CRITICAL THINKING
AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION TODAY

UDC 378.14:159.955

Tatjana Paunović, Ljiljana Marković, Ema Živković

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš, Serbia

Abstract. *This paper discusses the concept of critical thinking and its place in university education today, internationally as well as in the Serbian and regional Balkan contexts. As an illustration, the second part of the paper offers a review of Gordon Asher's chapter in Writing Your Thesis: A Guide for Postgraduate Students, a coursebook which incorporates the conception of criticality in higher education, from the perspective of Critical Pedagogy. We highlight the importance of embracing a broad, epistemological understanding of critical thinking, not only as an applicable pragmatic skill, but, rather, as a way back to a more humanistic view of education as emancipation and whole-person development of individuals, for the benefit of both the individual and the society. Lastly, we discuss the importance of methodological tools in teaching for critical thinking.*

Key words: *critical pedagogy, academic literacies/ critical literacies/ critical academic literacies, critical thinking/ reading/ writing, higher education*

1. INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking has been highlighted as an important goal of education for many decades. From John Dewey's (1910) early definition of critical or 'reflective' thinking as "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey 1910, 6; 1933, 9), movements aimed at the reform, liberalisation and modernisation of education invariably endorsed critical thinking as a central educational objective. For instance, the widely adopted Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive educational objectives (Bloom et al. 1956) includes critical thinking, as the highest-order abilities of analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and creation. However, the understanding of what critical thinking comprises, of what it aims for, and of whether and how it should be implemented in education has differed substantially between authors, and changed over time.

Today, the issue of critical thinking in university education is critical. While the last decades of the 20th century witnessed a surge of substantial contributions from humanities and social sciences, resulting in the articulation of very influential voices of the critical thinking movement and critical disciplines, the first decades of our century have been marked by a paradoxical status of critical thinking in education. On the one hand, it has become an institutionalised and almost universally proclaimed educational goal, but, on the other hand, the discussion about critical thinking seems to be smothered, and its importance and value considerably diminished. In Davies and Barnett's words (2015), critical thinking "has faded from the public debate about higher education, as 'employability' has risen", and the focus shifted to the skills "more obviously suited to the requirements of a global economy", as a result of the rise of "the entrepreneurial university" and the "market principles in higher education" (Davies and Barnett 2015, 1-2).

In this paper, we discuss the vital importance of teaching for critical thinking in higher education today, using the example of a university coursebook dedicated to writing the MA thesis to illustrate how the teachers' conceptions of critical thinking shape both their approaches and their educational goals.

2. CRITICAL THINKING AND CRITICALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In contemporary higher education curricula, critical thinking, reading, and writing are almost invariably described as literacy skills essential for students' effective participation in economy and society, or in "the global workforce" (Liu, Frankel, and Crotts Roohr 2014, 1). However, as pointed out by a number or contemporary authors, "despite […] decades of dedicated scholarly work 'critical thinking' remains as elusive as ever" (Davies 2015, 41), and the notion of critical thinking is "neither clearly nor commonly understood" (Lloyd and Bahr 2010, 1).

One important point of dispute is what education for critical thinking comprises, that is, whether it should be confined to practical skills of reasoning and argument analysis, or it should include the promotion of attitudes, basic values, and moral integrity. The former view seems to dominate educational practices today, despite numerous warnings that mere reasoning 'skills' are not enough.

For instance, Ennis initially (1962) identified critical thinking as "the correct assessing of statements" (83) in three dimensions, logical, critical, and pragmatic, and proposed twelve characteristics of the critical thinker. However, he later (1996) defined critical thinking as "reasonable and reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do" (166), comprising not only abilities but also dispositions. Broadening the conception to comprise values and ethics, Ennis highlights the "correlative" dispositions, i.e. the disposition "to care about the dignity and worth of every person" (Ennis 1996, 171), which are "not required of critical thinking by definition", but in order that it be "humane", they are "desirable". Most importantly, Ennis states that, without this component, the education for critical thinking is not complete, and can even be "less valuable, perhaps of no value at all, perhaps even harmful" (Ennis 1996, 171), which may be said to echo Hannah Arendt's warning that "[t]he aim of totalitarian education has never been to instil convictions but to destroy the capacity to form any (1973, 468).

Along similar lines, Lipman (1995, 2003) introduces three dimensions of higher-order thinking: critical thinking, but also creative thinking, and *caring* thinking, the last one in

the sense of endorsing values and judgment. In his chapter on 'education for caring thinking', Lipman (2003, 261-272) defines it as "concern for matters of importance", and analyses some kinds of caring thinking, such as appreciative, affective, active, normative, and empathic thinking.

From this kind of perspective, Paul and Elder define 'strong-sense critical thinking' as comprising not only elements of thought but also intellectual standards, and intellectual virtues (Paul and Elder 2013/2006). They describe the development of critical thinking as a process leading from the initial ignorant phase of "unreflective thinking", through several stages to the stage of "advanced" thinking, and commitment to internalizing intellectual virtues, all the way to the stage of "accomplished thinkers", for whom intellectual virtues and critical practices have become "a second nature" (64). This process requires the development of "fair-mindedness", the qualities of a "strong-sense critical thinker" (24), and the 'virtues of a disciplined mind'. Paul and Elder particularly emphasise the importance of "intellectual humility", i.e. the recognition of one's ignorance (27), "intellectual courage", i.e. willingness to challenge one's beliefs (31), "intellectual empathy", i.e. one's willingness and ability to "entertain opposing views" (34), and "intellectual integrity", or holding oneself "to the same standards to which we hold others" (37). Furthermore, strong critical thinkers are characterized by "intellectual perseverance", i.e. are able to work through the complexity and frustration of the critical thinking process (p. 39), and they also exhibit "confidence in reason", recognising the worth of the process of good reasoning (41). For Paul and Elder, a critical thinker is an independent thinker, characterized by "intellectual autonomy" (44), but also the one who recognizes the inter-relatedness and interdependence of all the "intellectual virtues". Reflection, self-understanding and self-monitoring are also highlighted as essential in the process of critical thinking development (Paul and Elder 2013, 52), as is an understanding of the three distinct functions of one's mind: thinking, feeling and wanting (56–61).

Defining critical thinking as a higher-order cognitive activity, i.e. a "composite of skills and judgments, and as a variety of dispositions" (Davies 2015, 43), Davies proposes a model of critical thinking in higher education comprising (at least) six distinct, yet integrated dimensions: 1) core skills in critical argumentation (reasoning and inference-making); 2) critical judgments; 3) critical thinking dispositions and attitudes; 4) critical actions; 5) critical social relations; and 6) "critical creativity", "critical openness", or critical being. In Davies' model, critical thinking has both an individual and a socio-cultural dimension, and comprises skills, judgments, dispositions, actions, social relations and "critical being". The cognitive dimension of critical thinking comprises cognitive skills and judgments, or critical thinking as argumentation and reflection. The "propensity" dimension adds affective factors such as dispositions, emotions, attitudes and readiness. The "criticality" dimension also involves "actions", while the "critical pedagogy" dimension adds "social relations" to the previous dimensions. Critical thinking as creativity, or as "thinking differently" is yet another possible dimension of critical thinking (Davies 2015, 84).

Davies, however, also highlights the differences in the conception of critical thinking in the critical thinking movement and critical pedagogy:

The critical thinking movement sees the objective of teaching critical thinking skills and dispositions as conditions for fermenting a critical mindset among students as part of a general agenda for improving the aims of higher education. They see teaching critical thinking as allowing students to distinguish between truth and falsity; misleading and doctrinal information; and alerting them to fallacies of

thought and flawed assumptions. They see critical thinking as an emancipatory practice of providing tools for students to "think for themselves" and "form their own conclusions".
The critical pedagogy movement, however, sees the teaching of critical thinking [...] as a way of alerting students to their indoctrination and their role in serving an entrenched capitalist political system. Moreover, they see the role of teaching critical thinking as alerting them to the social conditions that have led to this. (Davies 2015, 73)

An influential voice of the latter position is the work of bell hooks (1994, 2010). In her book *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994), she pleads for "engaged pedagogy", stating that the teacher's most important goal is to teach students to "'transgress' against racial, sexual, and class boundaries in order to achieve the gift of freedom", as "without the capacity to think critically about our selves (*sic*) and our lives, none of us would be able to move forward, to change, to grow" (202). She warns that our society is "so fundamentally anti-intellectual" that it discourages critical thinking. That is why the teachers' commitment to inquiry is crucial, and why it requires both courage and imagination (hooks 2010, 10). The essential requirement for critical thinking is "keeping an open mind", so hooks (2010) pleads for "radical openness" in teachers:

> *[...] it became clear to me, after years in academic settings, that it was far too easy to become attached to and protective of one's viewpoint, and to rule out other perspectives. So much academic training encourages teachers to assume that they must be "right" at all times. Instead, I propose that teachers must be open at all times, and we must be willing to acknowledge what we do not know. A radical commitment to openness maintains the integrity of the critical thinking process and its central role in education.* (10)

In the domestic academic context, broad views of critical thinking were put forward by Pešić (2008, 2011), who points out that the epistemological view of critical thinking implies that well-constructed argumentation and a thorough understanding of the process of reasoning do not in and of themselves prevent biased and non-critical thinking. True critical thinking, in this sense, requires us to understand and question the underlying assumptions, to be able to "decentralize", i.e. step out of our own framework of reference used in our interpretation of experiences, and to be aware of and truly understand the central theses of opposite standpoints (Pešić 2011, 19). Furthermore, Pešić (2011) points out that the today widely encountered understanding of the goal, role, and even purpose of critical thinking, based on the concept of instrumental rationality, is not enough. The aim of critical thinking is not only the ability to solve problems quickly, and to realize our aims more efficiently. She identifies with – a smaller number of – authors who understand critical thinking as based on the concept of emancipatory rationality, aiming to actively question and change the social conditions and patterns of functioning which limit human freedoms and the realization of universal human values, needs, and interests (Pešić 2011, 20). Therefore, critical thinking aims at critical *action*, leading to individual and social emancipation. She concludes that the true meaning of critical thinking is not skilful syllogism and argument analysis, but a fundamental examination of our living conditions, and the achievement of greater freedom, true autonomy and individual creativity (20).

Similarly, Dimić (2016) concludes that today most university courses professing to teach critical thinking in fact focus on the formal aspect of thinking, on logic and syllogistic

reasoning, and not on developing actual critical skills in the sense embodied by Kant's philosophy, i.e. as a critique of any kind of prejudice and authority, leading to the autonomy and emancipation of citizens from religious and political authority.

In the regional context, too, Spasenovski and Miliša (2018) highlight the dangers of the commodification and neoliberalisation of the university, questioning the understanding of the goals of university education today, and the compatibility of critical thinking education with such goals. They warn that an important reason for the "rapid expansion of consumerism at all levels" is "the silence of the academic community" (68). Furthermore, Miliša and Spasenovski (2017) particularly point out the responsibility of educators to act against the expansion of consumerism, and to instead promote the "values of altruism, empathy, solidarity, and/or self-sacrifice" (2017, 92).

Krešić (2020, 80) points out that in today's society, often labelled 'the society of knowledge', the *value* of knowledge is questionable. Educational goals, once described as the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and the strengthening of human potentials and intellectual growth, are today described in economic terms, such as efficacy, mobility, productivity, competitiveness, and marketability. Efficacy has become the dominant value, and education and knowledge are perceived not as a desirable goal or outcome, but as a tool for achieving marketability, employability, and economic growth (82). Krešić states that university education should turn back to the humanistic goals, and "should align humanistic and economic goals" (84).

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Closely related to the issue of what critical thinking comprises and aims for is the question of how to include the education for critical thinking in the university curriculum. Although some authors question if critical thinking *can* be taught at all, and whether it *should* be taught (Davies 2015, 42), the debate has mostly focused on the question of *how*.

For instance, Ennis (1962, 2011a,b,c, 2013) proposed an elaborate approach to teaching critical thinking across the curriculum of undergraduate education, pointing out that the question of whether critical thinking should be included as a separate module or integrated into all the subject-matter courses is a false dilemma, as we can and should do both. Chaffee (1992) also pleaded for teaching critical thinking across the curriculum, and for "teaching the whole student", stating that if we want students to "develop the self-insight and motivation required for meaningful intellectual development", we must make it possible for them to relate what they are learning "to their lives – to their goals, their values, their self-concepts". Teaching for critical thinking, therefore, means "knitting together critical thinking abilities with the fabric of students' experience", so that critical thinking would "become part of who they are" (130). Paul and Elder (2013) emphasise the importance of practising and developing higher-order critical thinking over time, and through continuous practice. Several authors insist that this development should extend "beyond critical thinking to critical being", in both higher education and in life (Dunne 2014), through extensive deliberate practice (Wilson Mulnix 2012, 478). *Dialogical* teaching is what Benesch (1999) points out as the crucial tool for developing critical thinking, which should be used "to promote tolerance and social justice" (576). Therefore, she concludes that:

The current debate about critical thinking is not a harmless academic exchange but a political discussion with serious implications about what should and should not be taught. Not only can critical thinking be taught through the encouragement of greater awareness, but choosing not to teach critical thinking may result in unquestioning acceptance of prevailing conditions, limiting possibilities for dissent and change. (579)

Furthermore, many authors also point out the discrepancy between the overtly stated goals of developing critical thinking in university courses and their real outcomes, as both the standards and methodologies of teaching for critical thinking need to be much better specified and operationalized. El Soufi and See (2019), for instance, state that university lecturers "expect intellectual standards from their students, but do not have a clear idea of what is considered an intellectual standard or how to formalise it" (143).

In the Serbian and regional Balkan higher education context, this discrepancy between the declaratively set outcomes of critical thinking development and the reality of students' actual achievements in tasks that require critical thinking is pointed out by a number of researchers. For instance, such findings are presented by Gojkov, Stojanović and Gojkov Rajić (2018), who found a high discrepancy between the students' self-evaluation of their own critical thinking skills and the students' success in tasks that required the application of critical thinking. Thus, they conclude that "the Bologna reform puts studies in a paradoxical situation emphasizing the need for critical thinking, as the most significant teaching aim, while, on the other hand, it actually leaves little space to reach it" (591). Moreover, in her extensive research, Lungulov (2015) has found that, when it comes to developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, university teachers have a more positive view of their presence in university classwork, while students feel that these general competencies are not devoted enough attention; graduated students also stated that critical thinking skills are not encouraged enough during classwork.

Practical methodological tools, such as problem-solving activities, and their possible application in the higher education context are being investigated by more and more contemporary researchers, for instance, Kosanović and Trivunović (2022). In the broader Balkan context, Miliša and Ćurko (2010) propose that activities such as debate clubs, and elective courses in ethics and philosophy may be a good vehicle for fostering critical thinking. Partalo, Skopljak and Mihajlović (2019) state that fostering critical thinking is especially important in the university education of prospective teachers, who will be responsible for their own students' critical thinking development. The results of their empirical study with 539 university students in teaching-oriented departments point to four educational tools considered to be particularly important for fostering critical thinking: "meaningful learning, thought-provoking questions, exploratory teaching and learning strategies, and stimulating practice" (250).

The university education of prospective teachers is particularly emphasized with respect to developing and implementing teaching for critical thinking. Buchberger, Bolčević, and Kovač (2017) particularly highlight the importance of providing prospective teachers with methodological tools for teaching critical thinking, as the teacher is the "crucial facilitator of the educational context that would foster teaching for critical thinking", and that role demands both full engagement and professional competencies (120).

Contemporary researchers of critical thinking in higher education point out that it is not simply an option to be chosen or rejected, but that it has become the obligation and responsibility of higher education to enable students to think critically, echoing Siegel's (2014/1987) claim from several decades ago that educators have an obligation to help

students become critical thinkers, as critical thinking is an "intellectual right" (19). Therefore, a higher education study program must be, as a whole, focused on developing students' critical thinking. University teachers "need to recognise that they have an individual and a collective responsibility for teaching students to think critically"; they also need to have "a clear understanding of what critical thinking is and why it is important to teach", as well as the "pedagogical competence to integrate critical thinking into their disciplinary topics, and utilise various teaching methods to enhance it" (Hyytinen, Toom, and Shavelson 2019, 77).

In the following section, we offer a review of a university coursebook that illustrates how criticality and critical thinking are integrated with specific course objectives.

3. CRITICALITY IN POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AND WRITING

Writing your thesis: A guide for postgraduate students, edited by Tony Walsh and Anne Ryan (2015), is a very useful resource for post-graduate students, addressing the process of designing, researching, and writing the final thesis in arts and social sciences. It leads the students, in a very clear and straightforward manner and style, through all the phases of constructing, researching and finalising their thesis. However, what makes this resource particularly valuable, and different from similar handbooks and textbooks, is the particular perspective the authors promote – that of criticality and critical thinking.

Firstly, Walsh and Ryan explicitly describe the approach endorsed as a "post-positivist conceptual framework" (2015, 2), which makes it possible to "accommodate and embrace" the complexities of "multifaceted social phenomena and events" (2). The post-positivist researcher is seen as a learner, aiming to "interpret the meaning of what s/he encounters rather than to establish universal truth" (2). Such a position of the researcher-as-learner relies on critical thinking most directly.

Secondly, the authors emphasise a "secondary purpose" of this book – to "highlight the intrinsic value of acquiring expertise in research and its applicability beyond the world of academia', which they specify as the "capacity to adopt an investigative position and to draw on a range of data gathering and analytical skills", coupled with "a questioning disposition" and "commitment to work" (3).

This perspective is particularly resounding in the chapter by Gordon Asher, "Criticality in Postgraduate Research and Writing". In his academic profiles, Gordon Asher identifies himself as an 'independent scholar and learning developer', associated with the GA Academic Services and supporting postgraduate students at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, and as a member of UCU Scotland's Higher Education Committee. He is currently working on his PhD by publication, within the broad title "In, Against and Beyond the Neoliberal University", aiming to link critical educational theories and practices within the academic context with "radical education out with the academy". His publications include papers dealing with the issues of university education, e.g. "Learning in the age of digital reason" (2018), "Practicing what we preach? Writing and publishing in, against and beyond the neoliberal university" (2017b), "Working in, against and beyond the neoliberal university" (2015b) and "The Porous University: Opening up the University; Being and becoming critically academically literate? (2017a). He emphasises the need to engage, individually and collectively, in "iterative dialogical processes of being and becoming critically academically literate" as a necessary prerequisite for understanding the contemporary university, for resisting "its ongoing neoliberalisation and neoliberalising tendencies", and for envisioning "alternatives to its present and likely future trajectory" (2017a, n.p.).

From such a vantage point, in his chapter "Criticality in Postgraduate Research and Writing", Asher (2015a) sets out to "demystify" the concept and explain what *being critical* means in the context of postgraduate study, proposing approaches that will enable students to be 'critical' in both research and writing.

Three main concepts are defined at the outset of the chapter. *Dialogue* is defined as central to research, study, and writing, which are all discursive practices as they all involve a process of discussion and thought, question–answer, and argument "with ourselves and others". Working on a research thesis is defined as a *learning process*, since engaging with reading, research and thinking one grows, changes, develops and learns. Finally, *criticality* is defined as a complex process in which critical reading, critical thinking, critical writing, and critical reflection together constitute a "cyclical process in which each informs the others in a critically reflective manner" (46).

Asher highlights four central characteristics of critical thinking. One is 'hunting for assumptions', explicit or implicit, causal, prescriptive or paradigmatic, our own as well as others'. Therefore, critical thinking involves "exploring, developing and becoming clear and explicit about the assumptions that underlie our *own* stance in the world, that frame our thinking and guide our actions" (50; emphasis added). Another one is the ability to analyse and make judgements based on relevant criteria, that is, to offer "reasoned and evidence-based opinions" (51). Also, critical thinking involves an awareness of alternative viewpoints or interpretations, and making choices based on evaluating different possible perspectives. Lastly, Asher points out that critical thinking involves "developing a questioning and reflective disposition" (51). The explanations are followed by suggestions for further work and useful online resources, and, more importantly, by questions guiding students working on critical thinking practice.

The next section focuses on critical reading, and the relevant considerations, such as being critical in the choice of texts for the research thesis, being critical while engaging with different types of texts, and reflexive thinking while reading. In this section, Asher also offers useful online resources for further work, such as useful 'checklists' for critical reading, as well as questions and suggestions guiding students through critical reading.

Critical writing is presented in the next section following the same model of organisation. Asher points out that the main aspect of being critical while writing concerns answering two questions: 'What do *you* think?' and 'Why?', as well as demonstrating that reasoning is evidence-based, and that arguments are properly built. This section is also accompanied by practical suggestions and questions leading students in their further individual work.

Most importantly, in the last section of the chapter, Asher brings forward the notion of *criticality as orientation*, explaining the meaning of criticality as a stance or paradigm – "the critical paradigm, which lies within the spectrum of approaches that constitute the post-positivist paradigm" (62). Asher foregrounds the general importance of the critical paradigm, which he defines as "having an explicitly political, emancipatory orientation in and to the world" (62). Asher's explanations are based on DiAngelo and Sensoy's (2014) view that the critical stance comprises "those academic fields (including social justice, critical pedagogy, multicultural education, anti-racist, postcolonial, and feminist approaches) that operate from the perspective that *knowledge is socially constructed and that education is a political project embedded within a network of social institutions that reproduce inequality*" (DiAngelo and Sensoy 2014; emphasis added). Asher also quotes Brookfield (2005, 27), who explains that "critical theory tries to generate a specific vision *of the world as it might be*", not only criticising the current society but also envisaging "a fairer, less alienated, more democratic world".

Summarizing important contemporary literature views, Asher manages to present the complex notions and ideas in a very student-friendly, comprehensible form, concluding that critical thinkers and researchers in this tradition focus on questions that aim at "improving society for the benefit of all", as critical theory is based on the assumptions that "the status quo is unjust and that things should and can be different", and that "humanity should choose and work towards values that speak to a rejection of and struggle against: inequality, oppression and repression, domination and exploitation - and for a society and wider world based on freedom, democracy and equality". Critical theory, therefore, including Critical Pedagogy, focuses on "social justice and empowerment", as well as on "overcoming the linked local and global problems of society", i.e. on sustainability (63–4). For Asher, this seems particularly relevant today, in the contemporary "conjuncture of integrated crises marked by growing social, political and economic polarisation" (63).

Asher concludes that being critical in postgraduate research also means that it should be based on "foundational values as criteria for making judgements", and followed by "taking actions based upon them". In postgraduate research theses, therefore, being critical means being clear and explicit about the starting premises, but also about the basic underlying values, and about the aims and objectives of our research.

Asher's view of criticality, therefore, aligns not only with the critical theoretical orientation, but also with the claims that critical thinking and critical reflection need to be included in higher education, and particularly teacher education, much more substantially and comprehensively than they are today. In his paper "Working in, against and beyond the neoliberal university", Asher (2015b) explicitly attributes the lack of critical thinking development to the neoliberalisation of education, particularly higher education. He states that this is reflected in the curricula, the teaching and learning process, as well as in research:

> *Teaching and learning is being devalued, degraded and deprioritised. Curriculums, given and hidden, are driven by considerations of 'marketability' and 'competitive performativity [...] subsumed under the compulsion to create and accumulate value' (Hall 2015, n.p.). Research is increasingly instrumentalised, centrally mandated and measured in accordance with commodification.*   (Asher 2015b, 21)

Asher also explicitly states that both time pressure and the stress it induces and the economic difficulties, or, in his terms, the 'precarity' of both students and teaching staff are an inherent part of the very design of the contemporary system of higher education:

> *Both staff and students are subject to the tyranny of 'the academic capitalist time regime' (Walker 2014). The fast-paced, metric-oriented neoliberal university requires high productivity in compressed time frames, disrupting contentions that good scholarship requires time to critically and collectively think, read, write, research, teach, learn, reflect and relate (Wanggren and Milatovic 2015). Further, precarious insecurity, effecting ever greater numbers of staff and students, is pedagogical - 'part of a corporate business model designed to reduce labor costs and to increase labor servility' (Chomsky 2015, n.p.).*   (Asher 2015b, 21)

Finally, in his talk to postgraduate students – "The Porous University: Opening up the University: Being and becoming critically academically literate?", Asher (2017a) concludes that thinking critically means both being 'open' and 'opening up' what has been described as 'the hidden curriculum' in higher education, i.e. making "explicit – and

opening to challenge – that which is so often insidiously implicit in the hidden curriculum" (2017a, n.p.).

Also, being 'open' implies "speaking more broadly to the notion of university's wider public community democratic mission, to conceptions of education as a public good for a democratic citizenry and society". (2017a, n.p.). In conclusion, Asher quotes the words of Professor Sarah Amsler, the author of "The Education of Radical Democracy" (2015), calling for the "fearless and re-politicised university":

> *If we are to shape universities as places in which we can actually teach and study, and learn and be, we need to educate ourselves about the politics of higher education, advanced research, labour, intellectual culture, space and time – and we need to do this in a context in which thinking and speaking about the politics of any of these things is regarded as either a waste of time or a threat to economic productivity and institutional reputation.*
> *And, we need to do this in an environment in which many academics by dint of profession or proclivity have either no experience of political participation or activism or no interest in such… And, we need to do all of this in an environment where many academics and some students are exhausted and insecure and are therefore in need of considerable self and collective care. Therefore the doing so involves the capability to liberate time for solidarity actions and activities rather than for exchange.* (Asher 2017a, n.p.)

In this light, Gordon Asher's chapter and the whole coursebook by Walsh and Ryan indeed resonate with Sumner's (1906) belief that "[e]ducation is good just so far as it produces well-developed critical faculty", and that "[e]ducation in the critical faculty is the only education of which it can be truly said that it makes good citizens" (632–633).

4. CONCLUSION

Asher's practical chapter on writing a postgraduate thesis reminds both university students and teachers that, in Paul and Elder's (2020) words, "[i]f we want critical societies, *we* must create them" (45; emphasis added). Our views on critical thinking, therefore, pose fundamental questions about our conceptions of the purpose, role, and responsibilities of higher education today, that is, whether a critical society is indeed what we still value.

It is the responsibility of higher education institutions to foster, cultivate, and promote critical thinking. To the students, our responsibility is to make it possible for them to develop critical thinking and communication skills and abilities, to foster their individual autonomy, and to prepare them for professional and personal success in the future. To the society, our responsibility is to make sure that these skills are accompanied by the "dispositions", moral integrity, and moral values.

An important step in this direction would be a transparently specified definition of the critical thinking conception in higher education curricula, and a detailed specification of the expected outcomes in terms of critical thinking skills, but also dispositions and values. Another would be a much wider and more fundamental application of teaching methodologies that foster critical thinking, including not only problem-solving, experiential learning, and task-based teaching but also interdisciplinary studies and relating content-knowledge courses to the fundamentals of humanities and social sciences. The cornerstone of all university teaching should be anchored in dialogical, Socratic teaching, encouraging students to engage in the thoughtful analysis and evaluation of all texts, challenging them to consider multiple perspectives, and providing ample opportunities for reflection and meaningful feedback.

Most importantly, empirical data suggests that teaching for critical thinking is in its essence *mentoring*; so, above all, we as teachers, must ourselves *model* criticality and the critical approach in our teaching.

REFERENCES

Amsler, Sarah S. 2015. *The Education of Radical Democracy.* Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Arendt, Hannah. 1973 [1951-1968]. *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* San Diego, CA, New York & London: A Harvest book, Harcourt Brace & Co.

Asher, Gordon. 2015a. "Criticality in Postgraduate Research and Writing." In *Writing your thesis: A guide for postgraduate students*, edited by Tony Walsh and Anne Ryan, 45–67. Maynooth, Ireland: MACE Press.

Asher, Gordon. 2015b. "Working in, against and beyond the neoliberal university." In *It's All Adult Education: Proceedings of the 44th Annual Conference, University of Leeds, 7 - 9 July 2015,* edited by Lindsey Fraser and Rosa Mas Giralt, 18–28. Leeds: University of Leeds Lifelong Learning Centre. Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA). https://scutrea.com/proceedings/2015.pdf#page=18

Asher, Gordon. 2017a. "The Porous University: Opening up the University: Being and becoming critically academically literate?" Presentation for *The Porous University Symposium: The Porous University - A critical exploration of openness, space and place in Higher Education,* May, 2017, University of the Highlands and Islands. Ragged University. https://raggeduniversity.co.uk/2017/06/05/porous-university-gordon-asher/

Asher, Gordon. 2017b. "Practicing what we preach? Writing and publishing in, against and beyond the neoliberal university." In *Mass intellectuality and democratic leadership in higher education*, edited by Richard Hall and Joss Winn, 199–215. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Asher, Gordon. 2018. "Critical dialogues for learning and technology: in, against and beyond the neoliberal university: Review of Learning in the age of digital reason, by P. Jandrić, Rotterdam, Sense, 2017." *Open Review of Educational Research* 5, no. 1: 144–149. https://doi.org/10.1080/23265507.2018.1547950

Benesch, Sarah. 1999. "Thinking Critically, Thinking Dialogically." *TESOL Quarterly* 33(3): 573–580.

Bloom, Benjamin Samuel, Max D. Engelhart, Edward J. Furst, Walter H. Hill, and David R. Krathwohl.1956. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*. New York: David McKay

Brookfield, Stephen. 2005. *The Power of Critical Theory for Adult Learning and Teaching*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

Buchberger, Iva, Valentina Bolčević, and Vesna Kovač. 2017. "Kritičko mišljenje u obrazovanju: Dosadašnji doprinosi i otvoreni smjerovi" / "Critical thinking in education: Contributions and possible directions." *Metodički ogledi* 24(1): 109–129.

Chaffee, John. 1992. "Teaching critical thinking across the curriculum." In *Critical Thinking: Implications for Teaching and Teachers. Proceedings of a Conference (Upper Montclair, New Jersey, 1991)*, edited by Wendy Oxman, 121–131. Upper Montclair, NJ: Montclair State College, Institute for Critical Thinking. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED352358.pdf#page=128

Chomsky, Noam. 2015. "How America's Great University System is Being Destroyed." *Alternet*, February 28, 2015. http://www.alternet.org/corporateaccountability-and-workplace/chomsky-how-americas-great-university-systemgetting

Davies, Martin. 2015. "A Model of Critical Thinking in Higher Education." In *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research, Volume 30,* edited by Michael B. Paulsen, 41–92. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-12835-1_2

Dewey, John. 1910. *How We Think*. Boston: D.C. Heath. https://archive.org/details/howwethink000838mbp/page/n17/mode/2up

Dewey, John. 1933. How *We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath.

DiAngelo, Robin, and Özlem Sensoy. 2014. "Leaning In: A Students' Guide to Engaging Constructively with Social Justice Content." *Radical Pedagogy* 11, no. 1: 1–15.

Dimić, Zoran. 2016. "Kritičko mišljenje I savremeno univerzitetsko obrazovanje" / "Critical thinking ad contemporary university education." *Balkanske sinteze* III(2): 11–22.

Dunne, Gerry. 2015. "Beyond critical thinking to critical being: Criticality in higher education and life." *International Journal of Educational Research* 71: 86–99. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2015.03.003

El Soufi, Nada, and Beng Huat See. 2019. "Does explicit teaching of critical thinking improve critical thinking skills of English language learners in higher education? A critical review of causal evidence." *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 60: 140–162.

Ennis, Robert H. 1962. "A Concept of Critical Thinking: A Proposed Basis for Research on the Teaching and Evaluation of Critical Thinking Ability." *Harvard Educational Review* 32(1): 81–111.

Ennis, Robert H. 1996. "Critical thinking dispositions: Their nature and assessability." *Informal Logic* 18(2-3): 165–182.

Ennis, Robert H. 2011a. "Critical Thinking: Reflection and Perspective Part 2." *Inquiry: Critical thinking across the Disciplines* 26(2): 5–19.

Ennis, Robert H. 2011b. The Nature of Critical Thinking: An Outline of Critical Thinking Dispositions and Abilities, May 4, 2023. https://education.illinois.edu/docs/default-source/faculty-documents/robert-ennis/thenatureofcriticalthinking_51711_000.pdf

Ennis, Robert H. 2011c. "Critical Thinking: Reflection and Perspective Part I." *Inquiry: Critical Thinking across the Disciplines* 26(1): 4–18. https://doi.org/10.5840/inquiryctnews20112613

Ennis, Robert H. 2013. "Critical Thinking across the Curriculum: The Wisdom CTAC Program." *Inquiry: Critical Thinking across the Disciplines* 28(2): 25–45. https://doi.org/10.5840/inquiryct20132828

Gojkov, Grozdanka, Aleksandar Stojanović, and Aleksandra Gojkov Rajić. 2015. "Critical Thinking of Students – Indicator of Quality in Higher Education." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 191, no. 2: 591–596.

Hall, Richard. 2015. "On learning gain, academic subsumption and performance anxiety." *Richard Hall's Space,* April 16, 2015. http://www.richard-hall.org/2015/04/16/on-learning-gain-academic-subsumption-and-performance-anxiety/

hooks, bell. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom.* New York and London: Routledge.

hooks, bell. 2010. *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*. New York and London: Routledge.

Hyytinen, Heidi, Auli Toom, and Richard J. Shavelson. 2019. "Enhancing Scientific Thinking Through the Development of Critical Thinking in Higher Education." In *Redefining Scientific Thinking for Higher Education: Higher-Order Thinking, Evidence-Based Reasoning and Research Skills*, edited by Mari Murtonen, and Kieran Ballo, 59–78. Palgrave Macmillan.

Kosanović, Maja, Bojana Trivunović. 2022. "Uticaj problemski zasnovanog učenja na podsticanje kritičkog mišljenja studenata u visokom obrazovanju" / "The impact of problem-solving learning on encouraging students' critical thinking." *Inovacije u nastavi* XXXV, 2022/4: 47–58. doi: 10.5937/inovacije2204047K

Krešić, Marija. 2020. "Neoliberalizam u visokom obrazovanju." *Suvremena pitanja, časopis za prosvjetu i kulturu* 30: 77–86.

Lipman, Matthew. 1995. "Caring as Thinking." *Inquiry: Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines* 15(1): 1–13. https://doi.org/10.5840/inquiryctnews199515128

Lipman, Matthew. 2003. *Thinking in Education*, 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Liu, Ou Lydia, Lois Frankel, and Katrina Crotts Roohr. 2014. "Assessing Critical Thinking in Higher Education: Current State and Directions for Next-Generation Assessment." *ETS Research Report Series* 2014, no. 1: 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1002/ets2.12009

Lloyd, Margaret, and Nan Bahr. 2010. "Thinking Critically about Critical Thinking in Higher Education." *International journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* 4, no. 2: art. 9. https://doi.org/10.20429/ijsotl.2010.040209

Lungulov, Biljana. 2015. "*Analiza ishoda učenja kao indikatora kvaliteta visokog obrazovanja.*" Doktorska disertacija. Univerzitet u Novom Sadu, Filozofski fakulet.

Miliša, Zlatko and Bruno Ćurko. 2010. "Odgoj za kritičko mišljenje i medijska manipulacija" / "Upbringing for critical thinking and media manipulation." *MediAnali: međunarodni znanstveni časopis za pitanja medija, novinarstva, masovnog komuniciranja i odnosa s javnostima* 4(7): 57–72.

Miliša, Zlatko, and Nemanja Spasenovski. 2018. "Kako se Bolonjom kompromitiraju društvene znanosti i potire kritičko mišljenje." In *Aktuelni problem visokog obrazovnja I nauke, Zbornik radova sa međunarodnog naučnog skupa, tom 1*, edited by Albina Abidović, 70–86. Evropski Univerzitet, Brčko district, Brčko.

Miliša, Zlatko, and Nemanja Spasenovski. 2017. "Konzumerizam i pedagoške implikacije" / "Consumerism and pedagogical implications." *Mostariensia* 21(1): 69–93.

Partalo, Dragan, Margareta Skopljak, Tatjana Mihajlović. 2019. "Podsticanje kritičkog mišljenja u univerzitetskoj nastavi" / "Encouraging critical thinking in university teaching." *Nastava i vaspitanje* 68(2): 231–250. https://doi.org/10.5937/nasvas1902231P

Paul, Richard. 2004. "The state of critical thinking today." *The Foundation for Critical Thinking - The Critical Thinking Community*, May 4, 2023. http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/the-state-of-critical-thinking-today/523

Paul, Richard, and Linda Elder. 2013/2006. *Critical thinking: Tools for taking charge of your professional and personal life*, 2nd ed. Pearson Education.

Paul, Richard, and Linda Elder. 2020. *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools*, 8th edn. Lanham, Boulder, New York, and London: Rowman and Littlefield.

Pešić, Jelena. 2011. "Sličnosti i razlike u konceptualizovanju kritičkog mišljenja." *Psihološka istraživanja* XIV (1): 5–23.

Pešić, Jelena. 2008. *Kritičko mišljenje: Od logike do emancipatorne racionalnosti*. Beograd: Institut za psihologiju.

Siegel, Harvey. 2014/1987. "Critical Thinking as an Intellectual Right." *Analytic Teaching* 8(1): 19–24. https://journal.viterbo.edu/index.php/at/article/view/414

Spasenovski, Nemanja, and Zlatko Miliša. 2018. "Kako je došlo do komercijalizacije visokog obrazovanja?" / "How did the commercialization of higher education start?" *Društvene i humanističke studije* 3(6): 49–68

Sumner, William Graham. 1940[1906]. *Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals*, New York: Ginn and Co.

Walker, Judith. 2014. "Exploring the academic capitalist time regime." In *Academic Capitalism in the Age of Globalization*, edited by Brendan Cantwell and Ilkka Kauppinen, 55–73. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press.

Walsh, Tony, and Anne Ryan, eds. 2015. *Writing Your Thesis: A guide for postgraduate students*. Maynooth, Ireland: MACE Press.

Wanggren, Lena, and Maja Milatovic. 2015. "Introduction: Education, Intersectionality and Social Change." *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* 7, no. 8: art. 2.

Wilson Mulnix, Jennifer. 2012. "Thinking Critically about Critical Thinking." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 44, no. 5: 464–479. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2010.00673.x

KRITIČKO MIŠLJENJE
I SAVREMENO VISOKO OBRAZOVANJE

Ovaj rad nudi prikaz različitih shvatanja koncepta kritičkog mišljenja i njegovog mesta u današnjem visokom obrazovanju, kako u međunarodnom tako i u domaćem, srpskom i balkanskom kontekstu. U drugom delu rada, diskusiju ilustruje prikaz poglavlja Gordona Ašera u udžbeniku "Pisanje teze: Vodič za posledipsomske studente", koji na značajan način inkorporira koncept kritičkog mišljenja u visokom obrazovanju, iz perspektive Kritičke pedagogije. Autorke u ovom pregledu ističu značaj širokog epistemološkog shvatanja kritičkog mišljenja, ne samo u smislu primenljive pragmatičke veštine, već pre svega kao osnove za humanističko shvatanje obrazovanja kao emancipacije pojedinca i celovitog razvoja ličnosti, na korist i samog pojedinca i društvene zajednice. Autorke se osvrću i na značaj metodičkih pristupa i sredstava u podučavanju za kritičko mišljenje.

Ključne reči: *kritička pedagogija, kritičke akademske veštine, kritičko mišljenje, čitanje, i pisanje, visoko obrazovanje*