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The Future Is Political and Transdisciplinary

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THE FUTURE IS POLITICAL AND TRANSDISCIPLINARY

AWAIS AFTAB

PPP

PHILOSOPHY, *PSYCHIATRY*, & *PSYCHOLOGY* (PPP) is a transdisciplinary oasis, one of the few journals in mental health care that facilitate a meaningful dialogue between philosophers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and scholars from related disciplines. The fact that PPP successfully provides such a space is of no small importance, especially from my perspective as a psychiatrist. The multidisciplinary nature of the undertaking has been a central aspect of the identity of the journal from the very beginning. PPP has maintained this transdisciplinary inclusive spirit over the years, and its editorial and advisory boards remain richly representative, but the challenge of ensuring continued participation of clinicians is not insubstantial. After all, the point is not token participation, but a robust and transformative interdisciplinary engagement. Clinicians have much to contribute to philosophical debates, however, such capacity for dialogue requires sustained cultivation (Aftab & Waterman, 2021), and forces in medical education have led to a situation where comparatively fewer psychiatrists have the interest or the ability to engage in such rigorous dialogue with philosophers. Philosophy of mental health has grown and specialized exponentially since the mid-90s. Keeping up with this literature is difficult even for philosophers, it is no small feat for full-time clinicians.

This means that PPP and its affiliate organizations have a responsibility to take a more active role in supporting educational initiatives to ensure that future generations of psychiatric clinicians are able to contribute to philosophical debates, and that philosophy of psychiatry does not become divorced from clinical and practical concerns. My advice to clinicians based on my experience would be two-fold: first, it is essential to acquire a basic familiarity with the philosophy of psychiatry literature. Aftab and Waterman (2021) offer a sample list of reading recommendations. At the time of this writing, the International Network for Philosophy and Psychiatry is also undertaking efforts to develop curricula aimed at clinicians. Second, it is important to find ways to interact with others in the philosophy of psychiatry community. Formal avenues to do so include the annual meetings of the Association for the Advancement of Philosophy and Psychiatry and the Philosophy Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, among others. There are also various online communities active on social media that many find helpful.

In recent years, we have seen an unprecedented enthusiasm and support for inclusion of lived experience in mental health care. This is a welcome and much needed development, but we are only just beginning to scratch the surface of

how to philosophically navigate this inclusion. Frameworks such as standpoint epistemology and epistemic justice offer us starting points (Knox, 2022), but much remains to be worked out (Aftab, 2022). There are notable philosophical challenges, such as ascertaining the limits of lived experience, and the biases and errors to which it is vulnerable; the application of scientific method and philosophical criticism to lived experience; methods to resolve disagreements when different forms of lived experience contradict each other; handling discrepancies between knowledge from lived experience and knowledge from other sources be handled; and analyzing the intersection of politics of lived experience with other differentials of power. I anticipate that these topics will be of central importance to the field and to the journal in the coming years.

It is also vital that philosophy of psychiatry engage with the sociopolitical dimensions of madness (Kalathil & Jones, 2016). The failure of philosophy to do so in a meaningful way has already been articulated powerfully by commentators such as Nev Jones (2022). An important aspect of acknowledging philosophy's failures in this regard comes from the notion of "elite capture," recently popularized by Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò (2022). It refers to how progressive philosophical ideas such as standpoint epistemology are co-opted by the "elite" to serve their own ends. Discussions on social media have already begun to point out that concepts in philosophy of psychiatry such as "epistemic injustice" show signs of elite capture

by the psychiatric establishment, resulting in token participation but no systemic changes. Philosophy of psychiatry needs to tackle its own vulnerability to co-option. This will require creative forms of philosophizing and engagement with real-world activism in ways that have been lacking in philosophy of psychiatry so far. It is my hope that PPP can provide a venue for such philosophical developments to take place.

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