



Raymond A. Mason School of Business

WILLIAM & MARY

DIVERSITY GOES TO WORK PODCAST

EPISODE 52: LINDA RIDLEY – MANAGEMENT’S LEGACY OF DEHUMANIZATION: TRACING MODERN BUSINESS PRACTICES TO CHATTEL SLAVERY

Phil Wagner

Hello from the halls of the Mason School of Business here at William & Mary. I'm Phil, and this is Diversity Goes to Work. Buckle up because we're getting ready to take a deep dive into the real human lived experiences that shape and guide our diversity work in the world of work. Should be fun.

Phil Wagner

Welcome, listeners, to yet another episode of Diversity Goes to Work. There are so many things that I love about William & Mary, but one of the most significant reasons I love this institution is just how powerful our alumni thought leaders are. You really can't don a William & Mary Hoodie and walk anywhere without bumping into some of those change agents. And it was a wonderful encounter I had a few weeks ago when I met today's guest, someone who is an alumni but is also a profound change agent. I'm going to let her introduce herself in just a second, but I want to briefly note the voice you're about to hear is that of Linda Ridley. Linda has a background in corporate and investment banking with Wachovia and has served as the CEO of Edgar J. Ridley and Associates since 2009. She's also an academic and a faculty lecturer and professor at Hostess Community College and graduate school in New York City. Linda, it's an honor to host you here because this is kind of a homecoming in many ways. Why don't you tell our listeners a little bit more about who you are and what you've done since you've left the halls of the Mason School of Business?

Linda Ridley

Hey. So happy to be here. Thank you for having me. It's interesting where I am now. I actually began my transition from Richmond, Virginia, to New York City while I was in the midst of final exams at William & Mary. So I'm literally surrounded by movers as I studied on an empty floor. Can you imagine that? So, I was in charge of operations for Wachovia at the time, and my brief was to expand the bank's footprint in New York. So I was traveling to New York City on Sundays, returning on Thursday nights for my weekend class at my EMBA class. So, I left the bank in 2009 when it merged with Wells Fargo. And so that's when I joined my husband's consulting firm, within which we implement a proprietary management concept invented by my husband, the symptomatic thought process. We train managers worldwide to examine their behaviors by emphasizing the negative impact of symbols and symbolic behavior.

We then encourage a shift to symptomatic thought. This is seeing things as they really are, without added connotations. My husband, Edgar, introduced this concept at an international business conference in Ma. Street, the Netherlands, in the late 20th century, and he's published several books on the topic. So, with consulting now, I had a global audience. And for instance, one of my clients is the APO, the Asian productivity organization out of Tokyo, Japan. And that took me to Southeast Asia to train female entrepreneurs from ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, et cetera. Then, shortly after I began consulting, I was invited to join CUNY, the City University of New York. So, I began teaching graduate students in organizational behavior and leadership. Keep in mind teaching was never in my plan, but the teaching piece was incredibly compatible with consulting. Clients love it when you tell them you're on faculty. So now I teach both graduate and undergraduate students in introductory business and management, as well as the work behavior. I actually developed a course on global diversity. CUNY commissioned me when I first started. So that was very interesting as well because I went in a different direction, because what I found teaching opened a can of worms. As I relayed the content to my students, I kept seeing gaps between this textbooks and what I knew to be true. Using that symptomatic thought process allows me to push the boundaries of the available research, and I realized I had something to say. So, my first foray into publishing was when I entered a competition for first-time case writers with the case center out of the UK. You're familiar with them? Yes. Okay. I was using their cases as well.

Phil Wagner

Yes.

Linda Ridley

So I won the competition. I was one of only three Americans 18 faculty worldwide, and I published a case. And I've been published frequently, including peer-reviewed articles as well as that business case study. And all of my research has been informed by the need to address the negative impact of symbolic decision-making with a shift to symptomatic thought, the need to see things as they really are. So, finally, fast forward. About five years ago, I decided that it would be interesting to obtain a doctorate to further my entrance into the academy, and my research trajectory stayed the same. I maintained my inquiry into the teaching gaps within business and management, and my emphasis was on the exclusion of chattel slavery. And I was able again to use the symptomatic thought process and critical management education as my framework. That's where I am right now.

Phil Wagner

That's such a robust history. Thanks for sharing that with us. And yes, that cited research. That's actually how I came into contact with the concept of symptomatic leadership. Your piece in higher education theory and practice takes that and translates it into the business education classroom. So wonderful work there. That really shows how this translates. Let's talk about that term that you just kind of tossed out there, Linda. You advocate for taking a critical management approach, an approach that challenges kind of the conventional narratives

around development of capitalism. What do you mean by critical management? And why do you think that's the lens that we need right here, right now?

Linda Ridley

Well-critical management education is an area of study that challenges traditional management scholarship, and it encourages additional voices and points of view. Critical management education in itself it's not like a technique. It's not a method. It's a learning-centered pedagogy. So, when I look at my framework, for instance, when I decided to do a dissertation, I broke it up into three buckets: critical theory, critical management education, and that symptomatic thought process. And so, actually, when you look at critical theory, it leads you into critical management education, which it's aligning with that search for answers, and it's examining the unadulterated management research that explores the contribution of chattel slavery. So if we think about a lot of the extant research, I say extant, there's a tremendous amount of what I call marginalized research out there that is not being acknowledged. And critical management education allows us that pathway into looking at management theory. You may be familiar with works by Padoni, who looked at business schools and the challenges, especially after the 2009 financial crisis, and quite a bit of material out there, Bridgman out of Australia, that is questioning where we are with the MBA programs, with our pedagogy. And what is it we're telling students? A popular paper I'm fond of is one that talks about broken wind entering, where we query whether, when we get business students, whether or not we are working with a damaged goods, as it were. I actually am taking this a level lower than graduate education because I think when we start looking at what we tell undergraduate students, baseline, blank piece of paper, we start talking about efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, basic tenets. And when I determined just from reading Baptiste, Rodiger, Rosenthal I love her just reading that material, I questioned, why isn't this included? Why doesn't this link? And that's critical management education allows me to get there because it's a wide ranging area where you can just examine and pull apart. And I have to say there's been quite a bit of criticism about it because it leans towards Paula Fury and critical pedagogy. And there are many business theorists who are not particularly attuned with that. And that brings me to just the field of business generally is considered sacrosanct and so not really allowed to upset that apple cart.

Phil Wagner

Yeah, well, and I don't think it's just the field of business. I think it's the domain of politics. And we're certainly seeing felt pressure from legislative on highs that are really imposing, not regulations, but insights into the classroom that shape how we're even able to navigate terrain like this. I mean, you think about the current political rhetoric that is seeking to ban or limit or censor, particularly classroom discussions of race and history. So, with that in mind, your work kind of stands out here because you say, no, we have to, we have to confront, we have to acknowledge those past connections between slavery and modern business practices. But some might say that history can be divisive. Right. So why do you think it is so important that we not forget the past in shaping business education, even if it reveals, I don't know, uncomfortable or unflattering truths? Wouldn't ignoring or sanitizing that history ultimately be detrimental to their future leadership?

Linda Ridley

Absolutely. It is so incongruous to suggest that certain children would have their feelings hurt if we talked about certain things. We don't even consider the other side of the classroom. How do they feel when we don't talk about it? But I think, frankly, traditional approaches to diversity learning are remarkable in their consistent gaps when it comes to addressing historical inequities. Those historical inequities are avenues to understanding the future and what kind of opportunities there are for business. And I think, as you said, the current environment of changing demographics, not only domestically but globally, I think it indeed deserves a more focused approach to addressing this multicultural landscape. And, I mean, what's our new term now? Majority minority. I have problems with the term, but that's okay, as that majority-minority language takes on a different shape. We have, I think, ownership to change the narrative. So, I think it's essential that business instructors consider how to incorporate this conversation into their learning outcomes. And if we're going to impact future generations, they're going to be leading the business world. And I think we have ownership over that. We have to widen our worldview beyond the traditional textbooks, which, frankly, only have a passing or marginal mention to diversity and inclusion. I think in order to be effective, we have to understand the impact of exclusion in all its forms, including gender discrimination, for instance. You may be familiar with Shayla Haynes. She suggests that although there's a relative comfort in discussing gender issues in the classroom, for instance, the gap remains as we display this inherent reluctance and uneasiness surrounding topics of race and ethnic discrimination. We'll talk about gender, but we might not want to talk about race and ethnic discrimination. So, there's an urgency within the current business environment. It's really palpable. And companies are desperate for competent managers that can tackle those thorny ethical discussions we see all over. Companies are hiring so called D&I leadership, which once they get in place and they try to do something, board of trustees, board of directors up, we don't want to do that. And they're out the door. What's going on there? So I think we need some education around that. We got some thorny ethical issues within leadership within human resources. And so we need to change these views. We don't like to say it out loud, but there are basic assumptions that managers have leaders of color and employees of color, and it translates into the business environment. And so I think it requires a saturation into the curriculum to equip business students with the tools they need to overcome what we've called a popular term is abstract liberalism by decision-makers. It's that notion that racism is colorblind. Eduardo Baniela talks about it, but that's something that we have to really drive home. And you see it in the popular discourse, and you wonder, did they read a book? And I see it replicated as we look at management. When you talk about why, look at chattel slavery versus, and maybe you and I will talk about this versus current day management. I frankly see the gaps all over the place.

Phil Wagner

Yeah. Have you found anything that helps us figure out why this is seemingly so controversial? When all of the hullabaloo came out about critical race theory? Right. And I point, like three, four, five years ago, particularly, I'm shocked because, as someone who was trained in critical

theory, the foundations of critical race theory are largely uncontroversial. They center conversations on race and racism, certainly, but all they seek to do is challenge dominant ideology tell the right story. They centralize experiential knowledge. It invites an interdisciplinary perspective. It commits to justice all things that a principled leader should do. Why do you perceive this as so controversial, then?

Linda Ridley

You know, I think that I have an advantage over some, I think, having been a student of Edgar Ridley, because Edgar points out the impact of symbols and symbolic thinking on behavior. And if you go backwards, I mean, you're talking about John Dewey. You're familiar with John Dewey. John Dewey said the most important thing that we can focus on is symbols. And so if you look at the reaction, the behaviors of the respondents who criticize critical race theory, first of all, we all know it's a political ploy. It's an easy trope. Most of the people who criticize it can't even spell it don't know what it means. So we have to be clear about that. And if you go back in the political history of this country, there have always been tropes, whether it was Willie Horton with Ronald Reagan, I mean, on and on. So, the important thing for educators is first to be well-versed in the background of what has happened in this country. And that's one of the challenges that I've encountered in my research because the material is so marginalized, you have to take a symptomatic approach. Reading the material symptomally, I don't know if you're familiar with Eric Williams. I mean, how far back is Eric Williams? And he was so disappointed he gave up and went into politics in the Caribbean. If you look at things we don't talk about, such as Paul Robeson, and go back in history, we don't talk about Patrice Lumumba and the participation of the CIA and Eisenhower; those things, if they're not in the books, you can't link any of that. So then, when we start talking about business, which I again say is a sacrosanct area, I mean, you wouldn't even mention critical race theory in the business conference room, but how does that connect? And there, we can see the challenges in terms of promotion, pipeline, hiring in the first place, the affirmative action that takes place with white males in business. So we don't even acknowledge, I have yet to see acknowledge, for instance, with the Supreme Court ruling of dismantling affirmative action, no acknowledgment of the work of Rodiger that looks at affirmative action, as he calls it, when it was white. I don't know if you're familiar with that.

Phil Wagner

I am, I am, yeah. We actually talked about this in class, so yeah.

Linda Ridley

So, you know, when I teach my first-year business students about redlining, they knew nothing about redlining. However, they live in the Bronx, and they know that there are certain neighborhoods you can't move to, but they don't know why. And so we have these, for instance, neighborhoods in Manhattan, in Staten Island, there's areas where people encounter a lot of problems if they try to live there. All of that is business. And that's what I tell my students. And so they need to have a connection with, in my opinion, how we treat people today. Where did that come from? And if you easily look at chattel slavery, where productivity

was not accomplished without brutality, it brings us to present day. So it's a long answer to your question in terms of. I think it's a joke, critical race theory. Another one is the war on woke. But what is woke again? These are pejoratives, I say, and a proxy for the racism that people bring to the table.

Phil Wagner

Yeah, I think they're a flimsy trope that it is then easy to dismantle. To your point, though, I know you were recently at one of the discussions that we hosted on the Tulsa race massacre, for instance. Those historical moments that are often wiped from the pages of history, and certainly, history books set precedent for the problems and interactions, and social inequities that we're experiencing now. So, I think if ever there's a place to have a conversation on how important the past is in having conversations about the future, it's certainly here at William & Mary. I want to go back because you mentioned one of my favorite scholars, which is Rosenthal. Caitlin Rosenthal's work is just fantastic. Her book, accounting for slavery, was so eye-opening to me. If you've never read and you're listening, go grab a copy of Caitlin's book. But there are other scholars who, like you, are sort of building a case. Maybe it's in management scholarship. Maybe it's just in public policy. Maybe it's, you know, thought leadership writ large sort of building this case. If we're to take all of that advice and then build, let's say, a management curricula or a set of curricular practices where we are acknowledging aspects of slavery plantation management, what do you think that can or should look like?

Linda Ridley

Oh, I think a full curriculum on symptomatic leadership would be very powerful, where we include all of the scholarship that is not typically acknowledged. I mean, when you're talking about. I just mentioned a few. You mentioned Rosenthal. I mentioned Baptiste, Rodiger. Certainly, I think, in my opinion, the premier work that undergirds this is the golden apple, changing the structure of civilization, which is by Edgar Ridley. Which is a complete body of work that gives the reader all of the touch points that they need to appreciate how damaging symbolic thought is because that's the question that you asked about critical race theory. All of that is symbolic thought. You're adding something where there is no place for it. I think people generally we don't walk around thinking about symbols, and am I thinking symbolically we don't do that? And Ridley does a very good job of pointing out what that looks like. I teach that in my courses, for instance, and students, it's a beauty to see when students take it and can apply it right away because graduate students already have a job, they're already working, they know how to implement it. And so I think it works very well. Then you talk about, I just mentioned Rodiger. Where we go, have writers who have gone back in history and told a true story. Again, this is all a symptomal approach. And when you look at, I even move over. I think this course would have to be multidisciplinary, by the way. Caitlin Rosenthal talks about that because what is she teaching? The history of capitalism? She had to take it into another area. And she talks about how you've got to bring together different disciplines in order for it to be effective. Edward Whitmont he was a psychiatrist who founded the Carl Jung Institute in New York City. He passed not too long ago, but he talks about the world of myth has its own laws and its own reality. And I think a course like this would have to have a strong focus on

demythologization. And I could literally sit here and write out the syllabus right now in terms of what I think. Because when you talk about Whitmont he talks about the mistruth is only accessible to the symbolic view. And then you've got people like Terrence Deacon, he's at UCLA, and he looks at symbolic thought from the standpoint of neurology. So there's a lot of different areas. And I already mentioned people like Padoni, which whom I love, Haynes and Cummings, and Bridgman. There's so much work out there, and I'm always appalled that we don't see this in the business classroom. So how much time do you have? I could really go on because we're talking about what I would say is a naturalistic inquiry, where we're looking at what's out there. When you take economics and people like Thomas Shapiro, I don't see Thomas Shapiro taught. And here's the thing. If I sign up for a class in global capitalism or history of capitalism, maybe I'll see some of these things. But if it's that sacrosanct area of business and industry, you will not see it. And that's my argument. That's my rub, as it were. And so, if Travis Kalanick is a horrible manager, where did he learn it from? Where did he learn that you can talk to people any kind of way and treat them any kind of way because you started your company? And even people who shall remain nameless, where did they learn that they could build businesses in New York City and treat people like animals and not pay them? And so I keep coming back to, why talk about slavery? Well, it's over with. You can see the through line. Not to mention, we haven't even touched on modern-day slavery, an entirely separate area of study which I don't think should be separate. But there's a burgeoning look now at human trafficking, at supply chain issues, and slavery. Slavery is slavery, but we compartmentalize it, which impacts the learning. And we still end up with our MBAs coming in feeling, how can I say, entitled? Because that mythology has not been dissected. I know Harvard has a program with their MBAs where they try to really drive home the ethical piece because they don't want to leave completely ruined. So there's an effort to try to instill ethics in them, but I'm not so sure how successful it is.

Phil Wagner

So tell me, then, the benefits are there, right? But let's put them out front and center. Why does this benefit students? How does this benefit students? I mean, they're more distant than ever, approximately, from slavery as we conceive of it, or Jim Crow. Why this generation? Why now? Why make this pedagogical shift now?

Linda Ridley

And I would push back a little bit and say proximal distance is a fallacy because all we have to look at is something like the prison industrial complex, for instance. Brian Stevenson talks about slavery gave America a fear of black people, symbolic behavior, and a taste for violent punishment. And so we're still there, right? We've gone from chattel slavery to convict leasing to modern-day slavery. And, as we know, as a financial investment. Back to the business classroom. Prisons are a billion-dollar industry, one of the more attractive vehicles for solid return. You want to make some money, invest in prisons. So why is it significance? The significance is if we link business and management to early 20th-century industrialization, we expose that fallacy. The tenets that we learn were honed so much earlier than Henry Ford. They were honed in the 18th and 19th centuries, which is what Rosenthal and others like that

are telling us. That cruelty, that brutality, that coercion, which was commonplace, these are practices to elicit work results. That's working with an enslaved population there. And today's workplace is replete with similar examples. So, I mean, you got pregnant women at Walmart who have to file a lawsuit before they can use the restroom. What's that about? You've got meatpacking workers in North Dakota during a COVID pandemic who have to work no matter what because America has to have its meat. You've got investment banking analysts who have to work 100 hours a week in order to pass muster, and they drop dead. These are actual stories. I'm not making it up. Plus, I've been there, and I've seen it. That's a dark side, and it's always one of a hazing. Well, I went through it, so you have to go through it, too. But there is, in my opinion, a very direct link to how we have treated the development of capital from the very beginning.

Phil Wagner

That's so good. You allude to some of the ways in which coercive labor management practices under slavery have etched their way into today's business model. So it seems that this would just be such an easy ask like an invitation for faculty to pick up these realities integrate them into their curriculum. But we know that's not the case. You've done a little study on this, too, that looks at pockets of resistance or barriers that you have found among business faculty in integrating discussions of slavery into business courses. What are those?

Linda Ridley

Oh, boy. I had some very rich dialogs with business faculty when I did my study, and a lot of different things rose to the surface. I can probably put it in four buckets: what I call a mindfulness on the part of faculty, their concern for students, how would they deliver the content and just general innovation. So each of those buckets, I had deeper sub-themes. So, if you look at faculty being mindful about the topic of chattel slavery, it came up when we talked about peeling back the layers. Some faculty are very transparent. They just say I don't know anything about it. I have a lack of knowledge. I admit it. Okay, I'm clueless. And as we talk about it, they might move along a continuum and say, okay, I can see where it might make some sense, but that mindfulness might lead to their needing to be trained. And so when you talk about training, that's a resistance where we've got to put faculties maybe in an in-service environment, so we can extend that potential for them to embrace the teaching of the topic. But another area of faculty mindfulness is a fear of controversy. Many faculty have discomfort around teaching this topic for the very reasons you asked the question. They are afraid of the political climate. They even are afraid of university institutional reaction. Am I going to lose my job? Will I lose my tenure? Will I not be put in for tenure? So you have that challenge. So, there's a lot of qualifiers that I found that faculty would want to be in place before they would teach the topic. And then, when I looked at that bucket called a concern for students, I found that there was a juxtaposition between them inspiring students to work through their discomfort in order to learn and backing away from making students uncomfortable altogether. And so, I had some faculty express concern to me that students might feel challenged by the material and also that students might challenge them, and especially MBA students, going back to my observation about MBA students feeling entitled. So there were

anxieties around that some faculty suggested maybe we should give students more agency and let them help us design the course. If we're going to talk about chattel slavery, maybe that's a way to manage their anxieties. And some others just right out said, if I'm teaching MBA students, we all know that they are the cash register, as it were, for graduate schools, and so we don't want to alienate them at all. And so I would be a little reluctant to put this into the space. And again, I mentioned earlier that we are speaking of teaching in a business environment, as opposed to if someone signed up for the history of capitalism, their mindset is already there. Oh, you're going to take me there? But if I sign up for business, why are you taking me there? And so that is the challenge that I have encountered, is that we have to get faculty to wrap their minds around it, because many even said, oh, I wouldn't touch that with a ten-foot pole. So I recognize that this is something that we have to do some workarounds. Another area of student concern was just a level of student awareness. We found that faculty considered that many students who identify as white, for instance, they might be oblivious to the topic of chattel slavery due to their lack of exposure to groups of different backgrounds. But a very interesting finding I came upon was there are many students, especially from the African continent, that might be unfamiliar with slavery or might have opinions around slavery. And so, there might even be a tension between American-born African-American students and students from the African continent. So that might get in the way of the learning process, and so that needed to be managed. And so I already mentioned another sub-theme which has to do with student superiority. Because of the fact that faculty think that MBAs can bring an assertiveness in the classroom, it can be intimidating to faculty, especially young faculty members who are trying to build for tenure. So they have a concern around teaching errors and pushing back with those students. And so, again, that's a struggle. And an interesting observation. When I talked to a lot of faculty who identify as white, they would tell me, well, whatever, I would have an easier time of it than you would. So, they acknowledge that faculty of color might struggle to have this topic put into their classroom. So that's some of the things I found. Something else I looked at was how would you even deliver this content to students. So we looked at one of the themes that came up was something we called rhetorical strategy. I like that a lot. Where several faculty said you just got to blend it into the curriculum, so they don't quite notice what's hitting them. And so there had to be these games that you have to play in order to make this topic palatable for students. And when you're doing that, faculty have to be very mindful about the political climate, what's going on right now. You've just mentioned it several times, not only nationally but globally, I say, and certainly institutionally. And so faculty have to, I think, over-prepare to handle the potential classroom divisions. They really do.

Phil Wagner

Yeah. Say that. I would validate that I teach these concepts in my classes, and I would validate everything you say about MBA students, not because they are egomaniacal maniacs. Often, those programs are very large, and so you have 100 to 125 or more very diverse people in one room limited time to engage. So it is overwhelming. And you can't possibly know the history of everything everywhere all the time. And so you're putting yourself in a vulnerable position. I will tell you one of the things I've found is just the importance of positioning yourself not as

the know-it-all but as the question-asker. That's rhetorical strategy and action, right? In our classes with MBA students, I don't prescribe any moral doctrination whatsoever. You're welcome to walk in and walk out thinking what you'd like, but that's not how business strategy works. And so we do a case, for instance, on General Mills at the onset of the murder of George Floyd. And if you're General Mills, your company policy was to never comment on specific incidences like that. You put your money where your mouth is; you have scholarship programs and breakfasts and all sorts of stuff, but you don't comment well on May of 2020. When that breaks out, this one feels different. Okay. Well, no matter how you feel, morally or otherwise, about the police, about George Floyd, you're a business leader with profits, livelihoods, economic vitality on the line. You need to make a strategic decision. This is why you need that knowledge, right? This factors in whether you buy it all or not. You're doing yourself a disservice by not factoring in that history to inform our present reality. And so I think, to your point, Linda, your work just resonates so deeply with me, just asking the right questions and not prescribing the answers. It's so inspiring to watch students work that out with each other.

Linda Ridley

And you're right. And I think 125 students in the classroom, you've got to assign reading to get them salivating for this topic so that before they get there, and you said it, they've got to face reality. I think when we talk about, one of the other findings I came up with was scaffolding. You've got to build up layers to get them where you need them to be. And again, that's extra labor on the part of faculty. And anytime you have a topic that's considered racialized, you're running into faculty needing to have that skill set. I'm sure you're familiar with Derald Sue out of Columbia.

Phil Wagner

Yes.

Linda Ridley

And the need to build a racial fluency around topics. And once faculty have that comfort level, they can move to another level. I don't think that they can do it without being innovative.

Phil Wagner

Yeah. And I will tell you, students are hungry for this, and I do mean all students. One of the things I hope my legacy is that every student I teach feels seen, valued, heard, and like they belong. No questions. I have seen in the classroom that you can have productive but also very difficult conversations on this content as it applies here now with whatever the labels are, be they conservative or liberal or black or white. This is a conversation for everybody. And I have found maybe it's a William & Mary thing because we are a special institution. Students really want to know how to grapple with the difficult nuances. Nobody's looking for you to hand down a moral doctrine. I have been encouraged by watching our students just struggle with the nuance here and recognize the value of this. And so, if we are a little bit skeptical about how faculty might approach, let me tell you where to place our optimism, and that is in how

students and the next generation of leaders how they are grappling with this. It has been very heartening to watch.

Linda Ridley

It is.

Phil Wagner

Yeah. I want to ask one more question. As our time winds to a close here, let's just talk about the future. Obviously, you're going to keep working in this area, and I'm excited to continue to follow that work. I hope our listeners are as well. Where do you see room for, let's just say, future scholarship writ large at the intersection of sort of the legacy of slavery and modern management? What questions should we continue to keep asking so we can all contribute to this conversation?

Linda Ridley

Well, I think we really need to continue underscoring the significance of that link between chattel slavery and critical social science. I mentioned earlier, I think this work takes us into a multidisciplinary space where we can really have some good partnerships. And I think we need to look at the gaps that are in business and management teaching. I think we have a strong need for a change in the curriculum. Again, it shouldn't have to be that we have to shift disciplines in order to be effective in teaching this.

Phil Wagner

Right.

Linda Ridley

We teach this within business and management. So you're talking about textbooks. Textbooks essentially have not changed in 30 years. It's still the same textbook next edition. And so we might add some faces, we might add some business quote unquote, success stories, but we don't make that link. And I think that's critical. I think this discussion around fluency in managing classroom racial discourse. As you said, it can be hard, but when you've got the fluency, you can manage it as a faculty member, and you've got to develop that fluency. So we see a lot of that training taking place. I think that training is deeper than just DEI, which that's another podcast altogether. That's, again, it's become symbolic, but I think that there's a lot of work we can do and I think that that happens. Like you say, I don't talk to a lot of people who've read Caitlin Rosenthal, you see? So I mean, once you've got that information, you can't unread it. Now, what do you do with it? So when we talk about learning about the impact of symbols and the beauty of sentinel reading, which we get from an Edgar Ridley, and we look at Edward Whitmont in terms of symbols, and we look at works such as Eduardo Bonita and then moving further into Thomas Shapiro. I don't talk to a lot of faculty, even use Thomas Shapiro or Rodiger. So when I share my reference list with people, my reading list and I'm always amazed at where were you? And so I think one of the challenges we have going forward is looking at education less as these siloed areas that are not as effective. And where can we

bring those disciplines together to overcome what I call that myth in pedagogy? Going all the way back to Paula Fury. Okay. And breaking it out critically and determining where we can impact a student for liberation. I mean, that's in a nutshell.

Phil Wagner

Oh, that's so good, Linda. I could talk to you all day, and I'm delighted that the conversation, as we both know, will not end on this podcast. Thankful to be connected to you. It's so inspiring to see the work that you're doing. I think we often over-inflate the value of so much but always under-inflate the value of what happens in the classroom. That is where change agents are sculpted. And so I'm thankful that you are out there doing just that. And you've lended some of your expertise over the last hour to our podcast. Thanks for joining us. Thanks for the work you do. This was stellar.

Linda Ridley

Thank you.

Phil Wagner

Thanks for taking a second to listen to Diversity Goes to Work. If you like what you heard, share the show with a friend. Leave us a review on Apple podcasts or wherever you listen to podcasts, and reach out because we're always looking for new friends. And if you'd like to learn more about any of our programs or initiatives here in the business school at William & Mary, be sure to visit us at mason.wm.edu. Until next time.