

Angélica Sátiro:

I will speak in Portuguese, but at certain moments I will speak in Castilian Spanish, because it is a common language shared by the two people who are here.

The name of our dialogue session is “The Fragility of the World and the Strength of Education.”

Why do we think critical thinking is important as a central theme of this Education and Culture Congress?

Because we are experiencing, in our cities and in the world, a moment of polarisation, a moment of a culture of hatred, a moment of false truths, a moment in which it is very difficult to know what to do, because the world has become fragile.

This is why we have this dialogue session.

I have explained this, but before we begin, I would like to introduce these two people who are here, because for me they are two very dear, loved, admired and recognised people. They are great human beings.

I believe they are two of the most important contemporary thinkers, each in their own field. Both love knowledge, love education and love thinking.

I recommend that you read their books, because they are books worth reading: they have been deeply thought through, reflected upon and written with great mastery.

So, both Joan-Carles Mèlich, a Catalan philosopher, with many books and a professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, and Marcia Tiburi, a Brazilian philosopher who was a professor at Paris VIII for many years, are also doctors in education... Philosophy, forgive me.

They also have in common the fact that they think from the standpoint of absolutes. So Marcia thinks from the standpoint of fascism, questioning fascism, while Joan-Carles thinks by questioning totalitarianisms.

So we will be able to think about this polarised world together with these two people, because they devote a great deal of time to doing so, all right?

Now, in addition to introducing them with affection, I want to tell you that you can read their full CVs on the website, because they are impressive, all right?

And yes, Marcia and Joan, I want to introduce the people who are over there.

Up there, on the steps, we have adolescents, girls and boys who have been congress participants since last September and who also work on critical thinking. They are here so that they can listen to us.

And here we have the people who, in their cities, every day struggle, who get up every morning and struggle to make their city an Educating City.

And since a dialogue is not only about those who speak, but also about those who listen, I thought it was important to introduce them to one another.

Shall we begin?

Let's go.

Very well.

Having said that, I would like us to keep one issue in mind: cities cannot become battlefields.

And with the culture of hatred, with polarisation, somehow this is happening.

How?

Here we are going to ask two questions: What opens up space for the development of critical thinking in the current context, in your opinion? And what concrete conditions make critical thinking possible in an Educating City?

Who would like to start?

Can I start?

Let's go.

Márcia Tiburi:

Good morning, everyone.

Good morning to my fellow panellists.

Thank you, Angélica, for the invitation to be here.

Congratulations to the organisers.

It is a pleasure to be with you.

First of all, I think it is important to define, to begin by defining what a city is.

And a city, as everyone knows, is a place where we live according to the laws, according to the institutions that exist, building these institutions.

At the same time, we can say, from a more philosophical point of view, that a city is a particular place where we experience these institutions, this space.

And a place where, nowadays, we also learn to claim rights.

Many philosophers have already discussed the right to the city.

I myself have written a text entitled "The Visual Right to the City", because I come from a city called São Paulo, which is a city where everything is contested, every millimetre, including the visual space that we experience.

São Paulo is a city where there is a great deal of *pixação*, something that I imagine you, at least here in Granollers, are not as familiar with.

But São Paulo is a city that expresses itself greatly through what we call *pixação*, which consists of designs, texts and poetry, and an entire practice of visual occupation of the city carried out by people who are excluded from it, especially young people who want to have a right to language within the city.

Well, I wanted to talk about this because the city also places us within a particular experience and, therefore, in relation to otherness.

And I think this is gradual, that it is very complex, that it depends on the city, it depends on the place, on the place I come from, São Paulo, for example, and on Brazilian cities.

We have a particular experience of violence, a particular experience of exclusion and a particular experience of the wickedness and stupidity of those who govern us, so that we live in a state of struggle, and otherness is an instance, a place, a space that is denied in this experience.

Well, I call critical thinking precisely that which is done: the experience of thinking that is carried out through otherness, with otherness considered precisely as this denied space, a denied space that must be conquered.

I wanted to make a comment and tell you a very specific story about critical thinking so that we can understand what it is in a very concrete way.

I always think that thinking, doing philosophy, exercising reflective thought is something that needs to take place, that can only happen in situated circumstances.

That is, I think from a historical, concrete, material point of view, situated in a particular time and space.

This means thinking from history, what Marxists would like to call historical materialism.

I very much like this perspective.

But I wanted to tell you something I learned a few days ago which left me in a state of shock, very uncomfortable, but which also served to restore the function and meaning of what we are calling critical thinking here.

In Brazil — Brazil is a very large country, with more than two hundred million inhabitants — there are, as in every country, public intellectuals.

I myself, in Brazil, am more or less a public intellectual.

Eliane Brum, who is here, is one too.

We are people who appear on the public stage to varying degrees.

And there is one of these public intellectuals who is very wealthy, who receives around seventy thousand reais, I think about twenty thousand dollars, fifteen thousand dollars, for giving a lecture, and who is very well known. He has millions of followers on social media and is very well known.

And I have to tell you this story.

This man is highly respected because he has good opinions about many things, but a few days ago he did something that was very serious.

He made an advertisement for a bank, for which he probably also received several million.

And in that advertisement he said that critical thinking is important, but that the most important thing is to have a card from that bank and be able to pay for your shopping in ten instalments.

How awful!

In other words, he sold what he called critical thinking.

I was very indignant because I also like to defend critical thinking very much. I believe that I work with critical thinking, and I don't believe that anyone — neither me, nor Angélica, nor Joan, nor any of you — can sell critical thinking.

Because critical thinking is precisely that which cannot be reduced to a commodity, cannot be transformed into a commodity, precisely because this critical thinking confronts, challenges, the commodity form.

What is the commodity form?

The commodity form is a social form through which things can be sold.

Let us remember: this thinker who sold critical thinking is a white man.

The white man is also a commodity form, but he is not a commodity form like this bottle of water, like this pen, like our clothes, or like our bodies as women, as gay people, our trans bodies, our Black bodies, our bodies as people who are something other than the white man.

The white man is the social form that is capital itself.

Only a white man could sell critical thinking in this way, even if he did not have white skin and even if he were not a man, because we are talking about a social form.

Therefore, the internalised social form of the capitalist white man, which is necessarily patriarchal and necessarily racist, is what can sell critical thinking, precisely because critical thinking extinguishes, in the future, in the historical process of its own concrete action, the white man.

I mean that it extinguishes the social form of the white man, transforming all people into equals.

Finally, I wanted to add a detail that seems very important to me, obviously from my own perspective.

Thinking in this situated way, I can only think from my own position.

I make the personal effort — and this implies an ethical desire and an ethical impulse on the part of that individual, of that thinking body — to enact, to anticipate, to bring into play respect for what I have called otherness.

Who is otherness?

Otherness is the other.

The other body, the other culture, the other language, the other experience of thought, the other space, the other territory, the other city, the other person's city, the other person's country.

And from this perspective, I think that today it is very useful and very valid to connect the notion of critical thinking with decolonial, anticolonial and countercolonial thought.

I can only think from my perspective and, in order to think critically, I need to think by decolonising my own thought.

That is, I need to remove the form of the white man from within myself.

I need to debourgeoisify myself — how do you translate that? —. I need to depatriarchalise my own thinking, my own language, perhaps my own body.

I need to deracialise myself.

And none of this is possible in a particular place, or in the real and concrete space of this historical moment, except through this reflective effort, which is at the same time an effort of imagination.

I can only place the other, otherness, within my perspective if I have imagination.

And that is why, against patriarchal, racist and colonialist capitalism, we need a great deal of imagination.

And it is through imagination that women have survived wars; it is through imagination that peoples in the most diverse places have survived the things that wage war against them.

It is through imagination that people have overcome the suffering imposed by patriarchal capitalism.

Therefore, I would summarise critical thinking in this way: it is a particular way of constructing a perspective in the direction of otherness, remembering where we come from, who we are, how we have become who we are, from what place we think, and making the radical effort to dismantle within ourselves the internalisations produced by the system.

Thank you very much.

Angélica Sátiro:

Well, Joan, we have heard these concrete conditions that Marcia Tiburi has proposed.

What are yours?

What is it that opens up space for the development of critical thinking?

Joan-Carles Mèlich:

Thank you very much, Angélica.

Thank you all for being here, to the organising committee for inviting me, and to Marcia for the immense pleasure of sharing this talk, with which I personally completely agree.

What's more, I really liked the way it sounded and the words she emphasised.

The word otherness, for example, is clearly radical for me too.

At the beginning, when I was offered this topic of critical thinking and discussed it with my colleagues at a meeting we had, I immediately thought of a sentence written by the German philosopher Walter Benjamin at the beginning of his beautiful book *Berlin Childhood around 1900*.

Benjamin's sentence goes as follows:

“It's of little use not knowing how to find your way around a city. Getting lost, on the other hand, in a city as one gets lost in a forest requires learning.”

This sentence has been going around in my head for many years, and I found it in this book, *Berlin Childhood around 1900*.

Benjamin is a Marxist author of the first generation of critical theory.

From this point, I will try to answer Angélica's question, but I will turn it around a little.

The question will not be so much what makes critical thinking possible — which I think is what you were asking — but precisely the opposite.

What is there in our cities that currently prevents critical thinking?

And I will be very concrete, at the risk of seeming superficial, because, logically, each of the things I am going to mention would deserve a long explanation.

The first issue — well, I will mention three or four — but first of all I will name the philosophy that I believe is becoming dominant in our societies, cities and universities.

I would call it the logic of techno-economic reason, the techno-economic logic, the imperialism of techno-economic logic.

Our societies, our cities and our schools are being colonised by what I would call techno-economic logic.

Up to now, we could say that Marx — when I say “up to now”, I mean, for example, up to Marx, up to the nineteenth century and also a large part of the twentieth century — considered that the economic dimension, as Marcia has rightly said, was what Marx describes very well: this economic colonisation of the world, of the capitalist world.

The first sentence of *Capital* begins with the notion of the commodity.

This is no trivial matter.

Capitalist societies are characterised by their ability to transform everything into a commodity.

Everything is something that can be bought and sold.

So I think that today, to this economic vision, this economic colonisation of the world, we are adding the technological dimension, which should not be confused with technique.

I would ask whether we are capable of making a very important distinction that is not normally made, namely the distinction between technique and technology.

Technique can be good or bad; it can be used well or badly, and since human beings have existed — or something resembling human beings — on the face of the Earth, technique has existed.

But technology is something else.

Technology is a recent invention.

Technology, as its name indicates, is formed from the Greek word *logos*, and *logos* means many things in Greek, but the best-known meaning is “reason”, in the sense that there is a technological reason; that is, there is a technological vision of the world.

These perspectives Marcia was talking about: what technological or techno-economic reason does is deny any other perspective that is not its own.

A single vision of the world is imposed, totalitarian, of course, because technology is a totalitarian vision of the world, because it denies any other perspective.

So a perspective that denies every other perspective ceases to be a perspective.

Perspective, by definition, has to be multiple, it has to be plural.

If there is only one perspective, there are no perspectives.

And this is what technology has done, and this means that if there is no perspective, there is no critical thinking.

I will try to finish because this could go on for a long time.

Very briefly, I said I would list three or four — perhaps four — aspects of this techno-economic colonisation of the world so that we can think about them and, of course, criticise them.

The first: the tyranny of usefulness.

Techno-economic reason imposes the following as the central question: “What is it for?”

We will study Greek. What is Greek for?

We will study philosophy. What is philosophy for?

We will study social education and have a subject on the History of Education beginning with the *Iliad*. What is it for?

You will see, when the new Social Education curricula appear, how many History of Education subjects there are.

I already know, in education, not Social Education.

Do you know how many there are?

Zero.

Zero.

I believe that an educator who does not understand that Europe is founded on the wrath of Achilles understands nothing.

And that Europe is also founded on a prohibition: “Do not eat from the tree in the centre of paradise.”

If we forget this, we understand nothing.

But, of course: what is it for?

Second issue: bureaucracy.

Kafka realised this, especially at the beginning of the century, when he wrote his great novels, *The Trial* and, above all, *The Castle*.

Max Weber did too, in his books.

What is the sinister figure of bureaucracy?

There are many.

The file, for example. Kafka emphasises the notion of the file.

Before continuing, I will say that I am fully within this vision of the world because I would say that the sinister figure of democracy is the figure of the civil servant.

And I am a civil servant.

But let me explain.

What has happened with techno-economic logic?

What has it turned the civil servant into?

Or rather, the civil servant has ceased to be an administrative figure and has become an existential figure.

A civil servant is someone who performs a function and does not think.

There is a wonderful text by the German Marxist writer Bertolt Brecht, in a story about Mr K., in which one character asks another: is there a civil servant who asks questions?

If he asks questions, he is not a good civil servant.

If he thinks, he is not a good civil servant.

Bear in mind — I know that this now needs a great deal of qualification — that when Hannah Arendt covered the trial of Adolf Eichmann, an SS lieutenant colonel in Jerusalem, where he was sentenced to death for crimes against humanity, Adolf Eichmann, like so many others, did not simply say: “I am following orders.”

More seriously, Eichmann said: “I was obeying the law.”

He was asked whether, if he had been ordered to kill his father, he would have done so.

Eichmann replied — this is historical —: “If the Führer orders me to, naturally.”

Eichmann would have passed any psychological examination — I am not saying this; Hannah Arendt says it —.

Eichmann was not insane; that is the easiest thing to say.

As Hannah Arendt says, he was, unfortunately and terribly, someone normal.

Third issue, I am going very quickly.

The hyper-acceleration of time.

For example, my students know — and I greet them from here — that subjects are becoming shorter and shorter, more professors come in, assignments are done more quickly, group work...

Let nobody be left out, let them be group projects, of course, because if there is one thing they are not, it is group projects.

But anyway, that would be another topic.

The hyper-acceleration of time, what I have called haste in my books.

Haste.

We have to, I don't know how, in any case each person has to think about it, recover what I would call a cordial relationship with time.

A cordial relationship with time.

A certain degree of slowness.

Without a cordial relationship with time, it is impossible to think critically, it is impossible to think.

It is impossible to think.

One has to do this as the first condition for thinking: stop, stop, take your time.

If someone has no time, the bureaucrat has no time, the civil servant follows orders.

And, finally, one of the most serious things, and I will finish: the tremendous crisis of the humanities.

What is happening in our cities, our universities and our schools with the humanities is truly worrying.

And when I talk about the humanities, simply think about reading, writing and studying.

Nowadays nobody writes, everyone drafts.

But drafting is not writing.

Nowadays nobody reads, everyone searches for information.

But searching for information is not reading.

Nowadays nobody studies.

Have you noticed that the word “study” has disappeared?

And what has taken its place?

Research.

Nowadays everyone researches, but nobody studies.

Angélica Sátiro:

Is that it?

Yes.

They are two great thinkers, very good. This also communicates, which is why this is a dialogue that we are all having here. Thank you for your communication.

Look, since the axis of critical thinking also structured the session with Philippe Meirieu and Marina Garcés, I thought it would help us if we also included some of the things they said, to see how we can move forward from here.

Meirieu stated that critical thinking is an unsatisfied relationship with the world, that is, that we always want to understand the world more deeply; that is why it is an unsatisfied relationship. Marina Garcés stated that critical thinking has been handed over to abstract things and that we should move away from that, because thinking critically means being able to continue changing our understandings of concrete life. I think this helps us understand the place and role of critical thinking in an Educating City.

And you, Joan, have said that without critical thinking the city would cease to be a habitable setting. And you, Marcia, have said — not here now, but you have said it at other times — that critical thinking is the only thing that can sustain us as a species responsible for life on the planet.

Taking these concepts into account, we are people who build Educating Cities. I would very much like you to help us think about how we can take these concepts, this way of understanding critical thinking, into account, and how we can build an Educating City using our critical thinking.

Márcia Tiburi:

So, Angélica, I think there are always two paths available. One is government and the other is education. Therefore, I would like to develop these two topics briefly: the issue of government and the issue of education.

When I explained the story of the philosopher who sold critical thinking, I was talking about a person who imploded, who self-imploded. In philosophy we like to use amusing terms, fantastic for graffiti in the city. For example: performative self-contradiction.

But we can say that the person imploded when they said something that contradicts itself in the very act of speaking. They brought an end to what they were saying in the very act of saying it. And I say this because for some time I have been thinking a great deal along the lines of Paulo Freire, whom you all know, who spoke of a banking model of education.

And we can also speak of a banking philosophy. And banking philosophy and banking education are precisely the opposite of critical thinking, precisely the opposite of critical education. Critical education, which is not banking education, is education capable of perceiving and understanding the power games played upon a body and therefore helping a person to achieve autonomy.

We can say that critical education is, in fact, an ethical education. And a person educated through critical education is autonomous and, therefore, does not become a commodity, neither their thought nor their actions. And this person is someone who can govern themselves and, together with the world around them, with others, with their companions, build a government that is not authoritarian.

Eichmann, in Jerusalem, at his trial. Eichmann, the Nazi, like Franco, like so many others whom you know very well, because every country has its own, they are all paranoid. Donald Trump, today; Jair Bolsonaro, in Brazil; and so many others.

All the candidates for Hitler, these men, none of them would ever manage to develop critical thinking, because they live precisely through prefabricated thinking, because they were educated through banking education. This is true. They were not, they are not people who became what they are simply because they wanted to.

They were bewitched, bored, prevented from knowing otherness, through what Theodor Adorno called education for coldness.

And, Joan, I also remembered a phrase by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, old thinkers close to Walter Benjamin, who said that technical rationality is the rationality of domination. And this precisely engages with what you have said.

And this technical rationality, which is the rationality of power, which is the rationality of domination, is what turns us all into functionaries of a system. And not only functionaries of state bureaucracies, but it undoubtedly turns us into functionaries of these *gadgets*, functionaries of screens, computers and mobile phones. It turns us into beings who function according to machines, including artificial intelligence, which can do everything except imagine.

And when you say that nobody writes anymore, but drafts, this is what we are talking about.

I wanted to explain something, especially for young people, that also happened to me a few days ago. I am a writer and I have been writing since I learned how to write.

In fact, I learned to write with a little girl, and that is why I have never stopped writing. I also went to school, the kind of school that taught us to draw letters. And I thought: I have never forgotten this experience, and I thought I could continue drawing letters.

That is why I also design; even today I design letters. I design books that are metres and metres and metres long. I even illustrated a book by Angélica Dass.

Why am I explaining this? Because a few days ago, while finishing a book that took me eight years to write and which I finished two days ago — I told you about it, I finished it here — a person I live with said to me: “Why don't you put this into artificial intelligence and have it solve everything?”

And this person said it based on the fact that the female writer who won the Nobel Prize this year uses artificial intelligence to write. And it is a scandal, but this is what the world is.

At present, artificial intelligence has made us all cynical. And I replied to the person I live with as follows: “But I exist because I write. I need to write in order to feel alive.”

Therefore, I could not outsource my existence to a machine. And this is what we are talking about when we rebel against artificial intelligence, technical rationality and technologies. We want to exist.

And existing is very difficult in the age of spectacle, in the age in which our images have been transformed into commodities, in the age in which our affects, hatred and love have also been transformed into commodities.

Finally, I think we need to govern. And governing means struggling for the hegemony of our ideas and taking power.

That is, we have to organise ourselves. We have been doing this for a long time in the most diverse countries, and that is why the world has not yet been destroyed by figures such as authoritarian figures, the bearers of authoritarian personalities, such as Hitler, Franco, Bolsonaro or Donald Trump.

We resist, obviously, because we keep critical thinking alive, because we are capable of imagining authority, and because we are capable of fighting for a space of hegemony for our ideas, and we have to take this further and further.

I don't have time, but afterwards I would like to talk about ecosocialism and feminism.

Angélica Sátiro:

—All right. Thank you, Marcia.

Marcia, who has this feminist and ecofeminist perspective, was exiled here, in Europe, because she was persecuted for opposing fascism in Brazil. Just to situate the standpoint from which she speaks.

Joan, we are now talking about the fact that critical thinking is essential to building an Educating City. What are your thoughts on this?

Joan-Carles Mèlich:

Well, let's see. Things are heating up, which I like very much, because I had so many things to say, but going deeper into what Marcia was saying, with which I very much agree. Afterwards I will answer the original question you asked, when you quoted the contributions of Philippe Meirieu and Marina Garcés.

But first, so that I don't forget. The problem with artificial intelligence is that, for example, if I ask it to write a text for me, it writes it perfectly. And that is the problem.

It is not a human text. It is written by a machine. Everything is clean.

I cannot resist telling you an anecdote, and I confess that I am guilty of this too. A few days ago I put a text of mine that I had just written into Google. When you open Google, a kind of AI mode or something similar appears.

I put my text there and, to see whether it would encourage me, I asked it which philosopher might have written that text. It answered: "Without a doubt, Joan-Carles Mèlich."

And then I said: "Look how well I've done, I have my own style."

But it immediately answered me: "But we can improve it."

It is not Joan-Carles Mèlich's text, because the text can, naturally, be improved. Of course. Even the texts of a Nobel Prize winner can be improved.

But the style is this person's style. In an interview they ask him — they talk about this with Jorge Luis Borges. People used to say that Cervantes wrote badly.

But if writing badly, Borges says, is what allows me to write *Don Quixote*, then perfect.

People say that Dostoevsky did not know how to write. But I wish I could write *Crime and Punishment* or *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Therefore, and this has to do with the question Angélica asked, we have to return to the founding text, which is Book Seven of *The Republic* and, specifically, the allegory of the cave.

We have to read Plato again, but not because we agree with him, but because he helps us think.

I do not agree with Plato; I agree with Sophocles. They were contemporaries. But that would already be giving a lecture.

No, no, I mean the fact that we have to return to the allegory of the cave, because what happens in the allegory of the cave? Well, Plato...

Notice something, which philosophy teachers often explain incorrectly. The prisoner in the cave does not free himself and go up; rather, he is freed and forced, against his will, through an act of violence, to leave the cave.

This, for example, María Zambrano has emphasised very well. And I often encounter students who tell me that the prisoner frees himself.

Plato never said that. On the contrary, the prisoner does not want to free himself. What happens is that Plato then gives his interpretation of truth.

Well, we live in a cave. What does this mean? It means that we live in a world of shadows. And a world of shadows is a world of ambiguities, a world of doubts, a world of uncertainties.

And in order to inhabit the world humanely, not in the manner of an artificial intelligence or a robot...

The other day I watched an episode of *Black Mirror*. I don't remember what it is called, but I think I mentioned it to the students and they will remind me afterwards. It is impressive because you can

see it clearly. That is, a girl's partner dies and she can then create a kind of cyborg. I think it is from the seventh season.

And this cyborg is perfect. It never contradicts her. And she says: "But you are the same, everything is the same, everything is the same."

But, of course, it is a clone because her husband has died. "You cannot agree with me." And the cyborg says: "Do you want me to contradict you?" And she says: "Of course I want you to contradict me, but I don't want to tell you that I want you to contradict me."

"You have to contradict me because it comes from you, not because I tell you to. You haven't understood anything." Everything fits together.

That is, if the city becomes a puzzle in which there is no piece that does not fit, then we are in a totalitarian universe. Whether political, economic, technological or, naturally, any other kind of totalitarianism.

Then the educator becomes a guide, a guide, someone who knows what the path is and tells us where we have to go.

Just remember one thing. "Guide" in German is *Führer*.

Well, that's it.

Angélica Sátiro:

Well, let's applaud, because they are brilliant.

Look, as I told you, they are two dear friends. We would probably continue talking, because there is a lot of material to work with here, as they say here in Spain, but we have already been warned about the time.

So I will ask you one last question and ask you for your capacity for synthesis, the greatest synthesis you can manage.

Look, people tend to think that critical thinking is one thing, in addition to this mistaken idea that thinking one thing, feeling another, emotion another, acting another, are all compartmentalised.

People tend to think that critical thinking is there, disconnected from life itself.

Marcia, in your idea about feminism in common, you argue that we have to build societies based on mutual care and the protection of vulnerable bodies and lives; that is, critical thinking is connected to life.

You, Joan, and your ethics of compassion, which does not arise from obeying abstract laws, but from being confronted with the pain of an injured person and responding with care to their suffering.

Therefore, this connection you establish between critical thinking and ethics, starting from here, could you help, by way of closing, to give these people some ideas about how we can live our own lives amid this emotional confusion, with all the crises that are occurring, and how critical thinking can help us in these complex contexts?

With the capacity for synthesis — three little minutes.

Márcia Tiburi:

Three minutes. We are being governed by platform states; in some countries we are still governed by churches; we are governed by authoritarian personalities.

Education can be considered as self-government and must be approached as an ethics, that is, as an awareness of the production of subjectivity.

As educators, whether we are education politicians, teachers — it does not matter — or thinkers about education, we have to provide paths so that our students, whether children, young people or adults, can be autonomous, thinking, reflective and capable of governing themselves, without hierarchies and together with others, with the intention of building a permanent, intense, lifelong education, until the end of life.

And I think that, from my perspective, without being able to present all the premises of this to you now, I have developed a theory that I call ecosocialfeminism, which goes against policies of violence, policies of enmity, policies driven by the death impulse that animate the patriarchal, capitalist and ableist perspective of the world, and which defends life on what we call planet Earth.

I very much like Eliane Brum's perspective, because she made a very important shift, which she has been making for a long time, and it is important to mention her at this congress because she is also here.

She spoke about changing the centre of the world, and this means thinking about another nomotopology, that is, another geography, another spatiality, concentrating the world, moving away from the order of Wall Street, or the big cities, or the economic centres, and returning towards nature.

Or returning to the forests, which is a concrete name for the question of nature. But this will only be possible if we change the government of the world. And the government of the world will never be able to make this shift while it remains in the hands of authoritarian men.

In this sense, this is what I mean when I talk about ecosocialfeminism. I believe that this lies in the hands of radical democracy, which includes all social movements.

I mention feminism because it encompasses many of the social movements. In Brazil we have many movements: movements for land, movements of homeless people, movements of LGBTIQ+ and APN+ people, Indigenous and Black movements, and movements of feminist women.

In Brazil there is also a very dangerous anti-feminist movement, so I like to say that they are feminist movements.

And I wanted to leave you with this so that we can reflect together. It is not exactly an answer, but rather a call to reflection, and I think this is our role as educators, public intellectuals, politicians, people who continue to think critically against authoritarian language, against this consumerism of language, against the clichés of social media and prefabricated discourses.

Therefore, my defence of critical thinking is a defence of dialogue. And from time to time we will have to do as in Plato's cave: force things a little, demand that people be capable of this reflection for our own survival on a planet that also deserves to survive, because planet Earth did not ask us to be here. That is to say, our responsibility is even greater.

Thank you very much.

Angélica Sátiro:

Thank you, Marcia.

Joan, the final words on critical thinking and its ethics of compassion in the face of the pain of the other.

Joan-Carles Mèlich:

In my view, for critical thinking to exist, we have to keep alive a tension that will never be fully resolved between three spheres of the city, which are the following. I will state them in this order, but the order is not important.

First, the political sphere. Political laws, which would be symbolised by the figure of, or by what Creon does in Sophocles' *Antigone*, are necessary. But, since this has already been discussed at length, I will move quickly to the second sphere.

Alongside the political sphere, we have the moral sphere.

To put it briefly, morality is a set of values, norms, rules and habits belonging to a particular culture at a particular moment in its history. There are no universal moralities; moralities are cultural, historical, and so on.

To be very concrete, what seems interesting to me to rethink here from the point of view of morality is this: why is it important to think about morality from the perspective of critical thinking?

Because it seems to me that the most fundamental thing would be to understand that not only urban planning is important, but that urbanity is more important.

A city will be habitable, a city will be cordial. When they bring me a coffee and bring me the bill, I will say: "Thank you, that's very kind."

When someone is sitting — we could talk at length about this — on a bus, not in the seats reserved for people who deserve special consideration. Is it already serious that we have to put up reserved seats? This is already serious. But it is even more serious to see who sits in those seats and who has these people next to them and does absolutely nothing.

This is urbanity.

Of course, the easiest thing is to say: "This man is a fascist" and that's it, right?

Well, I think this is very important. It is very important to respect; it is very important to listen.

All of this would form part of the field of morality.

And finally, as Marcia has said many times, there is the field of ethics.

Morality is very important, but it is not enough; there is something more. Ethics is the dark zone of morality.

Ethics is that face-to-face relationship in which the moral rules I have been educated in enter into crisis or may enter into crisis.

And therefore, sometimes, in order to be ethical, that is, to be compassionate, to be cordial, to attend to the suffering of the other, I have to question the rules of politics and the rules of morality.

An ethical response will never be good enough. If the ethical response is good enough and I have a clear conscience, ethics has disappeared from the scene.

Angélica Sátiro:

Thank you very much, Joan. Thank you very much, Marcia.

I would like to thank you, children, girls and boys, and adolescents. Thank you.

I would like to close this dialogue session by inviting each one of you to return to your cities with this idea clear in your mind:

I am a critical thinker. I can continue thinking critically because I am not merely a civil servant or a public employee.

And yes, through dialogue we will be able to develop the critical thinking of our cities and of all the people who live in them.

Thank you very much.

Thank you. Goodbye.

Goodbye. Well. Now.