

## From the Editor

I would like to use this column to call our readers' attention to a recent article, "The Philosophy of Psychiatry: Who Needs It?" published in the February issue of *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* and written by our colleagues, Edwin Wallace, Jennifer Radden, and John Sadler. The article serves to remind the larger psychiatric audience of the critical ongoing need for a philosophy of psychiatry as well as of the response to this need by AAPP, the UK group, and PPP. Appropriately, the authors invoke our predecessor and patron saint, Karl Jaspers, for their epigraph. In a statement that could serve as our permanent clarion call, and which I cannot resist citing in full, they quote Jaspers as follows:

Many a psychiatrist has said that he did not want to burden himself with a philosophy and that this science had nothing to do with philosophy. But the exclusion of philosophy would nevertheless be disastrous for psychiatry: firstly, if we are not clearly conscious of our philosophy we shall mix it up with our scientific thinking quite unawares and bring about a scientific and philosophic confusion. secondly, since in psychopathology in particular the scientific knowledge is not all of one kind, we have to distinguish the different modes of knowing and clarify our methods, the meaning and validity of our statements and the criteria of tests—and all this calls for philosophic logic...To sum up: If anyone thinks he can exclude philosophy and leave it aside as useless, he will be eventually defeated by it in some obscure form or another.

Beginning with the Jaspersian point that everyone has a world-view or implicit philosophy and that one is better off being aware of it than not, the authors then offer a broad overview of the issues in contemporary psychiatry that cry out for philosophic reflection. They begin with a review of efforts to define "health" and "mental health." Not surprisingly, they find most of the suggested definitions colored by unac-

## President's Column

### Whither AAPP?

As I relinquish this Column along with the office of President, I feel empowered to offer my views on the future of AAPP, hence the question, "Whither AAPP?"

To know where AAPP might go, it is useful to consider where it has been. AAPP began with a commitment to a singular goal: to promote critical discussion at the interface of philosophy and psychiatry. Its goal was to introduce philosophical reasoning into psychiatry training programs and to bring the clinical phenomena and insights of psychiatric practice to the academic work of philosophers. We have never wavered from that goal.

To come anywhere near achieving the goal, AAPP has worked to promote the field and to establish venues for work in philosophy and psychiatry. It supports PPP, the first academic journal in the field, this *Newsletter*, the annual, regional, and local group meetings as well as sponsored sessions at the meetings of other professional societies, e.g., American Philosophical Association, and international meetings. These are and will continue to be ways that AAPP promotes the field. The Jaspers Prize, too, was designed with this goal in mind. It is no wonder that the work of younger philosophers and psychiatrists, including residents and graduate students, have been commonplace at our annual meetings for a number of years now. We have encouraged their participation or at least have tried to remove barriers to their participation.

These successes, however, raises the question with which I began, namely, where is AAPP headed? With each new endeavor, we have come to question our commitments. In no particular order I offer the following as my advice as I relinquish the presidency of AAPP.

First, AAPP is a professional and academic organization. It does not claim to represent the official position of anyone on matters in philosophy and psychiatry. Indeed, it is almost absurd to think that it could. Give its limited resources, AAPP cannot throw its weight behind projects, because it is not very weighty. It lends what limited support it can to projects in the field—and heretofore has effectively leveraged its limited resources—but its lack of financial resources is well compensated by the dynamism of its membership. The organization should not try to grow for growth's sake, but because growth serves its primary purpose.

Second, the *Newsletter* has reported the establishment of "local groups" in the Soviet Union, Italy, France, and elsewhere. These reports has raised the question whether AAPP has now become an international organization and some have insisted on regarding AAPP as the *American Association for Philosophy and Psychiatry*. At this point in the development of the field, AAPP would do well to ignore these questions and should resist any efforts to Balkanize the field. AAPP is simply a professional organization. As the field grows and develops, individuals should be added, as some already have to membership on the Executive Council to reflect the diverse interests and needs of our membership. AAPP is not a representative body and has not tried to be such. In fact, it would be far more

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knowledge assumptions. Writing of Jahoda's six indices of mental health, they state: "However useful they may be, these criteria can hardly claim to be purely natural or scientifically derived; they are clearly a function of time- and place-bound cultural contexts as well as of presupposition-laden psychological orientations." They then develop this point by reviewing an array of cross-cultural data: both the variety of conceptions of health and mental health in different cultures, and the varied presentation of psychiatric syndromes in other cultural settings. "There is both historical and cross-cultural evidence that, to the limited degree that we can compare present-day syndromal concepts with past ones, some

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interesting, though potentially more destructive, to decide representation in AAPP based not on location, but on intellectual affiliation. Thus, we could have phenomenological, hermeneutical, existential, analytic, psychoanalytic, computational, cognitive science, neuroscience, and so "divisions." That, however, is the conceit of the splitters, whereas AAPP was conceived by a group of individuals intent on lumping together those few special people who focused their work at the intersection of philosophy and psychiatry. Not until the field matures should we worry about such matters. Whenever circumstances promote the thought of division in the near future at least, AAPP would do well to remember its origin and to avoid these political distractions. AAPP, however, does need to involve energetic and hard working individuals. In fact, if this organization has failed on any single point, it is in not enlarging the circle sufficiently wide to make room for new ideas and creative energy. The Executive Council needs to better cultivate the involvement of the membership in its various projects. AAPP would do well to develop into a member driven organization.

Third, I would like to see regional meetings grow in importance, because they have the greatest potential to promote the field and to cultivate the interests of students. AAPP's involvement at other professional meetings nicely augments this commitment, but national meetings tend to be gatherings of professors, not students.

Fourth, despite what I said about the importance of its membership, AAPP does need resources if it is to succeed in developing this field. AAPP has been successful at developing resources for particular projects, not for augmenting the coffers of the organization. If the organization can continue to tap the energy of its members, then resources can be found to accomplish particular projects. In this, I confess being an Aristotelian rather than a Platonists. Resources are worth pursuing if we can identify legitimate projects worth our effort.

What are we to make of the present state of this organization and its future course? My answer is that we need to be careful not to make too much nor too little. Too much would involve insisting that AAPP is or is not a national or international organization, that AAPP is or is not most closely tied to psychiatrists or philosophers, that AAPP is or is not more sympathetic towards linguistic, phenomenological, or hermeneutic approaches. The organization would do well

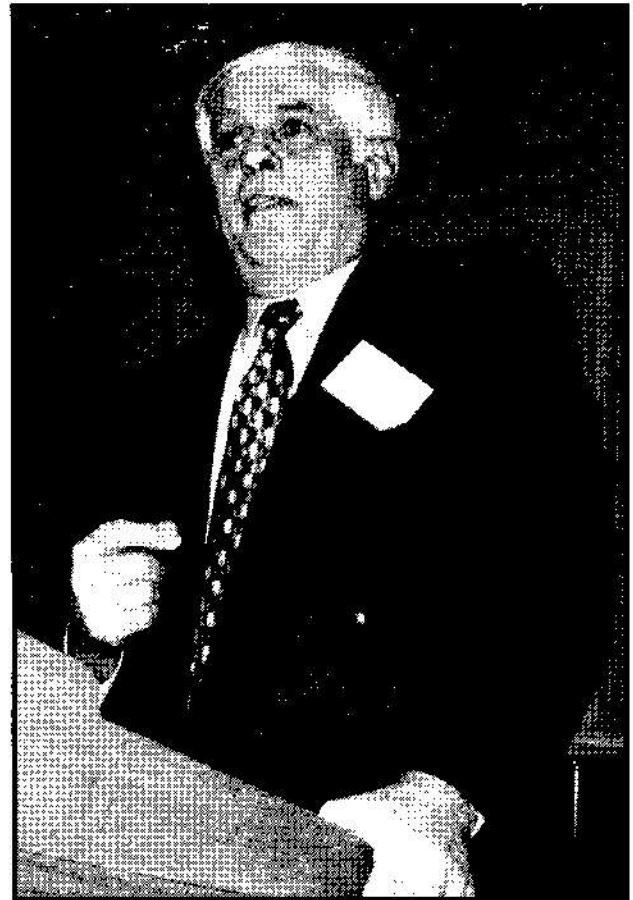
to resist the tendency to divide and, rather, should continue to reach out to bring individuals not otherwise associated with this organization into our fold. AAPP should do so less as a way to augment membership, though that does serve our attentions as well, than to continue its eclectic and inclusionary commitment. In this regard, I am far more comfortable to be characterized as a lumpner than a splitter. The dynamic tension between the various approaches, disciplinary orientations, interests, and styles prevalent at our meetings, seem to be exactly what is right with this organization. To attempt to introduce clarity and rigor into these matters would be foolish indeed.

Thus, my future vision of AAPP is a vision of a dynamic organization whose goal of establishing and promoting a field of inquiry consumes its energy. Whether the AAPP as an entity thrives, much less survives, in the future is less important than the contribution that its members make to the intellectual work of philosophers and psychiatrists along a wide range of common interests and concerns. We need to recognize that we are all different and that we are better for it.

Finally, it would be apt to recall that advice freely given is sometimes worth what one pays for it. Perhaps that is true in this case as well, but only the future will tell and I can only hope that we are all in it together in the future to discuss and, perhaps, to disagree about these matters in the same spirit that animates AAPP today.

George Agich, Ph.D.

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**Keynote Speaker Amadeo Giorgi at AAPP Regional Meeting in January**

*Imagination and its Pathologies*  
**AAPP Regional Conference**  
**Saint Joseph College**  
**West Hartford, CT**

*Report*

In January the Association's local Connecticut Chapter (the Society for Phenomenology and Psychiatry) hosted a three-day regional meeting under the theme "Imagination and its Pathologies" at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford, Connecticut. The conference was well attended. Roughly 70-80 colleagues from various disciplines and professions braved the harsh New England Winter weather to participate in the event. The conference was noteworthy for its conviviality and good spirit. Invited speakers were Amadeo Giorgi, Richard Kearney, Ethel Person, and Martin Dillon. Giorgi spoke on the utility of phenomenological methodology in understanding the meaning of hallucinations, Person presented her