



The Observing Relationship. Shared Perspectives from Observational Documentary Film Making and Psychoanalytic Observation.

Saturday 9th November 2019 at The Watershed, Bristol.

As part of the ACP's 70th Anniversary events the ACP and The Bridge Foundation will be hosting a one-day conference in Bristol.

At the heart of the training to become a Child Psychotherapist is the practice of infant observation – a two year systematic study/observation of the development of infants that ‘provides the observer with the opportunity to encounter primitive emotional states in the infant and his family, and in the observer’s own response to this turbulent environment’ (Rustin, M 1989). The aim is to describe the development of the relationship that develops between the infant and others including the observer, but also of the infant’s emotional states and internal world, through an understanding of the unconscious aspects of behaviour and patterns of communication.

Through the process of observation and the recording of observations meaning can be given to complex states of mind (and situations).

The analytic process of reflective observation based upon this experience in training is, of itself, considered to be a key element in transformation. It offers a model and an experience of a capacity to “observe oneself whilst being oneself” within a relationship. (Britton)

The conference would seek to examine the commonalities – and differences between the psychoanalytic process of reflective observation and the role of the documentary film maker, paying particular attention to the relationships that are formed within both our disciplines and the potential for transformation.

The conference promises to be an exciting inter-disciplinary event, with ideas shared and possibly new relationships formed as we seek to understand something more about our respective approaches to ‘The Observing Relationship’.

Speakers include Paddy Wivell, Documentary Film Maker, and Margaret Rustin, Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist.

Paddy Wivell.

Paddy Wivell is an award winning documentary film maker, and director of the highly acclaimed Channel 4 series 'Prison', documenting life in HMP Durham, and broadcast earlier this year. Other credits include "Boys and Girls" 2001, "Compulsion. The Trouble with Jonny" 2005, "Bedlam – Crisis" 2013, and "The Tribe" 2015.

In his own words -



I've been making documentaries for the BBC and Channel 4 for nearly fifteen years. The people who've taken part in my films have come from all walks of life; from Rent boys to Eton scholars, Hasidic Jews to night time cruisers, from wayward kids to rebellious pensioners, reforming addicts and notorious conmen. But they all shared something – a desire to speak and be heard, a glint in the eye and a spirit for adventure. There's always a moment after we've first met when, despite the risks, they decide to throw in their lot and choose to conspire with me to make a film together. It's a heady moment, a rush and a thrill and a little bit like falling in love. I'll always be grateful to them for it.

Margaret Rustin.

Margaret Rustin is a child, adolescent and adult psychotherapist and a child analyst at the British Psychoanalytic Society. She was head of child psychotherapy at the Tavistock Clinic from 1985 – 2009 and has taught extensively in Europe and elsewhere, most recently in China and Taiwan. Since retirement from the NHS she continues to teach and supervise and has a private clinical practice.

She has written and edited many books and papers about aspects of psychoanalytic observation, child psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, to include 1989 Rustin, M.E. (co-ed and contrib.). ***Closely Observed Infants.*** Duckworth. 2013 Rustin, M.E. (co-ed and contrib.). ***Young Child Observation: A Development in the Theory and Method of Infant Observation.*** Karnac.. And "***Observation Observed***" with Beth Miller (2003) available both on DVD and to stream.

She convenes a research workshop on Inter-generational trauma.

Further speakers and details to be announced. SAVE THE DATE!