UNDERSTANDING THE RELATION BETWEEN CRITICALITY AND KNOWLEDGE IMPOSITION IN PEDAGOGY

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ABSTRACT

The starting point is the idea that critical thinking can help promote intellectual autonomy and prevent the appearance of knowledge imposition. However, different critical approaches seem to do this in different ways, depending on their different conceptions of critique and critical thinking, and on the particular strategic choices they make. An examination of these conceptions and strategies shows that they all fail to fully prevent knowledge imposition, but each for different reasons. In some cases, the approaches do not provide specific enough questioning tools, and therefore cannot guarantee that their users will actually be able to properly identify and question all the relevant aspects of forms of knowledge. In other cases the tools for questioning provided by the approaches implicitly demand from students the acceptance of a form of knowledge, which therefore they may end up accepting uncritically. A further examination of these issues and the requirements they impose on language shows that it will always be impossible for any critical approach, or indeed any approach, to fully promote critical thinking and intellectual autonomy, and to prevent knowledge imposition. However, the framework used and provided here at least allows one to identify, in particular cases, the dimensions in which intellectual autonomy and critical thinking are or are not being promoted.

KEYWORDS
intellectual autonomy, knowledge imposition, language, critical thinking, critical pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

An important connection can be established between criticality and knowledge imposition in education. Indeed, for instance, it has been thought that by promoting critical thinking in their students, a teacher would at the same time be promoting intellectual autonomy and preventing knowledge imposition on them. Critical thinking would allow students to question ideas, theories, ideologies, social structures, processes of knowledge construction, etc., and therefore prevent their acceptance from being imposed on them. Or, perhaps, critique on forms of classroom communication may allow a teacher to identify imposing elements in it, and redesign it so as to address those elements and allow for the emergence of intellectual autonomy in her/his students.

However, many criticisms aimed at critical approaches in education and pedagogy indicate that many authors think that the attempts by the proponents of those approaches have failed to fully prevent knowledge imposition. In some cases it has even been claimed that they even promote some form of knowledge imposition themselves. In the light of these criticisms, it is worth examining in some detail the existing relations between pedagogical proposals about criticality and knowledge imposition. This paper has as its main purpose to explore those relations, to see in what dimensions, and to what extent, critical approaches in can or cannot help prevent knowledge imposition and promote intellectual autonomy in students.

To this end, in section 1 I will present a very brief review of salient characteristics of some critical approaches, concentrating specially on those aspects that have most to do with knowledge imposition. Section 2 will present a certain terminology that will be useful for understanding the issues this paper is about. In section 3, I will formulate some requirements established on the nature of language and knowledge, by these approaches, if they are to effectively prevent imposition and promote autonomy. In section 4, I will point at some issues concerning the discussion about whether those requirements can be met, and postulate the existence of an indissoluble dilemma that makes the full prevention of knowledge imposition an impossible. The final section describes some possible consequences for educational practice.

1. CRITICAL APPROACHES IN PEDAGOGY

Some critical approaches in pedagogy have been particularly influential, and I will briefly present some of their characteristics here. My list may not be exhaustive, but it will allow me to introduce the argument in the following sections.

One critical approach in education is the one proposed by the Critical Thinking Movement (see for instance Toulmin et al., 1984; Paul, 1993; and Ennis, 1995). It seeks to develop philosophical theories of argumentation, usually based on informal logic, and teach them to students so that they learn the skills and acquire the dispositions needed to assess arguments. In relation to knowledge imposition the idea is that if students learn these theories and use them as tools, they will then question forms of knowledge that are presented to them. Hence, they will take responsibility for their acceptance or rejection. It is usually said that the theories of argumentation or logic used by this movement are not ideological.

The main criticism found in relation to knowledge imposition consists in the lack of power of those tools for identifying and therefore questioning those aspects of arguments that are not clearly visible, or are hidden, and that therefore do not form part of the "net of strict logical analysis" (Duhan Kaplan, 1991). This way, for instance, an

impeccable logical analysis of some argument may fail to address important but non-explicit issues in it.

In the approach known as critical pedagogy students are also given tools for questioning forms of knowledge[1], mainly the so-called dominant ones (see for instance Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1997; and McLaren, 1994). Freire's notion of critical consciousness, for instance, defines a state of consciousness in which students are now able to properly question both reality and the presumably distorted views espoused by those in power. Those "dominant" views will then not be imposed on students, as they are not naïve anymore. There is, however, another strategy in which these authors seek to prevent knowledge imposition, and it is by organising the classroom interactions in such a way that students are allowed to voice their views, and be listened by the other participants in conversation. In this way, the teacher will presumably not indoctrinate students into her/his own ideology, but instead will help them develop their own views. Freire's discussions on dialogue and on banking education are manifestations of this.

One strong criticism concerns the fact that the conscientisation process that allows students to achieve critical consciousness is ideological in itself. For instance, in Freirean pedagogy critical consciousness is allegedly Marxist, although in other cases it may take a different colour. This means that a Marxist view may be imposed on students, being the vehicle for this imposition the very process of empowering students (see for instance Burbules, 1993; and Buckingham, 1998).

Other authors in critical pedagogy have more recently tried to develop an approach that does not commit to particular ideologies, therefore not demanding their adoption by students, and that will furthermore extend their critique to cover all, and not only one or two, forms of domination and oppression. Arguably they see themselves now as seeking to articulate silenced or repressed knowledges, making them publicly available, but at the same time critically questioning both them and the dominant ones. However, the criticisms seem to not have been totally mitigated in comparison to early critical pedagogy, as there is apparently still the need for a positive vision of the future that serves as a standard from which other views are seen and judged (see for instance Ellsworth, 1989; and Gur Ze'ev, 1998). And even if one limits oneself to the articulation and critique of dominant and alternative views, then those articulation and critique themselves may carry with them the acceptance of a particular ideology or position.

In post-radical pedagogies there is a further displacement of standards against which particular views or positions can be contrasted or judged. In fact, there is no promotion of such standards, and the negative emancipatory interest that characterises critical pedagogy is now replaced for the pure opening up of interpretive possibilities. The

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[1] I will use the expression *form of knowledge* to refer to any idea, argument, belief, belief system, ideology, theory, or worldview. I ask the reader to not give it any connotation of "true warranted belief", for I do not intend to mean that the truth of any belief can ever be established.

preferred strategy consists in the continual articulation of further textual possibilities which remain hidden. The emphasis, however, is not put on the wider societal political issues that surround the classroom, but on the text. A problem that appears is one which was also present in critical pedagogy, but in a reduced way: By not pointing at specific [political] issues, it is possible that they will never come to the fore and be discussed, and hence it is possible that the imposition of knowledge in that respect will not be prevented. (In the case of critical pedagogy this criticism only referred to some particular political issues that were left out of the analysis, as in the case of gender issues in the Neo-Marxist approach espoused by Freire.) But, interestingly, what was just said in the previous paragraph about recent versions of critical pedagogy can also apply to post-radical pedagogies: The very articulation of alternative knowledges might be an expression of the articulator's ideological views.

Neither of the two remaining approaches I will mention here, Young's Habermasian one (Young, 1990 and 1992) and Gore's Foucauldian one (Gore, 1995 and 1997), make any use of the strategy of giving tools to students, so that they can question forms of knowledge. This time they concentrate exclusively on the organisation of interactions. Gore is more pessimistic than Young as regards the possibility of creating a non-imposing type of interactions, which is partly due to her adoption of Foucauldian forms of theorisation. In Young's work, however, the ideal speech situation provides a kind of benchmark one can at least try to get closer to. Both of them attempt, using various tools, to characterise real conversations in terms of various ideal descriptions of interactions that are regarded as symmetrical/ asymmetrical, repressive/ non-repressive, etc. In this case, and assuming that their analyses are to a large extent correct, there would still be something missing from the picture of knowledge imposition: As they do not deal with contents, they do not teach how to identify and question forms of knowledge, and therefore some of these may remain hidden and be invisibly imposed. Maddock, for instance, has in fact argued that Young's approach cannot help students articulate and address the political and existential issues of their lives (1999).

2. A GENERAL CHARACTERISATION OF CRITICAL APPROACHES

I will now attempt to characterise the approaches mentioned above in terms of a set of aspects useful for understanding the knowledge dimensions along which they promote or prevent the appearance of critical thinking and intellectual autonomy.

I will start by distinguishing between different types of forms of knowledge play a part in the act of critical thinking, and in the critical thinking classroom. On the one hand, there is knowledge coming from sources usually external to the classroom (the media, the government, tradition, etc.), but sometimes also internal to it (textbooks, other

students, etc.), that critical approaches may help students be critical about. Just to put an example, in some context it may be the ideas embedded in culture about the role of women in society. Let me call these forms of knowledge, *target forms of knowledge*. But there are also the various forms of rather theoretical knowledge, provided by the critical approaches, that are used by the teacher in some way in order to help students become critical. I will refer to them as *theories of the critical*. For instance, in the case of the critical thinking movement, the theories of the critical used are normally theories of argumentation and informal logic. For critical pedagogy they are normally semiotic, sociological and epistemological theories. And lastly, there are forms of knowledge represented in the beliefs held by the proponents of the critical approaches, and/or by the teachers attempting to help their students be critical, about the same domain that the target forms of knowledge are about. I will term them *source forms of knowledge*. To continue with the example above, in that case the role of source form of knowledge will be played by the ideas held by the teacher, and/or by the proponents of the critical approach being used by him/her, about the role of women in society.

The criticisms made to each of the critical approaches, briefly mentioned in the previous section, can now be understood as being (1) either about the approach's inability to help students properly identify and question all possible *relevant* target forms of knowledge or all possible *relevant* aspects of the chosen target forms of knowledge, or (2) about the approach's tendency to impose its source forms of knowledge on students. In this second case, interestingly, imposition of a certain view will have occurred *in the name of critique*.

The first of these types of criticism applies to what has been said about the theories of argumentation used by the critical thinking movement and about the Habermasian approach developed by Robert Young. The second type of criticism has been particularly predominant in the literature about critical pedagogy. In this case the theory of the critical used seems to carry with it, or entail, a particular source form of knowledge which ends up being imposed. However, it may also happen that even if the theory of the critical does not directly imply a source form of knowledge, then one such form of knowledge may make itself present in the act of critical thinking, or of being critical about the target form of knowledge. For instance, students may end up using the theories of the critical learned, simply to legitimise their own previous positions and win debates, without subjecting their own views to critical scrutiny.

Let me now postulate, in the manner of some kind of ideal types, some possibilities in which the three different kinds of knowledge involved in the act of critical thinking (source, target, and theories of the critical) can be related. One of them happens when the theory of the critical does not talk about, or entail, any sort of content, and remains at a purely pedagogical level concerning only formal interactions between persons (e.g., teacher and students in the classroom). Of them I will say that they use *pedagogical*

theories of the critical. To a great extent this is the case of Young's Habermasian and Gore's Foucauldian approaches.

Another possibility is that the theories of the critical do talk about contents, or about ways of dealing critically with contents, but in a way in which there is no direct relation to any source form of knowledge in particular. I will call them, *content-empty theories of the critical*. Again, to a great extent this is the case of the theories of argumentation and informal logic used by the critical thinking movement.

Lastly, there is the possibility that the theory of the critical used does talk about contents in a very concrete and explicit way, even describing explicitly in advance the various different possible target readings of reality. These are, in my terminology, *content-full theories of the critical*. In a way, it can be said that whereas content-empty theories of the critical only provide the questions one should ask about a target form of knowledge, content-full theories of the critical provide both the questions and the different possible answers to them for every possible source or target form of knowledge. Now, in some cases the theory of the critical will be directly tied to one particular source form of knowledge that is taken to be true, or valid. In this case I will say that it is an *advocating content-full theory of the critical*. However, if the theory of the critical simply presents a range of possibilities without declaring any one of them valid or true, it can be called a *non-advocating content-full theory of the critical*. The following table provides a summary of the categories, and also names some critical approaches in education that can more or less be suited to a particular category:

Approaches that deal with contents			Approaches that deal with pedagogical interactions
Content-full		Content-empty	(Content-empty)
Advocating	Non-advocating	(Non-advocating)	(Non-advocating)
Freire's approach, critical pedagogy	Critical pedagogy, post-radical pedagogies	Critical thinking movement, critical pedagogy	Young's, Gore's, and Freire's approaches

Now, the idea of content-full and content-empty theories of the critical can also be seen, according to this table, as something that specifies a gradualism from left to right. The more one goes to the right of the table, the less content is entailed by the theory of the critical; that is, the less beliefs about content one has to accept in order to apply it. The categories may be taken as simply pointing at extremes in a gradual scale.

The reader may also notice that some approaches appear more than once. Let me explain: In the case of Freire's approach, it provides both a content-full advocating

theory of the critical, and a pedagogical one, in a rather separate way[2]. Critical pedagogy (in other non-Freirean forms) appears three times, but this time because of the ambiguity present in the literature found, and the subsequent difficulty in the classification. Arguably, sometimes only a general abstract theory —with corresponding general abstract critical questions— is presented, and it is up to the reader to bring it down to her/his subjects of concern. In some other cases, the theory is presented together with more concrete indications for critique in particular cases, explaining the possible answers to the critical questions for various different forms of knowledge —or knowledges— but stating explicitly that none is being advocated. However, sometimes a particular form of knowledge is advocated, even explicitly. Nevertheless, I take it that this variety and ambiguity does not constitute a reason for dismissing the categories here proposed as irrelevant, and instead think that the categories help one understand in a better way the variety in the critical pedagogy literature.

3. SOME REQUIREMENTS FOR CRITICAL APPROACHES TO BE ABLE TO FULLY AND EFFECTIVELY PROMOTE CRITICAL THINKING

In this section I will try to establish the requirements imposed on the nature of language and knowledge, by each of the various kinds of theories of the critical described in the previous section.

3.1 PEDAGOGICAL THEORIES OF THE CRITICAL

Approaches using exclusively pedagogical theories of the critical face various difficulties if they are willing to promote critical thinking and prevent the imposition of knowledge. The main salient characteristic consists in the fact that they do not deal with contents. This means that whatever contents are brought into the classroom conversation are brought by the classroom participants (i.e., the teacher, the students, the texts, etc.) *without any help from the approach*. This effectively means that only those forms of knowledge and aspects of them that happen to occur to them will be addressed.

What, then, would be necessary in order for such an approach to be good enough for the development of critical thinking in students? It seems to me that the contents that are relevant for critical questioning have to be in some way *given*, so that therefore it is simply not necessary that the critical approach brings it to the fore, for they will eventually come out anyway. The assumption seems to be that the participants in classroom conversation have all the knowledge resources needed for critical

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[2] It is actually my contention that this creates an unavoidable tension. This idea has been developed elsewhere (Mejía, forthcoming).

questioning, and that all that is necessary is that they be allowed to work in a proper inquiry context. Let me now call this requirement, *givenness*.

3.2 CONTENT-EMPTY THEORIES OF THE CRITICAL

I have already explained that content-empty theories of the critical provide some theory-backed questions that the critical person should ask of any target form of knowledge, but without being too explicit about how in each particular case they should be answered. The central point to emphasise here is the fact that it may still be polemic, or problematic, how each person using the theory of the critical will produce an appraisal or assessment of particular target forms of knowledge.

In comparison with pedagogical theories of the critical, the contents brought into the conversation are not this time left so open, because at least it is guaranteed that certain topics will be explored. There is, however, still some degree of givenness that is required for these approaches to be able to guarantee that critical thinking will be fully developed in students, in that whatever is left open cannot be guaranteed. If there is no givenness, then students might still be unable to properly identify and then question relevant forms of knowledge and relevant aspects of them that simply do not occur to them. The emptier the theory, the greater the degree of givenness that it requires.

3.3 CONTENT-FULL THEORIES OF THE CRITICAL

If it is the case that both pedagogical and content-empty theories of the critical require some degree of givenness in order to be able to fully prevent knowledge imposition and promote critical thinking, then content-full ones, because they do provide contents, do not impose such requirement.

But, of course, being on the other side of the equation implies certain other things. Firstly, advocating content-full theories of the critical are tied to a particular source form of knowledge which is taken to be true or valid. This means that students, in order to be critical in the way envisaged by the approach, have to come to accept that source form of knowledge. Now, that acceptance might come about in the form of an imposition on the students, using whatever manipulative means one wants; but that would mean that while one is promoting critical thinking about other people's ideas and forms of knowledge, one is also preventing students from being critical about one's advocated form of knowledge. Alternatively, one might try to provide the context for a rational inquiry, and simply hope that students will, on their own (whatever that means), rationally come to accept the required source form of knowledge. For this second option to work, there is then a requirement that I can now formulate, which is that the advocated source form of knowledge be rationally inescapable. For that reason I have called the requirement, *inescapability*.

If one does not want to rely on the inescapability of a source reading of reality, or on the givenness of the relevant aspects that need to be questioned of target forms of knowledge, then one might want to have a non-advocating content-full theory of the critical. Its simplest manifestation may be present in what many teachers frequently claim to do: "I don't teach them my view, but instead give them the set of alternative possibilities, for them to decide on their own which one they'll take." This option seems to be a very good one indeed, and I think it goes in the right direction; but I also take it that it should be examined carefully before any conclusion is reached. Let us notice that in this case it is not a source reading of reality which might be imposed on students —as in the case of advocating content-full theories of the critical— but an interpretation (the teacher's) of a set of target forms of knowledge. If the interpretation carries the sign of the teacher's source form of knowledge, and is not independent from it, then in one way or another it may end up being imposed on students, in a much subtler and invisible way. I have called this requirement, *interpretation independence*, alluding to the independence required between the teacher's views on a topic, and her/his interpretation of the set of alternative views on the same topic.

4. ON THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF FULFILLING THE REQUIREMENTS

The space is very limited here to fully address the question of whether each of these requirements can be fulfilled. However, I will attempt to describe some aspects that are involved in this problem and direct the reader to other texts that have explored some of them. This will, I hope, also show why my answer to the question is that the requirements cannot be fulfilled.

4.1 GIVENNESS

The discussion about the requirement of givenness is similar in some sense to the discussion about the requirement of inescapability that I will present in section 4.2. Givenness, in its most extreme form, depends on the fact that given the right conversational conditions of inquiry, no relevant aspects of a target form of knowledge will pass without being identified and questioned. In less extreme forms, it depends on the fact that given some general critical questions or categories, anyone will be able to identify and question all the relevant aspects about a target form of knowledge.

The problem with this is that there are no aspects in reality that anyone inevitably would identify when in a "face-to-face situation with reality" (see Sellars, 1956; and Rorty, 1979). As the work of authors like Davidson (1984) and Sellars (1956) shows, reality is not divided into separate facts, and facts can only be separated and distinguished in our sentences in language. If one further accepts the doctrine of the

holism of language, as advocated by Quine, Rorty, Davidson, and others, then one's act of distinguishing any aspect [of reality, whatever that means], depends on one's belief system. And then, different belief systems will take different people to distinguish and take as meaningful and relevant, different aspects.

If the above argument is correct, then a theory of the critical using a pedagogical or content-empty theory of the critical cannot guarantee that all relevant aspects of a target form of knowledge will actually be identified and questioned by the students.

4.2 INESCAPABILITY

The search for inescapability of forms of knowledge corresponds to the search for some kind of epistemological source of certainty; that is, the search for something that will guarantee that some beliefs are compelling and incorrigible. The discussion around this topic has been tremendously extensive in the history of philosophy, and it is certainly not within the scope of this paper to recreate the arguments and positions involved. I will simply state that in this matter I follow the positions of Rorty and Davidson, and with them claim that nothing can play the role of an epistemological source of certainty. The of this consequences for the present argument can be summarised in that, strictly speaking, no source form of knowledge can be taken as inescapable, and therefore any approach using an advocating content-full theory of the critical will tend to impose knowledge.

This position is a philosophical one, of course, and one can wonder if it may be less extreme to grant that in all sorts of conversations outside of the realm of philosophy one is at least relatively justified in having some certainty about certain issues. I would definitely agree with such a position; however, how far does it go? In most cases in practice, out of the abstractions of philosophy, reasoning and argumentation seem to advance from, let me call them that way, *basic* ideas to *non-basic* ideas[3]. Basic ideas would have at least two characteristics: The speaker has some certainty about them, and s/he thinks that her/his audience share a similar degree of certainty about them. Now, critical thinking cannot be about the obvious, or about the clearly visible, and cannot limit itself to restate basic ideas. It necessarily has to advance to non-basic ones, but then it is here where polemics and argumentation risks appear. Critical thinking cannot but develop in the realm of the problematic, the polemic, and the difficult. Given this, inescapability in practice does not look much better than in the strictness of pure philosophy.

4.3 INTERPRETATION INDEPENDENCE

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[3] In some sense this idea can be seen as derived from Toulmin's discussion on arguments (1958).

I have talked about interpretation of some form of knowledge as the way in which someone understands it. It is common to take the understanding of a form of knowledge as an act that can be separated from other knowledge-related acts such as assessing or evaluating that form of knowledge, critical thinking about it, and so on. A wise saying advises us to first understand and only then criticise. A related idea is that there is something called the meaning of a word or sentence, that one grasps, and that is different from, but basis for, later analyses.

I have argued elsewhere (Mejía, 2001), based on the philosophy of Quine and Davidson, that the interpretation of a speaker's sentences necessarily implies an active interpreter who uses her/his own beliefs about the same topic the speaker is talking about. In this view the interpreter *translates* the speaker's sentences into some sentences s/he knows how to use. Knowing how to use a sentence , in turn, is to know [many] related sentences and how they relate to it, as well as possible appropriate or inappropriate contexts of use. In interpretation, then, are implied those related sentences and possible contexts of use; however, there is no single finite set of related sentences, which is necessary and sufficient for grasping the meaning of the sentences to be interpreted. This is just a consequence of rejecting the analytic-synthetic distinction (Quine, 1953) and of accepting the holism of meaning and knowledge (Davidson, 1984). An important point to emphasise is that the related sentences that appear in interpretation depend on the interpreter's belief system, and therefore may vary from one person to another. Interpretation, strictly speaking, is never exactly the same.

As in the case of inescapability looked at in the previous section, one may wonder if there is a sufficiently large basis of agreement in belief systems so that different interpreters' interpretations will usually coincide. Of course, we all must surely share lots of beliefs, as that is what allows understanding to occur. And lots of aspects of our interpretations will match very well. But again, one cannot take critical thinking to lie in issues about which there is generalised agreement, for the minimum one expects from critical thinking and the critical person is to go beyond the common and obvious. Critical thinking about some target form of knowledge is constituted by critical interpretations of it, in which connections with new dimensions beyond the obvious are made (Duhan Kaplan, 1994), in related sentences.

An indication that interpretation independence cannot be is apparent in everyday life: "This is what *they* think: …" sentences very usually have a much worse appearance than "this is what *we* think: …" sentences, as can be seen very frequently in politics and academic conferences. A further implication is that the line separating misunderstandings and disagreements, except in rather trivial cases, is very fuzzy.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

If my arguments are correct, then there is no possible way in which an approach can ever comprehensively promote critical thinking, and prevent all sorts of knowledge imposition. Critical thinking occurs in particular situations, about particular topics, and about particular ideas within a topic. A person may have developed a critical attitude, and that surely helps her/him be critical and take responsibility for her/his accepted beliefs in many cases; but that does not guarantee that s/he will be able to do so in every possible or even every relevant occasion. S/he will simply not have the knowledge resources necessary for doing so.

The reasons given in this paper for that impossibility can be related to the nature of language. About any possible target form of knowledge, if someone (e.g. a student) is left on her/his own to assess it and decide if s/he will accept it or not, then it is possible that s/he will not recognise various relevant aspects that s/he should take into account in that assessment. In my terminology, those aspects are not given. But on the other hand, if someone else (e.g. a teacher) shows her/him some aspects to question or examine about the target form of knowledge, then her/his acceptance of the relevance and meaningfulness of those aspects will imply the acceptance of a whole set of additional beliefs, which then can be imposed. Again, in my terminology, those aspects are not inescapable, and they are part of an interpretation that is not independent from the interpreter's beliefs about what the target form of knowlefge is about. Questioning always takes place *from* belief systems, and is never devoid of belief commitments.

Furthermore, the more content-full the theory of the critical used is, the more the critical thinking work is done by the theorist, and less by the student who is supposed to be critical. But if one wants it the other way, if one decides to place full trust on the students, then another relation applies: The less the theory of the critical specifies, the more the critical thinking work is done by the students, but also the less the teacher is able to guarantee that they will actually get to critically identify and question relevant forms of knowledge and relevant aspects of them.

Now, if there is no way in which knowledge imposition from all sources can be avoided, then the teacher should perhaps see her/himself as needing to make choices about what aspects of knowledge and of the students' lives are better questioned than not, and what others s/he will simply not attempt to address; and about what aspects s/he will commit to convince her/his students even if that implies some form of imposition. The choices are inevitable, because every interaction or lack of it carries some form of imposition, and because no epistemology can tell us how to proceed. Critical thinking is not about some specific kind of connections that the critical person makes about any target form of knowledge, be them political, epistemological, or of whatever nature. It is simply about making connections, without any restrictions. Which connections one will concentrate on is a choice one has to make, but for reasons outside of the nature of

critical thinking and critique. That choice involves necessarily but not exclusively ethical considerations; and education is fundamentally an enterprise submerged in ethics.

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