

Margaret Rustin is a Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist, and Adult Psychotherapist, and also an associate of the British Psychoanalytical Society.

Career and publications

Following in the footsteps of Esther Bick and Martha Harris, Rustin trained as a Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist at the Tavistock Clinic, London. Martha Harris, then head of Child Psychotherapy, had a profound influence on her and her thinking, in particular through her total commitment to the processes of learning and teaching. In 1985, Rustin took on the mantle of, effectively, the present and future training of the child psychotherapy profession as head of the child psychotherapy training. She was also a central figure in the life of the institution as a whole, and, between 1987 and 2009 assumed various significant positions including Vice Dean, Child and Family Department; Dean of Postgraduate Studies; Chair of the Professional Committee; and, from 2003-5, Executive Director. More recently, she was made an Honorary Associate of the British Psychoanalytical Society having been involved in many of its activities over the years.

Early on in her Tavistock career, Rustin took a year's leave of absence at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton (1984-5). During this time she was deeply involved in the upbringing of her own young children, and with writing. This period eventuated in the co-authorship with Michael of the marvellous *Narratives of Love and Loss: Studies in Modern Children's Fiction*, published in 1987 and now republished to include a chapter on 'The Inner World of Harry Potter'. Already clear in this book is the lasting capacity to convey the reality of children's imagination and creativity. Further shared publications of the Rustins include a work on psychoanalysis and drama, *Mirror to Nature: Drama, Psychoanalysis and Society* and most recently *Reading Klein*, a triumph of scholarship and clear thinking. Rustin has always been a prolific and generous writer, initiating and sharing with others several books that include joint editorship of and contributor to *Closely Observed Infants*, *Assessment in Child Psychotherapy*, *Work Discussion*, *Young Child Observation: A Development in the Theory and Method of Infant Observation*, *Psychotic States in Children*, and most recently, *Short-term Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*. She has always maintained a deep interest in the observational roots of child psychotherapy.

Social and political realities of children's lives

Over the years, Rustin has been an inspirational beacon in relation to her many published articles and her commitment to teaching both in the UK and all over the world. A particular aspect of this work is her capacity to think about internal and external worlds simultaneously. An outstanding example of such thinking is an influential article she wrote in 2005, 'Conceptual Analysis of Critical Moments in Victoria Climbié's Life'. Drawing on the Victoria Climbié enquiry report, the paper conveys a deep understanding of the states of mind of such persecuted children and thoughts about why the professionals involved found it so impossible to see what was happening, despite the evidence being available. As Rustin herself puts it, "Both Victoria's states of mind and those of the professionals who came into contact with her are analysed", in this paper, "in terms of defences against extreme pain." Of great significance are her comments on the importance of the right kind of training and organisational support being available for child protection and medical staff. The strength and insight of her commitment to teaching and learning spans the innermost psychological workings of the hearts and minds of the most troubled children and their families to the outermost reaches of the social and political conditions and contexts for their individual suffering.