Criticality, Diversity, and Journey

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ABSTRACT   This article will reflect on diversity of thought as an educational task and a remedy for the challenges of the contemporary world, where uncertainty, disorientation, and fear are strongly felt. The main areas of creating diversity will be highlighted, primarily criticality, with a focus on the idea of critical thinking, as well as social diversity and traveling. Diversity is primarily associated with stepping beyond one's own boundaries (egocentric, sociocentric, etc.) and actively embracing otherness. Therefore, I will strive to present my understanding of criticality against the backdrop of key and model concepts of critical thinking to emphasize zetetic criticism as an attitude leading to diversity of thought. Simultaneously, I will connect criticality with DEI efforts and the value of travel. Both of these activities illustrate two possible dimensions of stepping beyond the boundaries of one's own perception of the world (trans-personal dimension, trans-objective dimension), and both should be supported by shaping a critical attitude.

KEYWORDS   critical thinking; criticality; DEI; diversity; journey

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> Discover the insignificance of speech the royal power of gesture
> uselessness of concepts the purity of vowels
> with which everything can be expressed sorrow joy rapture anger
> but do not hold anger
> accept everything
> [...]
> So if it is to be a journey let it be long
> a true journey from which you do not return
> the repetition of the world elementary journey
> conservation with elements question without answer
> a pact forced after struggle
> great reconciliation[1]

It is impossible not to notice a strong upheaval in the times we live in.[2] It is associated with uncertainty, fear, and a sense of eroded trust. Nowadays, one could say, uncertainties have intensified due to the disruption of the existing *status quo* resulting from the emergence of new players (such as AI with its new type and quality of communication), the massive amount of data surrounding us, algorithms of actions, the overload of responses, and the lack of questions or inability to formulate them, the arrogance of the Anthropocene, and a combination of haughtiness and infantilism. From various quarters, one can hear voices suggesting ways to cope with the current situation. Something needs to change, perhaps invent something new, or maybe revert to something that was here before. As Ronald Barnett aptly concludes:

> We live with uncertainty in the world. There is no position of 'authoritative uncertainty' available to us. The challenge of higher education is both to problematize our world—its knowledge frameworks, its external features, and our own selves—and to enable us to live with good effect within it (Barnett 1997, 177).

In seeking a remedy for the challenges of modernity, one cannot take shortcuts and attempt to establish dogmatic solutions and decisive therapies. Remedies for confusion and uncertainty cannot include, among many other things, an illusion of dogmatic certainty, rigid frameworks of norms, forcefully imposed security, the creation of unyielding authorities, or the spread of manipulation and demagoguery. It probably won't come as a surprise to say that we are primarily facing radical changes in thinking about education

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1. Zbigniew Herbert's "A Journey" (2015).

and training.[3] Perhaps, we should follow the path once named by Jacques Chardonne: *To live with dignity in uncertainty.*

CRITICALITY/CRITICISM

I believe that the primary emphasis should be placed on the comprehensive development of criticality[4] because it activates reflexivity, and the latter „has become the cognition of late modern society" (Barnett 1997, 178). Undoubtedly, the education towards such competencies has already become a standard in selected European and North American countries. The whole issue, however, is associated with how one conceptualizes critical thinking (CT).[5] I will endeavor to elucidate my own understanding of criticality against the backdrop of prominent and model concepts of critical thinking, aiming to associate this criticality with other activities and processes undertaken to cultivate a more resilient human stance toward the ubiquitous pathogens of the contemporary world. Special attention will be devoted to the value of ensuring diversity and the phenomenon of journeying.

The movement associated with critical thinking (CT) has been present for over a century, tracing its roots to John Dewey's projects,[6] Ch.S. Pierce's *community of inquiry* which established conditions for critical discussion

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3. Richard Paul and Linda Elder also advocate a shift in thinking to render it more adaptive in a rapidly evolving world. "Traditionally, our thinking has been designed for routine, for habit, for automation and fixed procedure. We learned how to do our job, and then we used what we learned over and over. But the problems we now face, and will increasingly face, require a radically different form of thinking—thinking that is more complex, more adaptable, and more sensitive to divergent points of view" (Paul and Elder 2013, 1).

4. It is worth mentioning that in 2020 the World Economic Forum presented its third edition of the "Future of Jobs" report. The project featured top 10 crucial skills of 2020–2025: analytical thinking and innovation; active learning and learning strategies; complex problem-solving; critical thinking and analysis; creativity, originality and initiative; leadership and social influence; technology use, monitoring and control; technology design and programming; resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility; reasoning, problem-solving and ideation. Criticality, as I see it, is not reducible to any individual example of the aforementioned skills. Broadly understood, criticality is related to the half of the skills; namely, analytical thinking and innovation; active learning and learning strategies; complex problem-solving; critical thinking and analysis; creativity, originality and initiative; reasoning, problem-solving and ideation.

5. I will interchangeably use the terms "criticism" and "criticality," where the former is considered to refer to the entirety of the phenomenon, within which specific types constituting its subsets (manifestations) can be distinguished. On the other hand, the latter designates the overarching concept of this phenomenon. Meanwhile, critical thinking (CT) is associated with a specific educational trend whose roots trace back to the early 20th century in the United States.

6. John Dewey defines *reflective thought* as "active, persistent and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey 1933, 6). My research points to ancient (i.e.,

and inquiry. In 1941, Edward Glaser,[7] formulated the core understanding of critical thinking. The literature on the definition of critical thinking[8] is vast and highly diverse, reflecting the lack of consensus regarding its theoretical and practical foundations. It is not feasible within this context to delve into the broad spectrum of debates surrounding the issue. Instead, an attempt will be made to provide a concise overview of the directional stances on this matter in order to subsequently articulate a proposal for understanding critical thinking within this specific framework.

Above all, it is worthwhile to invoke the stance known as the Delphi Report, which resulted from the work of a discussion panel within the American Philosophical Association. According to this perspective, critical thinking is "a purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation and inference as well as explanation . . . ."[9] The core elements of critical thinking are argumentation and judgement formation. In a more nuanced form, the constituent elements of this approach primarily include argumentation and reasoning (referred to as cognitive elements), as well as dispositions, abilities, and attitudes (referred to as propensity elements). Additionally, it involves the capacity to articulate a variety of dispositions and attitudes. Thus, a characteristic feature of this approach is the formulation of rational judgments through conceptual and methodological tools, with an emphasis on formal and rational mechanisms of argumentation. Alternatively, another perspective shifts the focus in the understanding of critical thinking towards decision-making and judgment. Some scholars, such as Davies and Barnett (2015, 11), refer to it in terms of the "skills-and-judgments" view. Robert H. Ennis has presented a model definition within the aforementioned approach. In this sense,

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ancient Greek) roots of criticality, which situated reflective thought in the cultural context of the West.

7. "The ability to think critically, as conceived in this volume, involves three things: (1) an attitude of being disposed to consider in a thoughtful way the problems and subjects that come within the range of one's experiences, (2) knowledge of the methods of logical inquiry and reasoning, and (3) some skill in applying those methods" (Glaser 1972, 5–6).

8. In the matter of reviewing the literature on this topic, see, for example, (Lai 2011).

9. "We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation and inference as well as explanation of the evidential conceptual, methodological, criteriological or contextual considerations upon which that judgment was based. Critical thinking is essential as a tool of inquiry. Critical thinking is a pervasive and self-rectifying, human phenomenon. The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to consider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in selection of criteria, focused in inquiry and persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and circumstances of inquiry permit" (Facione 1990).

critical thinking is a "reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do" (Ennis 1985, 45).[10] Therefore, in contrast to the initial approach, the focus here is not only on arguing for a specific position, but on rendering judgment, on making a decision. Critical thinking, in this sense, involves examining justifications in order to make a decision regarding what to do or what to believe. Additionally, this standpoint can be complemented by certain suggestions that refer to reflection on the issues of metacognition and self-regulation. For instance, Lipman reduces critical thinking to "skillful, responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment because it 1) relies upon criteria, 2) is self-correcting, and 3) is sensitive to context" (Lipman 1988, 39). In this specific approach, one is motivated to see critical thinking in terms of a purposeful activity of making decisions with reference to possibilities of formulating a judgement.

   Both of the aforementioned positions are focused on resources or objectives. Therefore, in the literature, one can also find a proposal emphasizing the character of a critical attitude, referring to specific dispositions. Importantly, it is not merely about the possession of critical dispositions by an individual, but rather about the necessity to cultivate the inclination to utilize these resources. In my perspective, this provides a solid foundation for placing stronger emphasis on the volitional nature of dispositions associated with critical thinking. Critical thinking, as John E. McPeck puts it, is "the propensity and skill to engage in an activity with reflective skepticism" (McPeck 1981, 8). It is noteworthy to observe the definition's reliance on a certain type of skepticism; that is, its relative skepticism which illustrates a condensed activity and a specific purposeful action. Of course, a list of dispositions typical for critical thinking is open for further debates, but, as underscored by Emily R. Lai (2011),[11] researches in the field share a view that the dispositions should include the following elements: open-mindedness, fair-mindedness, the propensity to seek reason, inquisitiveness, the desire to be well-informed, flexibility, respect for, and willingness to entertain, others viewpoints. Thus, in this approach both skills (i.e., resources) and dispositions are equally crucial, and the latter is viewed as a kind of critical attitude which John Passmore calls "the critical spirit" (Passmore 2010, 134–147).[12]

10. It is noteworthy to observe that the definition served as a correction to the author's earlier definition from several decades prior, wherein the act of critical thinking was characterized as "the correct assessing of statements" (Ennis 1962, 81).

11. Lai refers to (Bailin et al. 1999; Ennis 1985; Facione 1990, 2000; Halpern 1998; Paul 1992).

12. Passmore points both to the significant value of the attitude as well as to possible dangers associated with it. "But in teaching his pupils skills at a high standard, or in encouraging

In the literature on critical thinking, one can also encounter perspectives that significantly broaden the scope of its meaning. An emphasis can be placed on new domains encompassed by this term, extending its meaning beyond mere inference, argumentation, reflection, attitude, and other aspects mentioned above, to include the individual's wider identity and something that can be called as one's participation in the world. In this context, the very idea of critical thinking becomes shed and eventually replaced by "criticality" as the latter term subsumes thinking, being, and acting within the shared horizon. An emphasis is placed here on the dimension of action and activity, rather than merely adopting a specific stance or possessing critical tools or abilities. Primarily, this activity manifests itself in the social dimension, within the context of one's life environment, and in response to various social challenges, ranging from local to the most global in nature. Criticality, as construed in this context, refers to a particular orientation within the world, coupled with self-awareness of one's own conduct. According to Robert Barnett, criticality extends beyond the individual and their cognitive resources and dispositions towards a communal dimension, encompassing the individual's participation in society and the world. In this specific sense, criticality comprises: critical reasoning, critical reflection, and critical action. Consequently, criticality could be defined as "critical being as the integration of the three forms of the criticality at all of their levels" (Barnett 1997, 115).

Finally, it is worth mentioning the critical pedagogy approach which further emphasizes the social and institutional dimensions of criticality. Essentially, it becomes transformed into a social and political critique that facilitates freedom of thought and action.[13] The focal points of this paradigm encompass ideologies, totalitarian or totalizing societies, political and economic structures, indoctrination, social oppressions, prejudices, inequalities, and other forms of subjugation or oppression.

them to examine critically their own performances and the performances of their fellow-pupils, the teacher is not, I have suggested, automatically engendering in them a critical spirit, as distinct from the capacity to be critical of certain types of specialized performance. For to exhibit a critical spirit one must be alert to the possibility that the established norms themselves ought to be rejected, that the rules ought to be changed, the criteria used in judging performances modified. Or perhaps even that the mode of performance ought not to take place at all" (Passmore 2010, 137).

13. "The critical thinking movement theorists had taken the adjective 'critical' to mean 'criticism' (becoming aware of weaknesses in some claim or argument). Their aim was putting logic at the service of clear thinking. The critical pedagogues, by contrast, took 'critical' to mean 'critique' (i.e., identifying dimensions of meaning that might be missing or concealed behind some claim or belief or institution)" (Davies and Barnett 2015, 19). See also (Kaplan 1991).

   This cursory and highly general overview of the main positions regarding the understanding of critical thinking served to elucidate the theoretical background for my conceptualization of criticality. In reference to the aforementioned perspectives, it must be asserted that I believe that criticality cannot be exclusively reduced to the dimension of argumentation and judgment formation, nor can it be confined to a superstructure built upon them for rendering judgment or making decisions preceded by the consideration of justifications. Instead, emphasis should be placed on a specific type of critical attitude along with the methods for fostering a predisposition to utilize critical resources, including cognitive elements, critical skills, knowledge, self-reflection, and meta-reflection. Hence, one may agree with a viewpoint suggesting that the disposition toward "CT reinforces CT skills and that success with CT skills reinforces the disposition" (Facione et al. 1995, 17). Furthermore, one cannot forget about the volitional and praxeological elements of criticality, evident especially in political and social criticism.[14]

ZETETIC CRITICISM

When analyzing the multitude of the aforementioned perspectives, it must be acknowledged that, quite often, a portion of them intersects with definitions of various rational activities, such as logic, sound reasoning, and argumentation. Consequently, the specificity of critical thinking is frequently not captured, let alone the nuances of criticality. I agree, therefore, with the suggestion (although not with the resolution associated with it) put forth by Ralph H. Johnson,[15] asserting that elucidating the adjective "critical" in the phrase "critical thinking" is pivotal. It is this term that articulates the

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   14. Martin Davies and Robert Barnett have made an attempt to compare and contrast six dimensions of critical thinking in higher education: "Critical thinking in higher education has, we contend, at least six distinct, yet integrated and permeable, dimensions: (1) core skills in critical argumentation (reasoning and inference making), (2) critical judgments, (3) critical-thinking dispositions and attitudes, (4) critical being and critical actions, (5) societal and ideology critique, and (6) critical creativity or critical openness. Each of these, we believe, has a particular place in an overarching model of critical thinking" (2015, 8). It is noteworthy to observe the emphasis put on critical creativity or critical openness. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, I believe that there is a profound relationship between criticality and creativity. Likewise, the scope of this article makes me unable to provide an in-depth analysis of the relationship between criticality, and sensitivity and ethics.

   15. See (Johnson 1996, 202). The scholar, upon observing deficiencies in other definitions for not sufficiently emphasizing the significance of the adjective "critical" in its etymological connection to the verb κρίνω, interprets its meaning in a highly biased and restrictive manner. In essence, the researcher narrows down its connotation to the action expressing "to estimate the value of something," thus imposing limitations on its broader semantic scope (Johnson 1996, 203).

distinctive characteristic of this activity and implies a specific set of markers. It is imperative to pursue this line of inquiry. In my research, I delve into the meaning of the terms "criticism"/"criticality," not only in reference to the etymology of the verb κρίνω and the adjective κριτικός but also with consideration to the ancient sources employing these terms.[16] First and foremost, the verb κρίνω stands for: 1) "separate," "divide," "part," "distinguish," 2) "order," "arrange," 3) "pick out," "select," "choose," "prefer," "decide," 4) "judge," "pronounce," 5) "expound," "interpret," 6) "inquire," "investigate," 7) "contend," quarrel," 8) "bring to trial," "accuse," "condemn," "criticize." At the same time, the adjective κριτικός may be translated as "able to distinguish," "able to discern," "critical," "separated," "picked out," "chosen."[17] Rejecting the use of specific or less useful terms for expressing the meaning of critical disposition, one can delineate fundamental semantic categories and corresponding types of criticism. In my view, the most general categories include: *separate criticism* (SC), *anti-dogmatic criticism* (AC), and *epistemological criticism* (EC). In this way, my proposition for understanding criticism/criticality, which subsumes critical thinking, involves outlining the key types of this activity along with their essential functions. At this point, I will only summarize my research in this domain and highlight the zetetic dimension of each distinguished type of criticality. Thus:

- *Separate criticism* (SC) represents the most rudimentary type of criticism, as it precedes not only any form of reflection but also serves as the foundation for other types of criticism. Broadly speaking, *separate criticism* emphasizes the capacity for differentiation, separation, or segregation, relying on the establishment of appropriate boundaries and divisions, thereby facilitating subsequent activities. Separative indiscriminateness manifests as the inability to make fundamental distinctions, which results in inappropriate divisions, one-sided oppositions, errors of false dichotomy, confusion of orders, and the like.
- In the academic discourse, *Anti-dogmatic criticism* (AC) encompasses activities denoted by verbs such as "judge," "pronounce," "expound," "interpret," "inquire," "investigate," "contend," and "quarrel." Its essence lies in opposition to dogmatic claims, whether manifested in the form of positive dogmatism or negative dogmatism. Anti-dogmatic criticism, in its opposition to dogmatic approaches wherein specific propositions are embraced more forcefully than warranted, primarily entails a multifaceted

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16. See (Kubok 2015, 2018, 2021).
17. See (Liddell and Scott 1940).

       engagement with existing facts. This involves confronting the said facts with one's own convictions, thereby necessitating continuous consideration of the reasons for their acceptance. Furthermore, this approach results in the potential for the ongoing revision of one's perspectives.[18]

- *Epistemological criticism* (EC) involves metalevel reflection which encompasses thinking about thinking, self-reflection, and the ability to adapt and assess modes of thinking, as well as related methodologies. Epistemological criticism also advocates for the necessity of preceding and grounding all reflection in relevant epistemological inquiries.[19]

Criticality, however, is not merely a set of cognitive resources and dispositions, which are limited to the most significant (though not exhaustively defined) types and functions. It primarily involves an active stance and engagement. To organize this issue, it is worthwhile to reference—which is only seemingly surprising at first glance—the text of Sextus Empiricus, who posits that "the most fundamental kinds of philosophy are reasonably thought to be three: the Dogmatic, the Academic, and the Sceptical" (Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes*, I.4). When translated into the contemporary language, Sextus argues that the first position corresponds to positive dogmatism (characteristic of those who claim to have found a decisive solution), the second position to negative dogmatism (those who deny the possibility of finding it), and the third position (i.e., the Sceptical) describes those who persistently seek answers and actively explore

18. In this view, AC is a negation of positive dogmatism or a negation of negative dogmatism. Dogmatism, in turn, could be defined in accordance to A. Plantinga's conceptualization: "Like 'fanaticism,' dogmatism is ordinarily a term of abuse, and a term one doesn't apply to oneself. (How often do you hear someone describe himself as a dogmatist?) The term has a variety of analogically related uses. In one use, to say of someone that she is a dogmatist is to say that she holds her views more strongly than is appropriate, more strongly than the evidence warrants, for example; alternatively, it is to say that she holds her views uncritically, without paying sufficient heed to objections and alternatives, or to the limitations of human reason (see Kant). 'Dogmatism' is therefore an indexical term; whether you properly apply it to a given doctrine or belief depends upon where you yourself stand" (Plantinga 1992, 108–9).

19. This specific aspect of critical thinking is underscored by Deanna Kuhn who claims: "A second distinctive characteristic of the present effort is that the developing cognitive competencies I describe as most relevant to critical thinking are metacognitive—rather than cognitive—competencies. In contrast to first-order cognitive skills that enable one to know about the world, metacognitive skills are second-order meta-knowing skills that entail knowing about one's own (and others') knowing" (Kuhn 1999, 17). Kuhn refers here to (Olson and Astington 1993). It is also noteworthy to observe Matthew Lipman's apt opinion: "Among the many things we may reflect upon is our own thinking, yet we can do so in a way that is still uncritical. And so, 'meta-cognition,' or thinking about thinking, need not be equivalent to critical thinking" (Lipman 1988, 41).

solutions. Sextus, contrasting positive dogmatism and negative dogmatism with skepticism, asserts that the former positions effectively halt the pursuit of searching for answers, while skepticism is characterized by a continuation of the investigation (ἐπιμονὴν ζητήσεως). Skeptics, in turn, are those who are still (ἔτι) investigating.[20] I call this dimension of skepticism as *zeteticism* or *zetetic criticism*, which entails the perpetual pursuit (i.e., persistent engagement in inquiries, continual probing). Hence, it is decisively differentiated from a standpoint grounded in the assumption of halting investigations and inquiries.

In this manner, *zetetic criticism* expresses an updated form of criticality in action, signifying a distinct inclination toward the continuous pursuit of inquiries. What becomes emphasized here is an attitude of active inquisitiveness, a refusal to approve the finality of answers, and a persistent cultivation of tendencies to utilize critical resources and forms. It is particularly noteworthy to highlight active manifestations of such a critical spirit within the main types of criticality as: a) a separative activity, b) an anti-dogmatic activity, c) a metacognitive and self-reflective activity (including the critique of one's own reason, to paraphrase Kant).[21] This dimension of zetetic criticism—following Sextus—underscores the justification not only for the cultivation of knowledge and specific critical skills but also for a particular critical stance characterized by continuous suspicion and critical vigilance, ensuring that critical activities do not possess merely episodic attributes. Anti-dogmatic criticism (AC) must be grounded in separate criticism (SC) and translate into epistemological criticisms (EC). Anti-dogmatic criticism (AC) manifests pragmatically as what is referred to in literature as critical thinking (CT), but it is not limited to it. Critical thinking (CT) is the capacity to shape specific skills and attitudes, thus constituting an inherent form of education.

DIVERSITY

Among the many constituent elements of what is referred to as criticality in this text, I would like to focus on one of them, namely ensuring diversity. However, it is beneficial to consider diversity from a much wider perspective

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20. "Τοῖς ζητοῦσί τι πρᾶγμα ἢ εὕρεσιν ἐπακολουθεῖν εἰκὸς ἢ ἄρνησιν εὑρέσεως καὶ ἀκαταληψίας ὁμολογίαν ἢ ἐπιμονὴν ζητήσεως. διόπερ ἴσως καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν ζητουμένων οἱ μὲν εὑρηκέναι τὸ ἀληθὲς ἔφασαν, οἱ δ' ἀπεφήναντο μὴ δυνατὸν εἶναι τοῦτο καταληφθῆναι, οἱ δὲ ἔτι ζητοῦσιν" (Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes*, I.1–3).

21. Certainly, zetetic criticism is not limited solely to these domains. In this article, I am unable to discuss other crucial aspects of this particular attitude. I only indicate that existential, ethical, social, creative, and sensitivity elements are also pivotal components that should be taken into consideration.

and illustrate two other ways of broadening its spectrum. The point is that not only does education in critical thinking (CT) contribute to enriching our cognitive perspectives with different possibilities. Therefore, first and foremost, *zetetic criticism* will take the form of *zetetic criticism* as an *attitude leading to diversity*, and a key category for me will be the category of *diversity of thought*.[22] Certainly, the cultivation of a critical attitude entails an ability to uncover and embrace a diversity of thought. Primarily, it involves being open to alternative perspectives, which is associated with a multifaceted engagement with the world and the confrontation of these diverse approaches with one's own convictions. This, in turn, paves the way for the ongoing consideration of the reasons for one's perspectives and, consequently, the potential revision of one's viewpoints. Diversity of thought manifests across various dimensions of criticality. Concerning the highlighted forms mentioned above, particular attention should be directed towards: the diversity as distinctiveness of divisions and distinctions (SC), the multitude of perspectives (AC), and the diversification in the realm of self-reflection and self-regulation (EC).

Nowadays, it is especially crucial to promote attitudes related to broadly understood diversity. While analyzing graduates' competences with reference to particular elements of their curricula, Simon C. Barrie points to certain shortcomings: "Generic attributes are understood to be interwoven aptitudes and abilities such as academic inquiry and intellectual curiosity, the ability to accommodate diversity and alternative perspectives, the ability to create and defend ideas, and the ability to use communication as a vehicle for learning" (Barrie 2007, 456). The opening of the field of diversity through critical thinking education is primarily associated with the ability to transcend the sameness and the related processes of unification or self-affirmation. However, such a departure cannot merely involve a simple break from the existing framework; rather, it should lead to the development of a richer array of alternatives. It is noteworthy that a critical attitude can serve as a remedy for the so-called "stickiness of thinking" which involves thar thoughts, as it were, adhere to what is known, established, sanctified by tradition, or authorities. There is nothing inherently intolerable in this, and our lives necessitate such foundations. The crucial point is to ensure that there exists the intellectual possibility of disengaging from such adhering thoughts, thereby allowing for the recognition

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22. This category is extensively utilized in discussions on the topic of diversity. However, I will employ this phrase in a general, loose, and non-specialized sense as the diversity of thought, encompassing a multitude of alternatives.

of diverse and varied options. In a general sense, critical thinking fosters a diversity of thought, which can lead to the development of specific dispositions: the ability to perceive alternatives, broadening one's perspectives, cultivating the capacity to compare items (i.e., *comparative syncriticism*),[23] fostering diverse foundations for self-reflection, awareness of criteria for decision-making, pressure to justify choices, a propensity for arguing in favor of a choice or eliminating alternative options, recognizing the contexts of issues, the opportunity for *philoxenia*, increased adaptation to change, enhanced flexibility (i.e., adaptability to the new), and even the ability for creative problem-solving and a proclivity for empathy.[24]

It seems unquestionable that an attitude open to diversity should be associated with both allocriticism and self-criticism. When deprived of self-criticism, criticism directed towards others holds little significance, and even undermines the authenticity of a critical stance, rendering it a mere form of commonplace criticism of everything that disagrees with one's own perspective. Simultaneously, as emphasized by Richard Paul, critical thinking is intended to counteract pathological tendencies in human thinking, primarily encompassing egocentrism and sociocentrism, which lead to self-deception. Both of these tendencies render human thinking biased, superficial, one-dimensional, assuming an uncritical foundation in the form of "I" or "we."[25] The promotion of diversity results in a detachment from a fixed foundation, thereby gaining perspective. Why is diversity so important? In this context, it is valuable to refer to Odo Marquard's nuanced response (2000, 97–111). This scholar argues that a monomyth is always perilous. Having the opportunity to possess multiple myths or multiple stories is worthwhile. Marquard postulates that polymyths, on the other hand, are not dangerous. I would rather say that polymythicity is palatable in contrast to monomythicity. Living in a polymythic manner ensures one the potential freedom from any single

23. See (Kubok 2021, 443–531).

24. This list may be compared with the selection of dispositions which, as Lai claims (Lai 2011, 10–11), most researchers have agreed upon: open-mindedness, fair-mindedness, the propensity to seek reason, inquisitiveness, the desire to be well-informed, flexibility, respect for, and willingness to entertain, others' viewpoints.

25. This aspect of critical thinking is underscored in *Foundation for Critical Thinking*: "Critical thinking is that mode of thinking—about any subject, content, or problem—in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it. Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It presupposes assent to rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem-solving abilities, as well as a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism" (The Foundation for Critical Thinking, n.d.).

narrative, whereas living monomythically compels an individual to engage solely in a singular narrative and a singular mode of thinking.

CRITICALITY TOWARDS DIVERSITY AND JOURNEY

The cultivation of the ability to grasp diversity represents one of the key objectives of critical thinking. However, the development of critical abilities is not the only activity that serves this purpose. Among the myriad activities, I would like to briefly outline two possibilities: DEI (i.e., Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) tasks and journey benefits. This choice is dictated by two circumstances: i) each of them contributes to the potential of ensuring diversity in different ways; ii) both approaches, to be effective, must be associated with criticality.

In this context, diversity is primarily associated with transcending one's own boundaries (egocentric, sociocentric, etc.), as well as actively embracing otherness. Thus:

- Practices aimed at Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), particularly those categorized as *interactional diversity*, serve the purpose of transcending the boundaries of one's own worldview and are characterized by a transpersonal nature. Diversity is achieved here primarily on the social dimension by providing different perspectives, alternative approaches originating from diverse individuals. This personal diversity (cultural, gender, racial, religious, ideological, and others) establishes the possibility of creating a framework of diverse perspectives, provided that each individual, in constructing a holistic view, moves beyond a monomythic self-treatment in a monadic manner (as in the case of Leibniz's philosophy). Paraphrasing Wittgenstein's famous statement that "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world" (Wittgenstein 2001, 5.6), one could say in this case: transcending the boundaries of my world is possible through the worlds of other people (i.e., *trans-personal dimension*).
- On the other hand, journey benefits can be considered as an example of transcending the boundaries of one's own world by expanding it with new experiences, things, perspectives, stories, places, emotions, etc. Thus, such an excursion takes on a *trans-objective nature*. Diversity is gained here through contrasting the previous with the new, which is a manifestation of one of the forms of criticism, namely, *comparative syncriticism*. In this manner, diversity is acquired by the same subject in contact with new objects (broadly conceived) or with new perspectives. Utilizing the previous paraphrase, it can be stated: transcending the boundaries of my world is possible through the expansion of one's own world (i.e., *trans-objective dimension*).

Even in such a cursory overview of these distinct approaches, the necessity of linking diversity with critical thinking is glaringly evident. The capacity for critical thinking is required from every individual to effectively leverage each of the options. Providing a diverse environment or engaging in travel activities may not contribute to the enhancement of diversity if an individual lacks critical competencies. It is worthwhile, hence, to take a closer look at both challenges.

DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT/DEI

Steven Vertovec asserted, "We are living in the age of diversity" (Vertovec 2012, 287). While this statement may not necessarily be endowed with a global character, it rather indicates the direction of actions and the magnitude of social challenges. Diversity is presently a cornerstone of initiatives collectively referred to as DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion). At this point, the aim is to enhance diversity, equity, and integration in various social domains. DEI efforts have become part of the agenda of diverse activities in the social dimension, including the business and organizational realms. The label "diversity" encompasses all that distinguishes people, enriching the palette of broadly understood "worlds of other people."[26] Diversity is considered a value that should be promoted and utilized without attempting to create a homogenous and monomythic community. "Equity" expresses equal opportunities and access to resources that enable individuals to meet their basic life needs. Additionally, it involves eliminating unjust and discriminatory practices. This conception of equality emphasizes equal opportunities rather than an *a priori* leveling of all aspects or a quasi-mechanical provision of various arbitrary forms of equality. On the other hand, "inclusion" focuses on incorporating individuals who are different or diverse into a given structure. This "inclusion" involves creating conditions where everyone can find themselves and thrive in a specific environment. The aforementioned elements are all interconnected.[27] Diversified people are equally treated: they are all included and bound for a creative accomplishment of objectives.

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26. Following Vertovec, one can point to the whole spectrum of personal characteristics: "race, gender, ethnicity, culture, social class, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, mental ability, physical ability, psychological ability, veteran or military status, marital status, American state of residence, nationality, perspectives, insights, backgrounds, experiences, age, education level, cultural and personal perspectives, viewpoints, opinions." (Vertovec 2012, 295–296).

27. Needless to say, there are postulates concerning either supplementing DEI with a different set of values or subsuming new values within the already existing scheme of DEI. This may refer to belonging, justice, access, for instance.

It is important to note that there are significant controversies associated with this set of values, as well as with the effectiveness of actions taken in their support.[28] However, this is not the focus of my reflection, nor is the analysis of strategies for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). My interest lies solely in the general understanding of diversity, naturally linked to other values. It is already evident that merely promoting diversity holds little significance if it is not accompanied by the ability to inclusively engage and connect this diversity, as well as the equitable treatment of individuals.

Diversity has been investigated across various dimensions and due to its various types.[29] In her report, Deborah Sol Holoien explores diversity and its effects on learning, intergroup outcomes, and civic engagement. According to Holoien, one can assert the positive impact of diversity on academic outcomes, primarily stemming from a spectrum of experiences. Additionally, Holoien notes, "it also improves attitudes about one's own intellectual self-confidence, attitudes toward the college experience, and shapes performance in the workplace" (Holoien 2013, 8).[30] By way of summarizing her viewpoint, Holoien claims that "Increased exposure to people who differ on various attributes can cause individuals to question their beliefs and assumptions about the world and correct any negative biases they may possess about unfamiliar others" (Holoien 2013, 15). This conclusion

28. To this end, it is worth referring to an article from *The Economist* titled "Workplace diversity programs often fail, or backfire," (dated August 25th, 2022). Controversies have arisen in many academic environments regarding the use of mandatory "diversity statements." It is noteworthy that efforts towards Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) can devolve into caricature if critical thinking is excluded. These actions should aim at respecting human freedom and dignity, particularly academic freedom and freedom of speech. Moreover, endeavors towards DEI should not be surrendered to any particular ideology or political worldview. Diversity should also encompass diversity of opinions and worldviews. Therefore, universities should be bastions of freedom, diversity, and independence from political monomyths.

29. Deborah S. Holoien has enumerated three types of diversity: structural, curricular, and interactional. "*Structural diversity* refers to the proportion of diverse individuals in a given setting. . . . *Curricular diversity* refers to classes, workshops, seminars, and other programmatic efforts that expose individuals to diversity-related content. . . . Finally, *interactional diversity* refers to interpersonal contact with diverse individuals" (Holoien 2013, 2).

30. When it comes to other aspects of the issue, Holoien concludes that "Despite some mixed results, in general the studies show that exposure to diversity can ameliorate negative stereotypes and biases people may have about people from different backgrounds and perspectives. In addition, increasing diversity in high-power positions can buffer underrepresented and stigmatized groups by providing ingroup members as understanding and supportive role models." (Holoien 2013, 12); "Although there exists mixed evidence regarding the effects of diversity on civic engagement, the majority of research on interactional and curricular diversity strongly suggests that increased exposure to diversity is positively associated with civic engagement." (Holoien 2013, 14).

highlights a strong influence of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives on critical thinking, which is manifested as a tendency towards greater questioning of one's beliefs. This type of impact of DEI on critical thinking (CT) can also be found in other studies.[31]

Before investigating into a reverse relationship, i.e., the necessity of grounding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices in critical thinking (CT), it is important to take a closer look at the concept of diversity of thought within the DEI framework. In the understanding adopted here, diversity of thought extends beyond the social and interpersonal dimensions to encompass the intrapersonal space. This involves the critical skill of crafting alternative perspectives on a given matter. In discussions related to DEI, diversity of thought is framed in a way that allows for more than one way of thinking about a given issue. Each individual's exclusive worldview becomes a valuable asset to the community. The emphasis is on the greater diversity of personal approaches to problems and unique perspectives as a factor leading to a richer diversity in generated thoughts.

Efforts towards DEI have successfully created value in the dimension of interpersonal diversity of thought. However, it is crucial to recognize that diversity should not be reduced solely to the diversity of thought. The point is that diversity of thought should not be an end in itself. As Rebekah Bastian observes, by focusing solely on diversity of thought, attention may be diverted from other DEI initiatives, including those with the most pressing societal implications (Bastian 2019). Ella F. Washington goes even further, referring to efforts related to diversity of thought as an excuse and adds:

> However, the concept is often used as a scapegoat. It's a way to avoid difficult DEI conversations around race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability and so on (Washington 2022).

It must be acknowledged that in light of the aforementioned observations, one cannot reduce diversity solely to the diversity of thought, excluding other societal actions aimed at non-exclusion, violence prevention, and upholding dignity.

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31. "Our findings reinforce the argument that engagement in diversity experiences may have important implications for the intellectual development of substantial numbers of students during the first year of college. Thus, an institutional policy based on programmatic efforts to weave exposure to diverse individuals, ideas, and perspectives into students' lives may serve to enhance the intellectual mission of a college" (Loes et al. 2012, 21). See also: (Hurtado 2001; Pascarella et al. 2014; Gurin et al. 2002).

In my conviction, however, efforts towards diversity should not be limited to the interpersonal diversity of thought. Quite to the contrary, they should be based on *intrapersonal diversity of thought*, which can be facilitated through a broad understanding of cultivating criticality, not only in the form of CT. Furthermore, ensuring internal diversity of thought becomes the foundation for effective DEI actions, as it builds fundamental criticality, the ability to detach oneself, provide alternatives, self-reflection, self-criticism, and ultimately the capacity to accept what is different. The diversity of individuals, even when treated equitably and provided with effective inclusion, may not be sufficient. If each of us lacks the appropriate attitude of embracing diversity and openness to alternatives, then social diversity itself remains an artificial construct, a form of diversification hybrid, or even a violent imposition. Zetetic criticism represents an attitude of active inquiry and continuous deepening of research into various new aspects of the analyzed issue.[32] In relation to the highlighted types of criticality, one can speak of diversity as distinctiveness in divisions and distinctions, including detailed differentiations, parceling, and pointing out divisions (i.e., SC);[33] a multitude of perspectives in the intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions (i.e., AC); and diversification in terms of self-reflection and self-regulation through diversity at the metacognitive level (i.e., EC). Therefore, it can be said that actions towards cultivating criticality should constitute the foundation, rather than just an addition, for strategies aimed at DEI in the broadest sense, not limited solely to interpersonal diversification.

JOURNEY

Defining a journey solely as a change of place would be too narrow. In my view, what distinguishes traveling is simply a significant change in some area that is essential to the individual. One might say that in this very broad sense, it pertains to an existential realm, but I would prefer to use the term: an essential dimension. Going to the store, routinely climbing a nearby hill, or traveling to the capital for a conference do not constitute a journey simply by the virtue of moving from one place to another.

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32. I deploy Josef Pieper's definition of criticality: "[...] »kritisch« sein besage für den Philosophierenden so viel wie: sich darum bekümmern, daß nur ja nicht etwas ausgelassen wird" (Pieper 1966, 97).

33. A paradigmatic example of such type of separate criticism (SC) is thinking in terms of oppositions: us—them, me—others, etc. Pathological manifestations of this type of thinking, and thus a form of separative indiscrimination, are unreflective and dogmatic expressions of racism, sexism, nationalism, ageism, and similar ideologies.

However, each of these expeditions can be considered a journey in the sense that I am adopting here. This significant change involves voluntarily stepping beyond what is known and familiar towards something distant and different. Susanne Köb identifies three motives for self-change in three realms of travel. A tourist journey can assume a threefold relationship in our everyday world: a journey in the external world, a journey in a counter-world, and a journey in the inner world (Köb 2005). Therefore, I conceive of a journey as a process that encompasses all stages, but I consider the dimension of inner journeying as constitutive for thinking about travel in an essential sense. In addition to that, other essential elements of a journey should be acknowledged: mobility in a broad sense, voluntariness, activity and agency, orientation towards novelty, authenticity, change, and value.[34]

Additionally, three noteworthy elements of such a journey are the moment of departure, the attitude towards otherness, and the departure from the quotidian in favor of the richness of the diverse world. The most challenging aspect is to start a journey, to move from a standstill, to decide to embark on a journey towards something new, which involves the ability to allow the other into oneself, an openness to heteronomy. Wiesław Myśliwski, in his novel *Widnokrąg* [*The Horizon*—D.K.], wrote: "because the hardest thing is to start. Not to arrive, but to start. To take that first step. Because the first step is not a step of the legs, but of the heart. The heart moves first, and only then do the legs begin to follow. And for that, not only strength is needed but also a calling, to overcome the heart and say, I'm moving" (the translation is mine). The voluntary departure from the zone of the known, familiar, and routine is undoubtedly a significant event that constitutes a moment of initiation in terms of journeying.

When it comes to the attitude towards otherness, the crucial matter is not only opening up to otherness or even accepting it; of utmost importance is the desire to establish otherness not just as difference but as an identity of distinctiveness. An ordinary tourist is likely capable of enjoying observing different behaviors, rituals, objects, landmarks, treating them as folklore. Satisfaction is derived from the collision with what is different, but that otherness remains as the Other. However, in an authentic journey, the aim is to collide with the Other, to recognize rooted identity and diversity. One can attempt to penetrate the Other to see oneself as different. In this case, we are dealing with an essential change in the traveling wanderer.

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34. I do not have the opportunity at this point for a detailed analysis of the essence of traveling. The above remarks should be regarded only as a general and approximate characterization of the nature of a journey.

Importantly, establishing otherness is not about a total transformation of oneself but about contrasting authentic life models. It is valuable to learn to connect the familiar with the unfamiliar and treat this as the basis for a critical evaluation of oneself. In this way, a journey contributes to the development of criticality. We are not dealing with entirely different worlds, but rather with one's own cognitively extended world encountering what is authentically different and noteworthy.

Stepping out of the mundane towards the non-routine, as well as allowing the Other to be different, is a way to incorporate diversity into one's being, which can be a value of enrichment. However, quantitative richness in itself is not a desirable value but merely a resource and a foundation for critical reflections on multiple levels, leading to internal qualitative transformation. The goal of the journey is not mere diversification or the accumulation of experiences, but critical reflection. To further emphasize the value of transgressive and transformative travel, this image should be juxtaposed with the well-known arguments against travel from Seneca, Emerson, and Chesterton.

Seneca believes that travel does not make anyone better or wiser. He adds:

> But as long as you are ignorant of what to avoid and what to pursue, and remain ignorant of the just, the unjust, the honorable, and the dishonorable, you will not really be traveling but only wandering. Your rushing around will bring you no benefit, since you are traveling in company with your emotions, and your troubles follow along. (Seneca, *Lettres*, CIV, 16–17).

Seneca also claims that

> What good will new countries do you? What use is touring cities and sites? All your dashing about is useless in the end. Do you ask why your flight is of no avail? You take yourself along. (Seneca, *Lettres*, XXVIII, 2).

The last sentence is crucial; travel is primarily an internal journey, so that everything we carry with us. Changing the location is not any serious change. It does not heal, or help. Seneca does not criticize travel as such but the naive belief in its redemptive power as a superficial escape from oneself. We carry ourselves throughout the journey, and therefore, we can subject ourselves to critical contemplation and potential transformation.

Emerson, in turn, points to the clash of the reality and our expectations concerning the reality, and, following Seneca and Socrates, he emphasizes the impossibility of losing oneself in travel.

Traveling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty, and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea, and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican, and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go (Emerson 1950, 165).

In this case, one could say that traveling is not about fulfilling prede- termined intentions, but about opening oneself to marvel at novelty. You cannot carry your world everywhere you go; instead, you allow the Other to be different. Moreover, the giant within us will not leave any of us, but over time, it may transform. Traveling provides material for action but also offers what is unique. As David Henry Thoreau used to say, life is something in which no one can replace us.

The third excerpt comes from Chesterton's work:

"Boon is a good man," said Gale, calmly; "he is very stupid; that is why he is an atheist. There are intelligent atheists, as we shall see presently; but that stunted, stupid, sort is much commoner, and much nicer. But he is a good man; his motive is good; he originally talked all that tosh of the superiority of the savage because he thought he was the under-dog. He may be a trifle cracked, by now, about sharks and other things; but that's only because his travels have been too much for his intellect. They say travel broadens the mind; but you must have the mind. He had a mind for a suburban chapel, and there passed before it all the panorama of gilded nature-worship and purple sacrifice. He doesn't know if he's on his head or his heels, any more than a good many others. But I shouldn't wonder if heaven is largely populated with atheists of that sort, scratching their heads and wondering where they are (Chesterton 2010, 53).

I get the impression that the author is here critiquing a specific faculty of reason, rather than critiquing travel itself. What does the phrase "you must have the mind" signify? In my opinion, one must possess a mind prepared for travel, open to otherness, and above all, critical.

The true purpose of travel is not necessarily exoticism, new places, or different civilizations, but rather the act of seeing something anew. Of course, it is easiest to perceive new things with fresh eyes, but this asso- ciation is not obligatory. As demonstrated by Chesterton, Emerson, and Seneca, getting in touch with new things may not bring about any change,

merely restore or preserve what is old. Traveling is mobility (activity) taking place in openness to establishing what is new in our perception of "things." It is simultaneously an experience of reality and a positioning aside to gain perspective. Traveling is stepping beyond established boundaries and establishing others for the purpose of their collision. Traveling is, hence, a confrontational movement, open to diversity, thus a critical movement. An exemplary illustration of this dimension of travel is found in the expeditions of Xavier de Maistre, first described in the book *Voyage autour de ma chambre* (1794) and later in *Expédition nocturne autour de ma chambre* (1825). The first provides an account of a journey around his bedroom, while the latter describes a nocturnal journey all the way to the windowsill. This traveler demonstrates how to rid oneself of the routine of observing familiar things and how to view the world with a fresh perspective. Alain de Botton, in *The Art of Travel* (2002), notes that this case teaches us that the essence of travel may depend more on the mindset than on the destination, and routine makes us blind. Consequently, in traveling, attitude, mindfulness, sensitivity, a desire for reality, and openness to novelty are paramount.

Agnes Callard, in her published article "The Case Against Travel" in *The New Yorker*, formulates the thesis that often travels create in us "the traveler's delusion," distancing us from contact with new places. Moreover, since "touristic travel exists for the sake of change" (Callard 2023). According to Callard, we are mistaken in thinking that the traveler changes; rather, changes occur in hosts who seek to adapt best to their guests. Furthermore, our openness to novelty often appears to be illusory as we feel obliged by various recommendations regarding what to see and do. Callard adds: "If you think that this doesn't apply to you—that your own travels are magical and profound, with effects that deepen your values, expand your horizons, render you a true citizen of the globe, and so on—note that this phenomenon can't be assessed first-personally. Pessoa, Chesterton, Percy, and Emerson were all aware that travellers *tell themselves* they've changed, but you can't rely on introspection to detect a delusion" (Callard 2023). Indeed, this is how tourism, more specifically "touristic travel" as discussed by the author, looks like. Most tourists heroically carry their giant with them, not expanding their world with what is different but rather "covering" the different with their own world, not changing it. Against this backdrop, it is worth emphasizing the possibility of the journey I described as a profound experience with an essential character. Such journeys are rare, but possible, just as unfortunately rare is the inclination towards deep critical thinking. This type of traveling is more of a spontaneous wandering based on desire and passion, sometimes

joyfully wandering in the discovery of the unexpected, perhaps even drifting, and making something somewhere else my own. Recommendations here are not external (postcards, guides, others' opinions) but internal, such as admiration, encounter, mood. Furthermore, to detect the delusion mentioned by Callard, one must possess the appropriate tools of critical thinking to distinguish oneself from others and compare these different "worlds" (i.e., separate criticism), recognize and evaluate change (i.e., ant-dogmatic criticism), and finally learn to contemplate ways of thinking about change and otherness (i.e., epistemological criticism). For the traveler, the greatest nightmare is the awareness of the impossibility of embarking on a journey.

Therefore, stepping beyond the established boundaries of my world is possible through the critically expansive nature of one's own worldview. Let us not be deceived that the multitude of things, data, and answers surrounding us enriches our lives by providing fascinating diversity, allowing us to see and know more. Let us not be naive; diversity itself tends to fuel our uncertainty and disorientation. However, we can transform diversity into a stimulating value that enables us to live productively with dignity in uncertainty. Above all, we must become critical in the most fundamental sense to even allow ourselves to recognize and accept the otherness that constructs diversity. Only then can we—by attempting to detach ourselves from the non-Other—accept alternatives, yet tether them to what is known. Living with diversity requires learning to live with it—with respect for it but also with responsibility.

During my recent journey to Greece, I had the opportunity to converse with Αγγελική Γιαννακίδου, the founder and president of the Ethnological Museum of Thrace in Alexandroupoli. When asked about the fundamental value for people in this region of Greece, she responded with a single word and without much hesitation: diversity. Prompted by this answer, I embarked on another journey, asking: why?

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