



**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2009**

**SCIENTIFIC MEETING**

**“States of Narcissism”**

**7:00pm - 9:30pm**

**Registration and refreshments  
from 6:30pm -7:00pm**

**Connaught Hall,  
University of London  
36-45 Tavistock Square  
London WC1H 9EX**

**Fee: £30 (OPUS Associates £15)**

**NB. You can become an Associate  
when booking for this event  
OPUS Associate Membership**

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**Presenter: Michael Rustin**

**Chaired by: Kay Trainor, OPUS Associate**

Michael Rustin is Professor of Sociology at the University of East London, and a Visiting Professor at the Tavistock Clinic. He is an Honorary Affiliate Member of the British Psychoanalytical Society. He has written widely on psychoanalytic topics. He is author of *The Good Society and the Inner World* (1991), and *Reason and Unreason: Psychoanalysis, Science and Politics* (2001), and with Margaret Rustin, *Narratives of Love and Loss: Studies in Modern Children's Fiction* (1989/2001) and *Mirror to Nature: Drama Psychoanalysis and Society* (2002).

Narcissism manifests itself in identification with real or imagined social groups, which give apparent strength and support to a fragile or damaged sense of individual identity, as well as in the psychic defences of excessive individualism. Using as a starting point a paper co-written with Margaret Rustin, Professor Michael Rustin will discuss different forms of narcissism as these manifest themselves in society. He will discuss the consequences of war, terrorism and the collapse of social bonds, in generating extreme kinds of identification with groups. He will also examine the ways in which 'regimes of individualisation', which force individuals to regulate and measure their own

performance by criteria imposed on them, may lead to 'psychic retreats' (Steiner 1993) into narcissistic self-regard, and may detract from creative relationships with others. Related to this, he will look at situations where individuals and work-groups are exposed to intolerable anxiety and feelings of persecution, and are given inadequate support in responding to it. The writers propose that in these situations narcissistic defences are adopted which lead to mindlessness, and the phenomenon John Steiner has described as 'turning a blind eye.'