

## **What is at stake when psychoanalysis and education come together ? Some ethical and clinical issues**

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### ***Introduction***

What kind of connections can we make between the field of education in the wider sense of the word and psychoanalysis? Between educating and treating? Between teaching and therapy? These questions are not new; they were first asked right at the beginning of the 20th century. As in all things, we must not let ourselves be overwhelmed by the dizziness that accompanies lapses of memory. We all of us belong to a line of descent, and the debt we owe cannot simply be cancelled. We have a duty to understand, interpret and re-interpret Freud's views on education; to look at what doctors and educationalists who became psychoanalysts have done since the beginning of the 19th century to advance the practice of education and teaching, in which judgmental attitudes and opprobrium are almost inevitably present. For many years, that movement went under the name of "psychoanalytic pedagogy", a term that is no longer in use.

I do not intend to go into any great detail about these historical aspects, but I shall mention certain landmarks in order to shed light on our discussion of the present situation. I will not talk about child analysis, nor indeed of adult analysis as regards teachers and other educationalists... I shall discuss the standpoint of psychoanalysis -- of psychoanalysts -- outside of the actual treatment process: the attitude adopted in the social sphere with respect to a parent, teacher or child who, in one part of his or her life, is a pupil. The human sciences and the influence they exert are important too -- what contribution can psychoanalysis make to these, in what manner, with what effect and what are the potential pitfalls?

Some French-language books, published since the 1980s, have attempted to reconstruct that history. As with every reconstruction, the authors have

different interpretations of the material available to them. We can now clearly identify the main themes. The first of these books was by Catherine Millot *Freud anti-pédagogue?* (1979) [Freud: an anti-educationalist?]; then my own *Freud pédagogue? Psychoanalyse et éducation* (1982) [Freud: an educationalist? Psychoanalysis and education]; then Jeanne Moll's *La pédagogie psychanalytique* (1989) [Psychoanalytic pedagogy]; Jean-Claude Filloux's *Champ pédagogique et psychanalyse* (2000) [The field of education and psychoanalysis]; and more recently, Danielle Milhaud-Cape's *Freud et le mouvement de pédagogie psychanalytique 1908-1937* (2007) [Freud and the psychoanalytic pedagogy movement from 1908 to 1937]. There were others before that and there will be more to come -- I have just received François Marty and Florian Houssier's *Eduquer l'adolescent? Pour une pédagogie psychanalytique* (2007) [Educating adolescents? In defence of psychoanalytic pedagogy].

There is -- and there always has been -- a debate over whether it is necessary to make any connection between psychoanalysis and education. Should they not confine themselves to their own specific fields? The attempts over the past hundred years to build such a connection have at least taught us one thing: the goal of psychoanalysis is not that of transforming workers in other professions into therapists -- there should be no misunderstanding about that. All the same, arguments have in the past been made for just that, hence designations such as "peda-analyst" or "psychoanalyst-educationalist". Those pioneers who did attempt to blend these roles together were forced to admit that in the social sphere that kind of mixture was just not tenable -- it could give rise to abuse in the name of a therapy that does not declare itself as such. The temptation "to be a therapist" in professions that have quite a different job to do is again very topical, but mainly in the form of criticisms made by people who discredit psychoanalysis and consider it to be dangerous: "They want to change people into 'wild' therapists, into psychologists, even though they don't have the proper skills; far better for them not to know anything about it." Psychoanalysts, all the same, seem to have long given up any role confusion of this nature:

teachers and parents are not therapists, and, vice versa, psychoanalysts are not educationalists or teachers. But does that mean that we have to do without any input from psychoanalysis?

Some would answer yes to that question, arguing that any attempt at making a connection between the two is doomed to failure. Psychoanalysis is above all a therapeutic space and ought to stay within the boundaries of that space. Other people would say no: psychoanalysis can be of help to those whose work has nothing to do with therapy. I belong to the latter category. Helping those in other professions to become aware of what they do and of the consequences of their acts -- quite a few people have been working along these lines in recent years (Imbert, 1996, 1998, 2004). These professional workers are not therapists, but they are able to do things that make it possible for some children or pupils to overcome their difficulties, things that avoid destructiveness. That is what we have tried to do with them in university training courses, attempting to understand the emotional and relationship aspects of their everyday work. Helping those in other professions to construct the dignity of what they do, with an attitude of humility and on-going exploration, is not a distortion of that other profession.

In the social sphere, however, psychoanalysts do not have a monopoly of the means of understanding. If they want to understand what goes on -- understand *with* those who are actually doing the work, a point I would insist on -- they have, of course, to make use not only of their psychoanalytic epistemology but also of ideas and references that are sociological, philosophical, anthropological, etc. When I work with people in a school setting, for example, I cannot think only in terms of psychoanalysis and make interpretations based solely on that. Nowadays, all the same, that is a moot point amongst psychoanalysts themselves. It is also for that reason that psychoanalysts have been accused of over-psychologizing the social sphere, of bringing work-related problems down to family issues, of contributing to the idea that the individual is wholly responsible for whatever happens to him or her and, in so doing, of diminishing the impact of the political dimension (Eva Illouz 2006).

## **1. The obstacles**

I shall discuss, with respect to past and present situations, some of the issues that we cannot avoid facing up to.

### *Success or failure?*

If we evaluate the history of the encounter between psychoanalysis and education, the first question that springs to mind is that of the success or failure of the attempts that have been made. Many of those who were initially very hopeful have since backed off and written of their disappointment and even at times their pessimism. I myself -- who will shortly be putting an end to my academic career -- cannot avoid making my own assessment. This is what I have been able to gather.

One thing is certain: there can never be any overall success. Psychoanalysis has to do with helping human beings to build themselves mentally; therefore there cannot be any global success, only local ones -- with such-and-such a child, or adolescent, or class. Success cannot be generalized. To believe that overall and permanent success is a possibility is, to my way of thinking, nonsense -- and nowadays we all know that. We have had to give up that hope -- but that does not mean that there is nothing we can do. Constructing one's mental apparatus depends on historical context, situations encountered, ideologies, various influences. Pathology is always changing; fabricated by many factors, it is expressed through specific difficulties in life and in one's relationship with other people and with the surrounding world. Even if we have a positive influence on one aspect, we cannot change the rest. In addition, we are always surprised to discover that the effect of our involvement is not always beneficial, even though it seemed to be motivated by an appropriate intention.

Perhaps we should stop thinking in terms of success and failure, or effectiveness for that matter. But present circumstances force it on us: "Give us proof of your effectiveness, otherwise you will be thought of as not getting things

right". Perhaps then we should rephrase the question a little more accurately: "Are we more successful nowadays than in Freud's day? Has there been an evolution or an involution?" Each of us will have his or her own answer. In all sincerity, I could not argue that things are very much better nowadays. We come up against the same obstacles, but maybe we are now in a better position to acknowledge that we are tied to a necessary repetition without letting this fact discourage us. Any advance in knowledge invariably brings both good *and* bad things in its wake. We must endeavour to go on making progress, and agree to explore any negative fallout that occurs.

We could formulate the issue somewhat differently: "In its social influence, has psychoanalysis had any impact on prevention?" In my opinion, it is impossible to answer that question. I could say "Yes" -- but a "No" immediately arises too. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say "I don't know" or "Yes and no". If I ask myself the question, what answer could I give? I have of course -- with teachers, therapists, and educators -- tried to put words on the psychological reality of what people actually do in their work; I have spent twenty years in my university career -- in lectures, *ex cathedra*, and in seminars -- trying to share with students an attitude of understanding, questioning and challenging, to interpret the unconscious and relationship aspects of what goes on (Cifali 1994).

Could I therefore claim to have done preventive work? I don't think I have ever used the word -- one which, in this particular field, I am wary of. Yet, by encouraging people to think about what they do, by challenging their "professional self", I would say that I did not do any harm in talking to them in that way; indeed, I might have helped some of them, one day, to stop at the brink of destruction and get back in touch with life-forces at a point when death-tendencies seemed to dominate. I did not, of course, transform their professional practice in such a way that no harm would thereafter result. No, words are not able to do that, nor other measures. The struggle between the forces of life and death scoffs at protection, at "best intentions", and re-emerges elsewhere -- usually where we least expect it. I have no power to prevent things -- or, if I do prevent them happening, I know that suffering will re-emerge in

another form. There is something I *can* do, however: accompany a person in such a way that he or she can face up to the normal trials and tribulations of life without feeling painfully shut in by them.

Nowadays there are many who specialize in childhood and adolescence, yet I feel that the minimum conditions for living through one's childhood and adolescence are no better guaranteed than before: absent adults, towns with no spaces for play, fragmented time, tiredness making cowards out of people... Have we prevented violence? Sexual abuse? Neuroses? Psychoses? Are there any statistics to inform us? I have tried to understand our relation to violence: it is true that more people nowadays reject violence, but paradoxically that intolerance makes us less able to react to violent behaviour in some people so that, in the end, it actually increases. We fought against violence in education, but the respect that has since grown may in fact paralyse us: by refusing violence, we let others have omnipotence. We have made talking about things both the main way to resolve differences and a therapeutic process -- to the extent of sometimes just chatting away and equating "keeping quiet" with cowardliness. We have fought against sexual abuse, but the victims do not necessarily feel much better after it has come to light.

The only thing I can be sure about today: each generation has obstacles to face up to and has to come to terms with the fact that there is no guaranteed response -- there is always a negative side to what seems positive. Psychoanalysis, as Michel de Certeau (1987) argues, can only be altering and altered, always in movement, always making and being made, always "in" the world and being transformed by it. We are obliged to try to make things better, to transform them, without being taken in by the mere disappearance of symptoms. We must try to save and protect, but without forgetting that negative aspects are not necessarily destructive.

Is that pessimism? Yes, if we say that the realities we experience as negative -- hate, destruction, helplessness, death -- are part of what makes us human. Yes, because there is no overall solution, no recipe or *a priori* correct way of responding. No, because we are optimistic, because we encourage

people to face up to these negative aspects so that in the end they do not prevail; we try to make it clear that we all have to start over again and accompany each new generation so that it can find its proper place. I therefore make it quite clear that I am optimistic -- not as far as overall solutions are concerned but as regards the ability of human beings to fight against the inhuman aspects that lie within each of us.

Some would perhaps retort: "You have failed because education and teaching have not improved very much, because the symptoms have not disappeared!" "You have failed, and other theories are ready to take over. They will succeed where you have failed; they are more scientific, more accurate, they will make it clear what to do in the educational sphere." This is the kind of statement we hear more and more nowadays. Are our hypotheses false? As regards many of them, I would say no. Will other theories be more successful and effective in the sphere of education and teaching? I have my doubts. The advantage of psychoanalysis is that it enables us to go on thinking whenever some form of resistance emerges.

### *Collaboration*

As psychoanalysts, we have to "collaborate with...": with educators, teachers, parents and other adults who look after children. Many of those who wrote about this subject in the past placed their hopes in a collaboration of this kind -- and many went on to say how disappointed they became.

What have I learned from studying their attempts -- or rather what they have written about them? Between psychoanalysts and these other professions there was, at times, a "negative transference", in which everything that went wrong was projected on to the actions and intentions of those who did not belong to the therapeutic domain: "They are passionate, blind, violent, they go about things quite wrongly...." That way of looking at the situation has been taken up in the social sphere; nowadays it is quite common for teachers to blame parents for any inadequacies on a child's part: anything that goes wrong is always taken to be the fault of some other person.... Parents, of course, make the same mirror-

accusation against teachers -- blame-mongering that goes on and on in an endless loop.

I am not saying that psychoanalysts initiated this displacement -- on the contrary, they have often given us keys to understanding: looking for someone to blame relieves us of our own responsibility, turns us into a victim and leaves us in the kind of passive state that is hardly conducive to further development. In the fabrication of suffering, we all share responsibility -- including the person who suffers. We know too that we will not be able to work with the person on to whom we project all that is going wrong, in spite of his or her weaknesses, blunders, mistakes and even horrific aspects.

It is true to say that professions that have to do with children entail a whole series of dilemmas and generate defensive ideologies. Professional people try hard to vouch for what they do and look for the rationality behind it. They want to be fair, and thereby evacuate their own darker side; they often find it difficult to deal with the dark side of things, not in other people but in what they themselves do. They repeatedly come up against the split between what one says and what one does, they find it difficult to accept ambivalence in their attitudes and their feelings. They believe in positive values that are supposed to protect them against negative aspects, and push conflict aside in order to cathect love and altruism. They praise difference, but prefer to be with people like themselves. The tension between reason and passion almost never lets up. These professions have a hard time of it, as regards their rationality and their underlying theory. Between their role, function and relationship challenges, they sometimes lose their way; pitfalls and contradictions are inevitable.

Collaboration therefore comes down to helping to construct a dialogue out of our differences and disagreements. This implies thinking hard about the role of each person involved, the ethics of our discussion and, above all, the question of power. Collaboration is a necessity. It has, however, often been demolished by arguments over territory, taking power, rejection. In such circumstances, I have recourse to an ethical debate, to the tools that make dialogue possible, so that conflict becomes legitimate and we have some idea of how to settle it: the



acknowledgement that we all have the right to stand by our (theoretical) beliefs, together with the requirement that each of us accepts that he or she is not alone -- we have to work together, always with the idea of letting the weakest among us go on growing and developing.

On that last point, I must admit that I do feel some despair. Everything we have learned about the exercise of power, about how institutions are organized seems to have got lost, so that, in situations where collaboration is quite definitely called for, fratricidal struggles take over. We have, all the same, set up in some places a -- perhaps fragile -- network, a collaborative venture between therapists and educationalists, an alliance of thinking which respects our different roles and situations. We all know the benefits of a complementary collaboration of this nature.

Nowadays there is a fashion for "relationships", for "team-work", for solidarity. Yet we still see -- and perhaps even more so -- (symbolic) death-struggles taking place, confrontations between individuals, professions, workers. Psychoanalysis offers us the inestimable means of understanding the state of our social relationships, the sometimes indifferent juxtaposition that blights the links between us, the destructive violence that comes to the fore in the banality of everyday life.

### *A social dimension*

Psychoanalysis is not an individual psychology. Whenever we work outside the field of therapy we are reminded of that. Psychoanalysis is henceforth part of the fabric of society. If we ignore the cultural and political dimensions of our problems, we run the risk of saddling ourselves with things that in fact are not of our doing. Restoring the cultural dimension of the problems we come up against does not mean undermining the value of the work we do on the inner person, it prevents people from closing in on themselves; it does not imply a denial of what we ourselves have done to bring about a given result, it ties it back into the fabric of society.

Nowadays, we cannot ignore realities such as groups, institutions, power, authority, social ties. In our everyday work, we have to contextualize experience, replacing it within a movement, tendency or historical framework; we do this by trying to understand, with the people involved, how this experience came about, mentally and socially (Giust-Desprairies 2003). Psychoanalysis is often thought of as focusing on what goes on inside, on the individual psyche, uninterested in the social dimension. Tied to a two-person relationship, it cannot hope to contribute anything to groups or to society with its institutions and organizations. In the field of education, it should therefore confine itself to therapeutic encounters when children, their parents or those in allied professions require that kind of help. Since teachers are part of an organization and work with groups, psychoanalysis is invited, as it were, to abstain. Psychoanalysts were criticized very early on for failing to take groups and their influence into account, but there is nowadays a substantial body of evidence demonstrating how groups, settings and mediation have a structuring effect and enable some problems to be overcome, whether in the classroom, the school, an institution or a team.

Psychoanalysis fought long and hard against violence in education, against contempt, humiliation, destructive punishments. It helped our relationship with authority figures to evolve, although it very soon came to realize that the difference between a structuring form of authority and a destructive one had to be maintained. Nowadays authority is rejected by students who are training to become teachers because they associate it with violence, misuse of power, humiliation and hateful destructiveness. They find it difficult to set limits, a proper framework; we no longer know how to respect prohibitions. Yet without laws, without the symbolic dimension, all that remains is chaos. If we do not know who we are, we cannot communicate with other people.

If we can work on the ethical foundations of education, perhaps we will be able to prevent our relation to the Law (with a capital "L") from going adrift. Psychoanalysts have seen the mental damage that a tyrannical form of authority wreaks on children -- and that caused when there are no rules and no limits.

They have denounced the harmfulness of situations in which a mix-up of generations can occur -- either through incest or by making children take on a parental role. They know the importance of structuring prohibitions -- the taboo against incest, murder and lying (Marcelli 2003). And in the future? Let us hope that we do not lose sight of the reference points that humanity always seems to have to re-discover.

Questions are still being -- and will go on being -- asked about violence in education, something that has quite specifically been denounced by psychoanalysts. Some authors go as far as to say that all education contains some degree of symbolic violence -- when you pull someone out of his or her initial position, i.e. educate the person (Malherbe 2001). That kind of "violence" is not destructive, it is constructive. The dividing line between the two is a fine one, which is why we have to understand where our actions come from. Leaving the other person where he or she is, being nice through abstaining, is another kind of violence -- by omission, as it were. Refusing all confrontation leaves the other person in a state of omnipotence -- we end up feeling afraid, we no longer try to draw such people out of it, accompanying them out of a position into which they may end up being locked. Such "symbolic" violence cannot do without the dialogue it permits, a dialogue that listens and acknowledges, that does not run away because the other person is feared.

Psychoanalysis dreamed of pushing back the frontiers of violence and fear. It has not succeeded in this. But that is not the failure of psychoanalysis, the contribution of which remains invaluable for understanding the various forms of destructive violence that seem constantly to renew themselves.

## ***2. The clinical approach***

I work in a university, in the educational sciences department, with other scientists also involved in the field of teaching and education. This is a specific characteristic of the University of Geneva. Similarly, the contribution of psychoanalysis to the construction of knowledge in the human sciences has also a specific character. Freud wanted psychoanalysis to subvert the human

sciences through what he called "applied psychoanalysis". One of the major influences that psychoanalysis has had in the educational sciences, as in other fields, is due to its "clinical approach" (Cifali, Giust-Desprairies 2006).

That approach is an art of research, intervention and training that aims at changing things; it remains strictly within the limits of each specific situation. It therefore concerns the professional worker attempting to think through what he or she is doing as well as the research worker who accompanies that wish to think things through and the colleague who wants to see this situation, structure or institution evolve. In these situations we come up against factors that are time-related, in which societal, institutional and personal issues are all tangled up together; the main aim is not to build up a body of knowledge that can then be generalized but to enable the other person to get better, to have access to knowledge, to overcome a handicap, to become de-subjugated. In the presence of these different people, an involved form of understanding can develop, a co-construction of meaning that brings about change. A specific form of association between theory and practice is set up, a link between knowledge and action. If all of these elements are present, we find ourselves in a *locus* we can truly call "clinical".

I would like to say a few more words about what is at stake as regards clinical matters in the current debate about how we build up knowledge in the human sciences. I am doing this because at the present time the clinical approach is called into question and undermined, whereas to me it seems essential -- not only if we want to go on thinking about situations in which someone accompanies another, vulnerable, person in a process the general pattern of which is carefully attended to, but also if we want to train people who enjoy working with other human beings and engaging with them in a "shared feeling voyage" as Daniel Stern puts it (2003).

### *Subjectivity accepted in action and building up knowledge*

The clinical approach to the building up of knowledge involving everyday actions addressed to other human beings invites workers in the field to take their

own subjectivity into account, to refrain from denying it, and to listen to what is going on inside without their knowledge; they should not restrict themselves to rationality, but accept the tension that opposites engender and acknowledge the impact of their subjectivity in what they do. Subjectivity, involvement, commitment, transference, counter-transference... all these are signs of the subject's presence in whatever he or she is doing (Cifali 1994). Integrating and working on one's subjectivity is the basis for any attempt to reach objectivity by confronting rather than evicting subjectivities. It is the hallmark of the clinical attitude that psychoanalysis renewed. It seems to me to be all the more invaluable nowadays in the face of the "strong ego" attitude advocated by other theories or of attempts to bypass it in the name of scientific objectivity. The professional ideology that is current today argues that the absence of any feelings arising in the relationship with the other person -- which it advocates -- is a sure sign of objectivity. Indifference may even be thought of as the acme of rationality. We act without becoming involved. University training tends to strengthen the belief that it is only by evincing our subjectivity that we will be right.

This has to do also with the way in which psychoanalysis defines the subject-in-the-world -- via the tension generated by opposites: conscious / unconscious, life / death, love / hate, liberty / submission, creation / destruction, dependence / autonomy. We have always tried to keep these together and do things in such a way that people can develop their own way of thinking, face up to the shadowy side of things without rejecting it, avoid treating others as enemies to be brought down while at the same time remaining able to protect themselves. Psychoanalysis developed against dependence and alienation, making it possible for someone to think about what he or she does not understand. That is still at the cutting edge of our work.

### *Associating theory and various kinds of practice*

The way in which psychoanalysis struggled with its theoretical *corpus* with respect to its therapeutic action could perhaps bring some measure of release to

other professions that also are "unhappy" with their theorization. Psychoanalysis oscillates between intuition and theoretical terrorism. In the professional domain, the issue is a crucial one; to disregard it would be to make possible a pathology of the use of theory, as dangerous as that brought about by ignorance. Psychoanalysis has looked at the different ways in which knowledge can be put to use; it has pinpointed the stumbling-blocks and laid out a trail which is followed by those who think about what they do, each in his or her own way. A body of knowledge cannot cover everything in professional practice; it does, however, enable things to be thought about before and after. Prior knowledge is a guide, but the solution invented in the actual situation will usually be quite different from what was planned, because of the need to take into account various unexpected factors.

Accordingly, what psychoanalysts can contribute is more than the concepts with which they perceive the reality of education and teaching and interpret words and actions. It is true that psychoanalysis did at times offer concepts that allowed only univocal meaning to emerge: that kind of import had the same damaging effect as any discipline that is too focussed on itself, scaling complex reality down to its own way of seeing things. Metapsychological concepts are invaluable, as long as they are used to open up new avenues for thinking and to work on what offers resistance. Psychoanalysis can represent a meaningful challenge for those who, when they are faced with uncertainty, do not always welcome it. Deconstruction gives a breathing-space; the truths that are present are expressed, with their past history throughout the centuries; things are put into perspective without ceasing to believe in the passion for knowledge -- in this way humility in the presence of a *corpus* of related knowledge remains constant. Psychoanalytic ethics are invaluable here, compared to the rise of a scientific *logos* that sees itself as unique and complete.

### *A debt*

In psychoanalytic clinical practice, we have learned something that is really fundamental: any build-up of knowledge belongs to the person who keeps

working at it, and psychoanalysts owe a debt to their patients to give it back to them. Nowadays people are gradually dispossessed of what they know of their humanity by specialists, to the extent that they will no longer intervene without being guided by someone who is supposed to have even greater knowledge. Many workers run themselves down in their daily life as regards their ability to react like human beings, when they are faced with the knowledge that specialists have apparently accumulated.

We have managed both to increase our knowledge and to dispossess those who need it most. It is an old story, one that has been studied in many ways. This pathology of knowledge can be looked at again with the help of some ethical principles. How can we communicate what we know in such a way that it lets other people build up their own knowledge and move away from dependency without thinking that they are self-sufficient? When we train other people that is a question which cannot be ignored -- but, unfortunately, it all too often is.

I am not saying that psychoanalysts, because they are more aware of this, are immune from the kind of specialization that dispossesses other people; they do however have the means to fight against this, unlike other approaches which are more involved in an accumulative conception of knowledge. There is a certain urgency here to ensure that parents and teachers, for example, are not defrauded with respect to their function as adults.

### *Accompanying processes*

The contribution of psychoanalysis to education and teaching is often restricted to difficulties, suffering and pathology. The very word "clinical" may indeed reinforce that interpretation -- hence the reproach that this is an attempt to transform schools into hospitals, for example.

Psychoanalysis has invalidated any dichotomy between normal and pathological, arguing that the same processes are at work in both; the difference between them is more one of degree, of intensity. It does not deal with two realities foreign to each other -- on the one hand health, on the other pathology.

If psychoanalysts and clinicians working in the field of education do indeed intervene when problems and suffering are present, they uncover processes and constructions that are part and parcel of normal mental development. They can therefore be of help to anybody who is in difficulty about how to think, act and talk about what is going on in his or her life. They can help to develop understanding in the normal work of education and teaching, in training as well as in actual interventions.

In my view, it is particularly important for psychoanalysts to work with teachers and parents as they go about their everyday life, without pathologizing or exaggerating the ordinary difficulties that children come up against in their development. Here again "accompanying" is the best way to describe this, while keeping strictly to professional principles.

### **3. *The present situation***

This clinical attitude as regards treatment, teaching and education generates a *de facto* tension with scientific *habitus*; in so doing, it creates an opportunity for worthwhile debates to take place. It is fragile -- and even more so nowadays because it comes up against a scientific normality that evacuates the individual and treats affect as if it were a cognition. On an institutional level, the clinical attitude seems to be losing the ground it once occupied, that of being able to think about the inner person, about relationships with other people, through its epistemological hypotheses and its own specific ethics.

In addition, I see that many clinical perspectives have been taken up on a more social level -- I have discovered this only recently. Emotional intelligence (Goleman 1997), for example, uses the same vocabulary as we do: concern for oneself and for other people, the importance of the relationship dimension in our work. I ought perhaps to be glad, but in fact it makes me shudder -- because these dimensions are in the service of manipulating other people. The words they employ -- empathy, self-awareness, commitment to one's work, engaging with success -- are linked to other words that have to do with control, management, exploitation and rationalization of feelings. The realm of the



imaginary, of fantasy, of inner life, of engagement is cathected with the aim of being more in control of intimate responses, of obtaining from others what we want and even of ill-treating them with their consent. We can no longer overlook the fact that our clinical approach has been taken over politically, and usually for the worse. Social success becomes loss, because taking things into account in this way is turned against the individual in his or her most intimate areas, fervours and enthusiasms; if people are not lucid enough mentally to understand the trap in which they are enmeshed, over time they may well be destroyed.

This is true also of another domain. Michel de Certeau (1990) argues that psychoanalysis has reintroduced fiction into science. He was one of the first of our contemporaries to suggest that experience can be written down like a narrative. In my own lectures and research work, I went on to explore the function of these narratives in the transmission of knowledge, and I studied the implications of another form of writing in the field of science -- the result was a four-handed book (I wrote it with Alain André, a writer and leader of a writers' workshop) in 2007. I have just realized that the intensity of "story-telling" (Salmon 2007) has been used by advertizing and by politicians to colonize imagination and lure people by telling them stories to obtain their adherence. We have always known that the field in which psychoanalysis works -- and particularly the transference -- is ripe for manipulation, where the aim is not to enable the individual to think for him- or herself but to make that person dependent on someone else. At present, that danger has not been removed -- indeed it is very much with us.

The need to maintain psychoanalytic ethics thus relates to two aspects and the struggle involves two levels. On the one hand, when science tends to repress the inner, unconscious life of human beings, one of the functions of psychoanalysis is to prevent repression of that kind being completely successful. On the other, when cognitive science attempts to take over the realm of affects and relationships, arguing that our clinical approach cannot provide reliable data, psychoanalysis has to participate in that political debate in which what is really at stake is our conception of human beings. Our work up until now has been to

help people build their own lucidity with respect to their own particular past and relation to the world, so that they then become able to think and to act clearly. Affective science, as it styles itself, seems to have no difficulty in constructing people who are both controlled and controlling, with no qualms about using knowledge to alienate other people.

The space left to psychoanalysis today is very limited indeed, since it is being attacked on both sides simultaneously. It is refuted by those who want only quantifiable elements, and invalidated by those who deny it has any scientific basis for dealing with affects. Psychoanalysis is different from each of these positions because of its reference to ethics and political clarity. We cannot, however, avoid re-examining over and over again the place we have in society so as not to give any ground as regards the essential ingredients of our approach.