this world and guide their own behavior in ways that generate and sustain quality and integrity in their lives. Shibata (2007) discusses issues involved when participants and facilitators from different cultural backgrounds come together in the online classroom and suggests ways for making such forums effective and worthwhile. Polski and Gorman (2014) deal with media ecology as an interdisciplinary humanistic endeavor relying on inspiration and intuition, encouraging discovery learning and training of perception. Reviewing a number of frameworks that provide structure for students, they propose discipline specific methodologies to assist teachers in facilitating the learning required. More specifically, Anwer (2020) explains ways she uses media ecology concepts in teaching effective public relations writing.

Recently, there have been some other articles who utilize media ecology concepts and data for revelations about the current scene. For instances, Miroshnichenko (2020) uses figure/ground analysis to distinguish between instrumental and environmental approaches to understanding new media effects; he reveals how these forces reshaped habitat and inhabitants with respect to the 2016 US Presidential Election. The article is insightful in a number of ways, but also an example of data and chart use such as those depicting "Bought vs. Free Media," "History of the Paywall," and demographics of social media users. Artman et al (2020) examine mass media technologies and practices in an attempt to assess the practical

impact of mobile devices on the production, distribution and consumption of media and information; they update these effects on journalism, radio, and television. Inclusion of some data from such sources as Fluent, Nielsen and Pew Research as well as examples from networks such as CNN, NPR, Social Media and various streaming platforms are helpful in grounding the discussion.

Then, there have been articles that show an active stance that media ecology can help support. As an example, Healey (2014) looks to tap the potential that exists to develop social media platforms, ethical codes and regulatory policies that support democratic values and institutions; he questions what would be needed for citizens to achieve a mature social media environment that is both ethically responsive and economically sustainable. Daniels (2011) describes the way in which a college class took the lead in designing a community event that critically engaged both a YouTube video and a documentary film about police brutality as a public health issue.

In articles like those cited above, media ecology authors have either directly referenced Freire or informed elements of his Gnostic Cycle. They have elaborated on the "knowing process." Their writings have articulated aspects of media ecology research, learning and teaching. They have demonstrated qualitative methods as well as included data to focus and inform findings. In a number of instances, these scholars and educators have shown ways they and/or their students have been active in their educational and wider environments. It appears that efforts like these articles offer much to build upon that could be made more deliberate using Freire's Gnostic Cycle and the kind of approach he advocates.

The Gnostic Cycle and Media Ecology in Use

What are a few examples of ways media ecology might proceed to include Freire's Gnostic Cycle in a more deliberate fashion? Given their compatibility, media ecology and the Gnostic Cycle might be utilized with greater intent to address emerging facets of a post pandemic world. This section offers more specifics about what such efforts might entail. It also suggests some possibilities regarding putting such ideas into practice.

For instance, regarding research and learning, scholars might investigate and become more familiar with search capabilities and the use of networked data. They also might investigate the "dark undersides" and/or potential adverse effects as well as the benefits of these digital capabilities. Some of these matters may have already received some consideration, but additional work can be illustrative and useful in connecting to issues emerging during pandemic and will likely remain as disease recedes. As stated by MacDougall (2008), ". . . the parsing technologies incorporated in part or in whole into our . . . search engines, as well as concerns over the skewing, blending, and blurring of sources, channels, authorities, experts . . . will only increase in depth and scale."

None the less, beginning with the near at hand, the reader may have been aware of all the references to EME items in proceeding through this article. The ability to draw on these sources is greatly increased by the fact that EME is available as an on-line journal (e.g., see CHEYUNSKI, 2021). In this form, there are various search features that can be used as an aide to research and seeking out knowledge that inform learning as described by Freire above. While these features are incomplete and have their limitations, they do offer a means to find pertinent information and to make important associations.

Along these lines, Barabasi explains (2014) "Reductionism [or breaking things down into their component parts] was the driving force behind much of the twentieth century's scientific research. . ." and that now many are realizing that most events and phenomena are connected. Since this realization that everything is linked, different disciplines are beginning to grasp the importance of "networked data" and applications such as graph databases that help in revealing insights they can provide (e.g., see NEEDHAM and HODLER, 2019).

As one possibility for putting the Gnostic Cycle into use, scholars might consider employing vehicles like graph data bases (GDB's) to keep track of and relate their various sources. For example, this author has constructed a GDB to monitor and examine relationships among over 200 books read and reviewed (CHEYUNSKI, 2019). One particular graph algorithm offers a means to determine the "shortest path" between selected titles giving a means to scrutinize such connections and their meaning as one research tool. This mechanism shows in figures below what a GDB can help portray and contributes to the topics treated in this article.
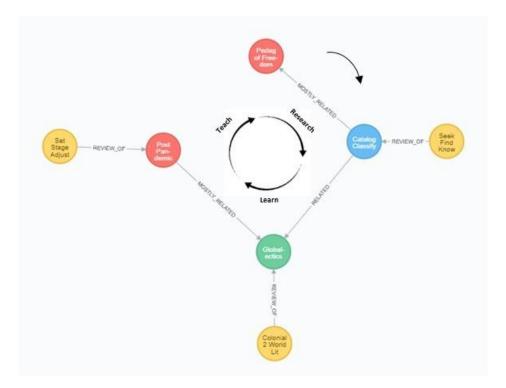
Figure 2 – GDB Shortest Path - Gnostic Cycle: Pedagogy to Lessons

For instance, see Figure 2 above for a depiction of the shortest path (going clockwise) from Freire's *Pedagogy of Freedom* (2000) to Zakaria's *Ten Lessons for a Post Pandemic World* (2020). Within their *Cataloging and Classification* on this path, Chan and Salaba (2015) describe the way library sector has worked out means for identifying—and thereby enabling others to find materials such as the Dewey Decimal Classification system (DDC)[3]----a treasure trove of data that reveals our "process of knowing" as it continues to change as used within the GDB figures.[4] Continuing through *Globalectics* (2015), wa Thiong'o's book deals with unequal relationships of power as a result of colonialization that pervade the totality of economics, politics, ethics, and aesthetics; he rejects the study of literature within purely national boundaries and calls for reordering of the "knowing process." Finally getting to Zakaria, one partakes of his observations regarding underlying factors in the ways COVID-19 has been addressed and the world that is coming into being as a result---- not reshaping so much as to accelerate history like the

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[3] The 10 categories of the DDC include General Interest & Reference (000's), Philosophy & Psychology (100's), Religion (200's), Politics and Social Sciences (300's), Language & Linguistics (400's), Mathematics & Science (500's), Technology & Applied Arts (600's), Arts & Entertainment (700's), Fiction & Literature (800's), Geography & History (900's)

[4] In the GDB figures, red circles represent books with DDC's from 100's, 200's and 300's, blue circles represent books from DDC's from 400's and 500's, and green circles represent books with DDC's from 400's, 700's, 800's and 900's; tan circles contain abbreviated book review headlines. The arrows between the circles show their relationships.

increasing pervasiveness of the digital domain. He opines that the only real solution to problems like pandemics—and climate change and cyberwar—is to look outward, toward more and better cooperation.

Although, not pictured here, it is pertinent to note that *Globaletics* also relates to Wilkerson's *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* (2020) which informs Zakaria's book as well; remarks about inequalities and social injustice are especially poignant. Neglected social structures that reinforce discrimination and violence have been truly dystopic for racial minorities for many many years. So as such "cracks and fissures" in society have come into greater relief during the pandemic, they loom as larger traumas that will be difficult to ignore going forward.
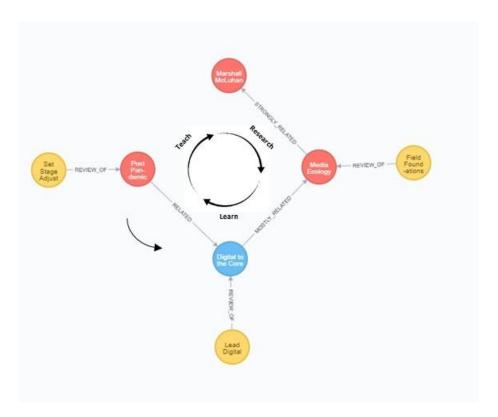

Figure 3 – GDB Shortest Path - Gnostic Cycle: Lessons to McLuhan

See Figure 3 above for a depiction of the shortest path (going counter clockwise) from Zakaria's *Ten Lessons for a Post Pandemic World* (2020) back through Raskino and Wallers's *Digital to the Core* (2016) to Strate's *Media Ecology*, as reviewed by Tywoniak (2018), and Coupland's *Marshall McLuhan* as reviewed by Linton (2011). Raskino and Waller, Gartner colleagues (see mention of this IT monitoring firm in Gunkel, 2017) say to those heading up any organization to "go digital or go home" and proceed to relate how all sectors, products and services are being digitized. They discuss how increasing digitization compounds

uncertainty, boundary blurring, and leads to cultural, ethical and regulatory dilemmas; problematic aspects come into most blatant view when examples such as e-cigarettes/vaping are considered. In his book *Media Ecology,* Strate provides "Pathways for Media Ecology Scholarship" with its schema for examining a particular medium, its biases, environment and effects which offers a handy model to guide future researchers in treating these matters (see TYWONIAK, 2018). Strate's oeuvre also relates back to such books as *McLuhan* by Coupland (see LINTON, 2011) who attempts an impressionistic tribute to one most well-known for warning of cultural threats embedded in electronic technologies. As Yi and Albrecht (2018) remind, McLuhan's attention to Poe's *Maelstrom* and the warnings from dystopian fiction to be more cautious and critical of digital media should be heeded.

At the same time, it is helpful to pay attention to other relationships that do not show up in Figure 3 that are informative about the techno-sphere. That is, there are connections between *Digital to the Core* and Ross et al's *Designed for Digital* (2019) as well as Dignan's *Brave New Work (*2019). Ross and her co-authors give much attention to the need to cultivate an "experiment, test, learn" culture;" they stress that the digital journey is long, where people need time to embrace, and adapt to new ways of working. Dignan strives to overcome dystopian *Brave New World* overtones (e.g., see CLAEYS, 2010) in digital work adaptation; he suggests frameworks and steps for recasting contemporary worklives. Perhaps, digital capabilities that many have been forced to adopt during the pandemic, may afford benefits and means to address inequities and social ills in the longer term. As Rushkoff (2019) asserts in advocating collaborative action:

> Team Human can take to the streets, participate in electoral politics, develop new platforms . . . work to reform corrupt institutions and to build better ones . . . Artificial intelligence, cloning . . . robots . . . nanotechnology . . . space colonization . . . are coming . . . Team Human doesn't reject technology . . . [But] . . .take[s] a stand [to] insist that human values are folded into [its] development . . .

This type of examination of shortest paths gives an illustration of additional research tools as well as hint of the kinds of learning and teaching that may be useful in a post pandemic world. For instance, Trujillo (2016) discusses Lunenfeld's advice regarding "controlling and rationing our intake (downloading), and increasing our levels of activity (uploading)."

Namely, one might attend to approaches that are inclusive and enable students as well as faculty to discover together and gently push boundaries as they actively engage with their environments. It would be apropos to take some hints from what other media ecologists have done and what seems to be increasingly the mode of digital design (e.g., see DANIELS, 2011, and Jarc, 2019). Namely, it is important to involve students and colleagues in little experiments that test the use of digital applications and features; one example here might be the use of academic abstracts and videos (e.g., see ERIKSSON and SØRENSEN, 2012; BERKOWITZ, 2013; SPICER, 2014; and ARTMAN, 2020). For teachers this would mean incorporating technology in class activities and where possible getting involved with their wider surroundings. Becoming familiar with emerging technologies and areas of its potential application will likely mean partnering with those in other fields and sectors to do the research and learning that will be needed. Through such means students and teachers, researchers, their co-workers, and partners might investigate and co-learn about media impacts as they have changed during the pandemic and likely will continue in its aftermath. As demonstrated in this article, Freire's Gnostic Cycle and elements of media ecology are quite compatible and can reinforce one another dealing with dystopia and in moving forward in a post pandemic world.

Conclusions

This article has defined dystopia as it relates to the negative dimensions of technical and social innovation. It has examined Freire's Gnostic Cycle as particularly pertinent in helping speak to these conditions. The text discusses the active element of the Gnostic Cycle and media ecology as well as how their approaches can be complementary. The article then provides examples of ways this reinforcement might be used to help better understand and address conditions as in the later stages of the pandemic and beyond. By incorporating Freire's Gnostic Cycle with media ecology more deliberately, researchers, scholars and teachers, their students and partners might be even better equipped to deal with dystopic consequences of technology and channel its constructive features to build back better in a post pandemic world.

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Abstract

In recent years, commentators have characterized the disruptive social occurrences and technological change as dystopic. As we attempt to address and deal with this melee of events with their associated emotions and reactions, this article mines media ecology literature, the work of renowned Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, and other sources to propose some answers and choices for the path forward. More specifically, this article defines dystopia and describes Freire's Gnostic Cycle, which is comprised of active research, learning and teaching as a possible antidote. It highlights media ecology articles complementary to Freire that may be further leveraged. Finally, the article focuses on Freire's Gnostic Cycle in offering suggestions regarding future media ecology work to contribute in building a post pandemic world.

Keywords: Research. Learn. Teach. Digital. Pandemic. Pedagogy. Dystopia.

Resumo

Nos últimos anos, comentaristas caracterizaram como distópicas as ocorrências sociais disruptivas e as mudanças tecnológicas. Tentando abordar e lidar com essa profusão de eventos e com as emoções e reações a eles relacionadas, este artigo explora a literatura de ecologia das mídias, o trabalho do renomado educador brasileiro Paulo Freire e outras fontes para propor algumas respostas e escolhas ao caminho futuro. Mais especificamente, este artigo define a distopia e descreve o Ciclo Gnosiológico de Freire, que compreende pesquisa ativa, aprendizagem e ensino como possíveis antídotos. O texto destaca artigos de ecologia das mídias complementares a Freire que podem ser ainda mais aproveitados. Por fim, o artigo volta-se ao Ciclo Gnosiológico de Freire

para oferecer sugestões em relação ao futuro do trabalho da ecologia das mídias na contribuição da construção de um mundo pós-pandêmico.

Palavras-chave: Pesquisa. Aprendizado. Ensino. Digital. Pandemia. Pedagogia. Distopia.

Resumen

En los últimos años, los comentaristas han caracterizado los sucesos sociales disruptivos y el cambio tecnológico como distópico. A medida que intentamos abordar y lidiar con este tumulto de eventos con sus emociones y reacciones asociadas, este artículo explora la literatura sobre ecología de los medios, el trabajo del renombrado Educador brasileño Paulo Freire y otras fuentes para proponer algunas respuestas y opciones para el caminho delantero. Más específicamente, este artículo define la distopía y describe el Ciclo Gnóstico de Freire, que es compuesto por la investigación activa, el aprendizaje y la enseñanza como posible antídoto. Destaca en la ecología de los médios artículos complementarios a Freire que pueden ser más aprovechados. Finalmente, el artículo se centra en la propuesta de Freire, Ciclo Gnóstico, en ofrecer sugerencias sobre futuros trabajos de ecología de los medios para contribuir a la construcción de um mundo post pandemia.

Palabras clave: Investigación. Aprendizaje. Enseñanza. Digital. Pandemia. Pedagogía. Distopía.