# How Critical is Critical Thinking?

Critical thinking has been identified as a cross-cutting skill that contributes, particularly in the twenty-first century, to academic and professional success in so-called knowledge societies. To the point where the expression "critical thinking" has become a kind of "mantra", repeated ad nauseam, as a "remedy" against all material and spiritual evils. However, a very particular sense of the word "critical" is worth considering: the one that arises from the so-called "critical theory", which concerns itself with the relationship between theory and practice and assumes a commitment to the transformation of reality. We can thus understand critical thinking, whether as a strategy for problem-solving and establishing the truth of facts, as opposed to dogmatic and vulgar thinking, or as thinking committed to improving human life conditions. In the first sense, critical thinking is merely instrumental. In the second, it is emancipatory. In this framework, the position advocated here is that it is not enough to advocate for developing critical thinking skills in our young students. Still, we must also ask ourselves how critical the critical thinking we are promoting is. And that obliges us to consider and discuss the axiological framework in which we develop our efforts to promote critical thinking in our societies.