Human life is temporal, and so are all mental phenomena. They are not a series of single notes, but they form a continuous melody. Memory is the peculiar faculty that bestows this inner coherence on all our experiences. Thus our life becomes a story remembered and told, a “history” or Lebensgeschichte. Mental illness, though often breaking into the continuity of life, cannot be considered separate from this history; it is essentially a temporal as well as a narrative phenomenon.

This has been the Leitmotiv for the 7th International Conference on Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology, with the main theme “Time, Memory and History”. Nearly 300 psychiatrists, psychologists and philosophers from all over the world attended the conference, discussing topics such as philosophical concepts of time, temporality and the self, psychological and psychopathological approaches to memory and its disorders, the temporal and biographical dimensions of mental illness as well as the history of psychiatry as a discipline.

Main lectures were given on a variety of subjects by renowned speakers; these and other papers will be made available on this website in the course of the next days. Three lectures should be mentioned especially:

(1) The opening lecture by Prof. Rom Harré, Oxford, on “Selves as dynamic entities – continuity and temporality” contrasted two temporal frames for the self, a personal and a social, the former derived from a “flow of psychic energy”, the latter from a “flow of intentional symbols”, frames that may or may not be in synchrony. These frames were further related to the concepts of identity and personhood.
(2) The lecture by Prof. Juan Mezzich, president-elect of the World Psychiatric Association, on “The complexity of health and the validity of diagnosis” opened up the perspective of new international classificatory attempts (especially in ICD-11) towards an extended view of mental illness, taking into account both ill and positive health aspects, the narrative dimension of diagnostic descriptions as well as the familiar and social context of an illness. These attempts would be supported by a growing dialogue of empirical and philosophically based approaches towards classification.

(3) The closing lecture by Prof. Bin Kimura, Kyoto, entitled “On Future”, developed a dual structure of human future, the one derived from the level of the mortal individual living, the other from the level of the enduring intersubjective community. Schizophrenic patients are forced to anticipate this latter kind of future as threatening, thus being unable to share the common direction of human life.

More than 30 parallel symposia and workshops addressed various issues such as time experience in emotion and mental illness, the self in phenomenological and neurobiological perspective, memory and identity, creativity in mental disorders, the subjective dimension of schizophrenia, dementia and Borderline Personality Disorder, as well as the theory, ethics and history of psychiatry.

The conference finally promoted the establishment of an Internet Platform for the growing International Network for Philosophy and Psychiatry (INPP) in order to alleviate the continuous exchange of all participants, researchers and clinicians.  
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Conference President
Announcement

THE 8TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PHILOSOPHY, PSYCHIATRY, AND PSYCHOLOGY

September 2005
New Haven, Connecticut, USA

New Philosophies for Community Psychiatry:
Recovery-Oriented, Evidence-Based, and Beyond

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