

From the Editor

As the following pages reflect, much has been accomplished in AAPP over the past year: a growing membership, a successful, expanded annual meeting, further development of local groups, involvement in international meetings, the publication of the first AAPP sponsored monograph, close relations with the UK group, the joint launching of *PPP*, and the joint planning of the First International Conference for Philosophy and Psychiatry to be held in early 1996 in Southern Spain.

Should a newsletter devoted to philosophy/psychiatry occupy itself with psychiatrist Peter Kramer's recent, best-selling *Listening to Prozac*? While not exactly claiming to offer a treatise on philosophy and psychiatry, the author does argue that the Prozac phenomenon has "the power to influence the way we understand human nature." Since the book raises many questions which challenge our shared interests, I will devote this column to a brief review.

I hasten to point out that the entire book is predicated on the putative character-transforming effects of Prozac. Dr. Kramer indulges himself rather effusively in hyperbolic descriptions of the drug's transformative powers ('transformation' and its cognates are used repeatedly throughout the book). He reports that he "had seen patient after patient become... 'better than well'." Now unless patients in Providence are pretty different from patients in New Haven, where I can assure you results with Prozac are more modest, this heady language better serves the purposes of journalistic dazzle than those of dispassionate discourse. Engaging the issues raised in the book, then, requires allowing a bit of poetic licence: if we had a medication that did all that Kramer claims of Prozac (and that we

UK Update

In the jargon of corporate enterprise, this has been a year of consolidation and growth for the UK Group! There has been an active programme of meetings, expansion of both local groups and international links, new initiatives in education and training, and the appearance of our joint venture with AAPP, the new journal, *PPP - Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychiatry*.

The highlight of the year was our Annual Meeting organised in Newcastle by Adel El-Sobky (a psychiatrist) and Mike Bavidge (a philosopher) on the theme of "Psychiatry, Religion and Contemporary Experience." A lively and varied programme ranged from formal philosophical and phenomenological presentations (radical theology, the nature of suffering, spiritual experience in mental health), through pastoral and clinical topics, to a modern dance interpretation of Aquinas. The breadth of the meeting was reflected in our two keynote speakers, Professor Andrew Sims (the immediate past President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists) and the Right Reverend Bishop of Durham.

We were delighted to welcome Michael Schwartz to Newcastle. His *tour de force* on "False Messiahs and Messianic Beliefs" drew together many of the themes of the conference. His talents as an impromptu after-dinner speaker were greatly admired (not least by the Bishop, who was heard to whisper "what a relief to find a bunch of psychiatrists with a sense of humour!") Michael's visit was also the occasion for us to hatch a plan with the Meetings Organiser at the Royal College, Jean Wales, for the first International Conference on Philosophy and Psychiatry, but more on that later.

Local representation has developed strongly this year. A notice in our Newsletter (which is really more of a news sheet brought out at the start of each academic term) produced many new volunteers. We now have local representatives, including philosophers and psychologists as well as psychiatrists, covering most university towns and main medical schools. There are new local groups in places as far apart as Essex, Leeds and Edinburgh, and larger regional groupings for Scotland and the North West of England.

It is particularly through local groups that our programme of meetings and workshops has been pushed forward. The North-West region organised an inaugural conference on the Concept of Mind and its Implications for Clinical Practice. The Scottish Group held their inaugural conference towards the end of the last academic year in St. Andrews and are now meeting regularly three times a year, their last conference being on Philosophical and Psychiatric Perspectives on Personality Disorders. Other meetings have included Phenomenology and Psychiatry (London), Ethics (Edinburgh), Cause and Effect in Psychiatry (Essex), Research Methods (Birmingham) and Legal Insanity (Oxford). We have also continued our programme of Autumn Research Workshops at the Royal College, last year's series including papers on social causation, personal identity, consciousness, insight and

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can all agree it at least does somewhat), what questions would it raise about character, biology, and so forth?

Kramer organizes much of his discussion around character traits rather than the usual diagnostic categories. By focusing on such traits as compulsiveness, rejection-sensitivity, social inhibition, and low self-esteem, he is able to argue that Prozac exerts its effects on personality rather than on specific pathologic conditions. However, since his notion of character or personality remains so much at the level of a collection of traits, the book suffers (from a philosophic perspective) from this thin treatment of personality. In a book

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criminality—a rich mixture!

The strength of our programme of meetings and conferences reflects the growing interest in psychiatry among philosophers in the UK. The Scottish Section holds its meetings in conjunction with the Scottish Philosophers Club and the Scottish Postgraduate Philosophy Association. Strong support has also been given by the Royal Institute of Philosophy in London. As well as generously agreeing to act as Academic Sponsors for PPP, the Royal Institute organised the whole of its winter lecture series on philosophy and psychiatry. The series is very widely publicised and brings together all the most well known philosophers in a given field. The topics in this year's series included personal identity, rationality, the mind-body problem, aesthetics and connectionism. The speakers included both up-and-coming philosophers and such established figures as Rom Harre, Kathy Wilkes, Dan Robinson (from Georgetown University) and Lord Quinton.

We are particularly grateful to Professor Phillips Griffiths (Griff) who has recently retired as Head of Department at Warwick University for organising these lectures. Griff is editing a book from the series under the title *Philosophy, Psychology and Psychiatry* (another combination of P's!).

Perhaps the most exciting development this year has been the new internationalism in philosophy and psychiatry to which both the UK and American groups have contributed. This was highlighted by the recent conference in Paris on "Philosophy and Medicine" organised by the European Society for Philosophy of Medicine and Healthcare with the support of a number of groups, including AAPP and the Royal College Group. A few years ago there was virtually no psychiatry in the equivalent conference. This year, out of a five-day conference, with no less than six parallel sessions each afternoon, somewhere between a third and a half of the topics were concerned with psychiatry or psychology. And in the bars and street cafes of Paris (where else for a new international movement!) plans were discussed for new national organisations in Japan, Scandinavia, Italy, Rumania, France and Germany.

The First International Conference for Philosophy and Psychiatry planned for early 1996 in Southern Spain, will act as a focus for all this activity. The conference office at the Royal College has agreed to handle the administration of the conference with our two established groups, and perhaps new national groups,

acting as sponsors. We hope that the conference will bring together the key people from around the world, and that from it will spring the International Association for Philosophy and Psychiatry which, through PPP, will help to give our developing discipline shape and direction.

Looking to the future, training resources for both philosophers and psychiatrists remain limited in the UK, as in the States. Derek Bolton and David Papineau repeated their popular course on "Philosophy of Science and Mental Health" at Kings College this spring. In Sheffield, the MA course "Philosophy, Science and Society" is flourishing. Indeed it has recently been recognised by the Education Science Research Council with "maximum weighting" for research training and as a priority area for further development. Within the Royal College there are moves to incorporate aspects of philosophy into psychiatric education, both for trainee psychiatrists and as an aspect of continuing professional development. So things *are* moving. But there is a real need for new Courses, new teaching materials, reading lists and so forth.

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International Activities

AAPP cooperated with the Organizing Committee of the "Informed Consent in Psychiatry: Cross-Cultural and Philosophical Issues" conference held in Benevento, Italy on May 26-28, 1994. Two Executive Council members, George Agich and Bill Fulford, served on the International Scientific Committee, and both gave presentations at the meeting. George Agich presented a paper entitled, "Consent Conundrums in Psychiatry: A Philosophical Appraisal" and Bill Fulford provided the concluding lecture summarizing the conference high points.

AAPP also cooperated with the Royal College of Psychiatrists Philosophy Group to organize sessions at the First World Congress on Philosophy and Medicine in Paris, France, May 30-June 4, 1994. The Paris meeting had over 500 attendees from 37 nations with 234 presentations. Despite its size and complexity, the Congress managed to maintain an air of congeniality. Three parallel sessions were organized with the following titles: "Consent in Children: Case Law and Practice," "Philosophy and Psychoanalysis:

Contrast and convergence," and "Personal Identity and Psychopathology." Coupled with other sessions dealing with philosophical aspects of psychoanalysis and psychiatry, the philosophy of psychiatry had a pronounced presence at this important international meeting.

Efforts are underway to assure that AAPP members have advance information on such meetings and opportunity to submit abstracts or papers for presentation. Further information on either the Benevento or Paris meeting can be had by contacting George Agich.

George J. Agich, Ph.D.

Local Groups

Consistent with AAPP's goal of fostering interdisciplinary research in philosophy and psychiatry, the Executive Council has welcomed and encouraged the development of local groups. Queries about local groups often betray assumptions about AAPP's policy and procedures regarding local groups, for example, that local groups have some formal relationship with AAPP and must be organized in accordance with AAPP guidelines. Neither of these assumptions is true. While AAPP has encouraged the development of local groups, the local groups that now exist are the result of local and individual initiative and conception. Programs conducted by these groups and the papers presented and discussed vary considerably from one group to the next. This is in keeping with the diversity of interests that are arrayed under the conjunction of philosophy and psychiatry. The groups that currently exist: Cleveland, New Haven, Seattle, and Washington represent the interests and willingness of local organizers to tie their activities into a wider framework. The Executive Council believes that one impediment to the field is the lack of a professional identity.

AAPP was established to promote and develop the field. AAPP's sponsorship of the journal, *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology*, and its annual meeting program and other conference activities have been directed toward this end. Local groups continue this work in a different direction, one that will ultimately prove or disprove the AAPP's founding purpose, namely, to promote cross-disciplinary research in philosophical aspects of psychiatry. The Newsletter included discussion of the activities of lo-