

The journal *Psyche* – *Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse und ihre Anwendungen*: A historical overview

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Abstract

The author presents a historical overview of the evolution of the German journal *Psyche*, starting from its foundation by Alexander Mitscherlich, Felix Schottlaender, and Hans Kunz in 1946. After the gradual reorientation of *Psyche* in the direction of being a purely psychoanalytic journal, Mitscherlich became its sole editor in 1969. In the 1980s, *Psyche* played a central role in the discussion and working-through of the German analysts' involvement in the National Socialist Regime. In 1997, Werner Bohleber followed Margarete Mitscherlich as editor-in-chief. *Psyche*, the only monthly psychoanalytic journal in the world, keeps not only documenting, but also shaping the main developments taking place in our field, on both a national and an international level. As far as the last 20 years are concerned, the journal has also played a central role in the debate conducted in and outside Germany in terms of empirical research in psychoanalysis and the dialogue with the neurosciences.

Key words: *Psyche*, psychoanalytic journals, German psychoanalysis, National Socialist Regime, empirical research, neurosciences

The return to the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud in Germany after 1945 was a long process of intellectual renewal and institutional reorganization in which the journal *Psyche* played an important role. To acquire a more detailed understanding of this process first requires a brief sketch of the intellectual world in which German analysts moved in the period between 1945 and the mid 1950s (described further in Bohleber, 2010, 2011).

The newly founded psychotherapeutic institutes in Berlin, Munich, and Stuttgart began their activity by pursuing the same program as the German Institute for Psychological Research and Psychotherapy, namely, grouping together the various schools of depth psychology under what was called “synoptic psychotherapy.” After the constraints instituted by the National Socialist Regime leading to such an amalgamation were no longer in force, it became evident that in the years following the persecution of Jewish colleagues – a period during which German psychoanalysis was cut off from international developments – a clinical and theoretical reorientation had also been underway.

The period in question witnessed a reassessment of the values inherent in German idealist thought and, even more so, those originating in the Romantic tradition. Moreover, after 1945, philosophical anthropology was to enter the arena and become an important philosophical current within Germany.

Philosophical anthropology moved away from metaphysics and the philosophy of history, and turned towards the life world of the human being in an attempt to understand it through its position in nature. Results in biological, medical, psychological, and cultural scientific research were taken up in philosophical thought, albeit without recourse to the scientific objectification of human nature. Many Freudian psychoanalysts found themselves concurring with the Romantic understanding of the unconscious as signifying the foundation of the self, whereby the superego was conceived as an instance of conscience (*Gewissensinstanz*) cautioning the human being not to neglect the self.

By way of an example, I would like to cite three psychoanalysts who were to achieve positions of influence after 1945. Carl Müller-Braunschweig sought to revitalize the work of Freud in Germany, and above all those aspects classified by others as obsolete and belonging to the past. This effort was primarily directed against the so-called “neo-analysis” of Harald Schultz-Hencke. Müller-Braunschweig represented Sigmund Freud's classic psychoanalytic conception, but went on to supplement it by way of his anthropology of the human being as a self-consciously (*geistig*) committed entity.

In West Germany, Felix Schottlaender (cf. also Bley, 2010) was the sole International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA) analyst after 1945, being

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a protagonist of synoptic psychotherapy and co-founder of the Institute for Psychotherapy in Stuttgart. He elaborated his own conception of psychoanalysis, which he linked to existential philosophy and *Daseinsanalyse*. He managed to overcome the antitheses in the psychotherapeutic schools by means of the “personalistic psychotherapy” developed by Ludwig Binswanger.

During the war, Alexander Mitscherlich was a medical assistant at Viktor von Weizsäcker’s Department of Internal Medicine at Heidelberg University. Psychotherapeutically, Mitscherlich was an autodidact (for more detail on Mitscherlich’s psychoanalytical development, see Bohleber (2009); see also Dehli, 2007; Freimüller, 2007; Hoyer, 2008). After 1945, he advocated the program of synoptic psychotherapy. His efforts at the time centered on formulating a psychotherapeutic anthropology. Like C.G. Jung, he drew a distinction between the ego and the self. What Mitscherlich valued so highly in Freud was that he had recognized the full significance of the phenomenon of transference and had made it the focal point of analytic methodology.

Each in their own way, Müller-Braunschweig, Schottlaender, and Mitscherlich paradigmatically combined Freudian psychoanalysis with an anthropologically oriented depth psychology and an appreciation of C.G. Jung’s analytical psychology. This psychoanalytic-anthropo-therapeutic thought in the context of a depth psychology points towards the direction in which psychoanalysis had developed in Germany after its links with international psychoanalysis had been severed. It had evolved in such a way that it had substantially shifted away from the direction taken by the Vienna–Berlin psychoanalysis prior to 1933, and that was now centered in London and New York. It cannot be claimed that the entire development had simply led down a *cul-de-sac*, since there had indeed been several productive advances that were to be found in modern intersubjective psychoanalytic development only decades later.

Mitscherlich and Schottlaender discussed together a project to establish a psychotherapeutic journal. The task they set themselves was to continue the “enriching encounter with the various schools of depth psychology,” and to further develop an independent psychotherapeutic anthropology. The publishing organ of this new direction was served by the journal *Psyche*, which Mitscherlich launched at the Ernst Klett Verlag in 1946, in collaboration with Felix Schottlaender and the Swiss anthropologist Hans Kunz.

All schools of depth psychology should have been involved in this journal project, and the journal was to be both interdisciplinary and international. This is why its subtitle was “*Eine Zeitschrift für*

Tiefenpsychologie und Menschenkunde in Forschung und Praxis” [Journal for Depth Psychology and the Knowledge of Human Beings in the Fields of Research and Practice]. Only gradually was it to develop into a journal of psychoanalysis.

The acceptance of the German Psychoanalytical Association (GPA) as a component society of IPA at the IPA’s Amsterdam Congress in 1951 forged connections at an institutional level. Besides the Berlin Institute of Psychoanalysis founded by Carl Müller-Braunschweig and some other psychoanalysts, the Department of Psychosomatics founded by Alexander Mitscherlich in 1950 at the University of Heidelberg evolved as a second centre of re-encounter and new orientation in German psychoanalysis. As one of the few men of his generation left untainted by any affiliations with National Socialism, Mitscherlich began to gain the trust of many emigrant psychoanalysts with whom he had established contact, and he later managed to persuade them to return to Germany to hold lectures and seminars. Some of these colleagues entrusted him with the publication of their work in *Psyche*.

In 1951, Mitscherlich went on a four-month visit to the USA. There, he made the acquaintance of many important psychoanalysts and was exposed to new impressions of training and clinical work. He considered ego psychology to be an integral and important development, although he remained critical of the form it was taking in America. He acknowledged the value of “strict analysis” and its training and practice. On his return to Europe, Mitscherlich became more and more an advocate of Freudian psychoanalysis and started working on his own version of ego psychology. He conceptualized a strengthened ego capable of critically withstanding social conformity and infantile neurotic channelling of the sexual and the aggressive drives. It was in this context that the connection between psychoanalysis and critical social psychology began to take shape, which he then later went on to develop throughout the 1960s and 70s.

In the years that followed, Mitscherlich stepped up the number of papers by authors of American ego psychology that he published in *Psyche*, but he also published in it articles coming from other psychoanalytical orientations within Europe, their authors including Michael Balint, Kurt Eissler, Erik Erikson, Heinz Hartmann, Melanie Klein, Jeanne Lampl-de Groot, René Spitz, Helm Stierlin, and Paul Parin.

In the course of this development, Mitscherlich became increasingly estranged from Schottlaender, who, by contrast, proceeded in a direction away from ego psychology and towards *Daseinsanalyse*. In 1955, relations between Mitscherlich and Schottlaender soured. Schottlaender consequently relinquished

both his function as a training analyst for the department of psychosomatics and his editorial post at the journal *Psyche*. Mitscherlich was able to get the Jungian Wolfgang Hochheimer to become the second editor of the journal. But the orientation of the journal kept being one of openness to all currents of depth psychology. What changed was that Mitscherlich himself developed more and more in the direction of an “orthodox Freudian,” as he called himself. In 1956, he had become a member of the GPA.

After the foundation of the Sigmund Freud Institute in Frankfurt in 1960, Mitscherlich gradually developed it into a large and important psychoanalytic training and research center. His new professional identity was also reflected in the scientific orientation of the journal. Mitscherlich published more and more purely psychoanalytical papers in *Psyche*. Also the many clinical, theoretical, and social-psychological papers that were being produced at the Sigmund Freud Institute were published almost exclusively in *Psyche*. In 1966, 20 years after its foundation, the journal changed its subtitle into *Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse und ihre Anwendungen* [Journal for Psychoanalysis and its Applications]. Through such a change, the range and target of the journal became more precise in terms of “psychoanalysis in its original meaning,” in other words, as “that particular current going back to the complete work of Sigmund Freud.”

All Jungians except for the editor Hochheimer and all psychotherapists committed to other orientations left the editorial board and were substituted by German and foreign psychoanalysts. Hochheimer left his post of editor in 1969 and, at this point, Mitscherlich became the only editor of the journal. Thus, *Psyche* eventually became the journal whose main task was the promotion of psychoanalysis in the German-speaking world. At that time, the journal published more and more papers representing new developments in psychoanalysis, particularly from the Anglo-Saxon countries.

Psyche also benefited from the great expansion of psychoanalysis that took place in Germany in the 1960s, and this meant an enormous growth in the number of subscriptions. From a subscription level of about 1500 in 1967, this grew to 4400 in 1977 and to as many as 7000 in the 1980s. This allowed the journal to reach out well beyond the professional psychoanalytic circle and to circulate widely in the academic public interested in psychoanalysis. In connection with the creative encounter between German psychoanalysis and the critical theory of Adorno and Horkheimer, further developed as it was by Habermas and other social scientists, the journal published more and more papers on topics of psychoanalytic social psychology and social critique.

In the 1980s, the involvement of German analysts in the National Socialist Regime eventually became a topic of discussion inside the German psychoanalytic community, and such a discussion brought about a lasting change in our attitude toward the past and ourselves. The journal *Psyche* was the place in which such a debate took place. In November 1982 and December 1983, the journal published monographic issues on the topic “Psychoanalysis under Hitler.” The 1983 issue also contained a reprint of a paper by Carl Müller-Braunschweig under the title “*Psychoanalyse und nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung*” [Psychoanalysis and the national-socialist world view], which he had published in 1933 in a national socialist journal. This is how the involvement of the founding father of the German Psychoanalytical Association in the National Socialist Regime became evident and how he suddenly ceased to be idealized. For some colleagues, such a de-idealization was very hard to digest. A heated discussion ensued, with angry attacks against *Psyche* and its editorial board. In the following years, through the publication of further papers on this topic, the journal kept alive the discussion on the psychological consequences of the country’s national socialist past in terms of its active and passive actors and in terms of its victims. Indeed, this topic became one of its main themes.

In 1982, shortly before the death of Alexander Mitscherlich, Margarete Mitscherlich, Helmut Dahmer, and Lutz Rosenkötter became the editors of the journal. In the following years, the national and international psychoanalytic landscape became more and more diversified. In Germany, Kleinian psychoanalysis started to become popular, and the inter-subjective version of psychoanalysis started its rise at the international level. The pluralism of analytic schools and theories had become one of the main discussion topics of the analytic community. Infant research and attachment theory went through a lively development and became the subject of an increasing interest on the part of the analytic community.

These changes were of course also reflected in the publication politics of *Psyche*. The size of the editorial board grew, with the advantage that emerging scientific and professional topics could be better represented on it. But this also created conflicts about the general orientation of the journal and the planning of its future. Such conflicts had always accompanied the life of *Psyche*, with consequent changes in the composition of the editorial board. At the beginning of the 1990s, it became clear to Margarete Mitscherlich and a section of the editorial board that the journal could not close itself to a whole series of new analytic developments and that it had to openly discuss them, with the risk – by not doing it – of entering a one-way street. These

discussions have been accompanied by conflicts over issues of staff. As consequence of this crisis, the editorial board broke up. With help from the publisher Klett-Cotta, *Psyche* underwent a process of restructuration. Margarete Mitscherlich became the editor-in-chief, and new positions of co-editors were created. Mitscherlich played her role till her 80th birthday in 1997. Since 1997, Werner Bohleber has been the editor-in-chief of the journal, working with a group of co-editors.

Starting in the 1990s, psychoanalysis as a treatment method and as a profession came under increasing pressure for legitimation. Through its involvement in the German public health system, psychoanalysis came under greater pressure in terms of necessary empirical proof of the efficiency of psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Another form of pressure was represented by the attempt of concurrent psychotherapeutic approaches to conquer its share of the "health market" and by the need to argue with them publicly. In such a way, the debate about the role and value of empirical research started to occupy a growing space inside *Psyche*. With the advent and growth of the neurosciences, a new fruitful, but also controversial, dialogue started, a dialogue centered on memory, remembrance, and unconscious psychic processes, a dialogue which we as a journal did our best to promote.

In the meantime, the criteria for the scientific status of journals also changed. Since 2006, *Psyche* has introduced an anonymous peer review system to evaluate submitted papers. The journal is indexed in the Social Sciences Citation Index, this determining the so-called impact factor of the journal.

The subtitle "Journal for Psychoanalysis and its Applications" still defines the general publishing policy of *Psyche*. The journal wants to present to its readers the state of the art of psychoanalysis, its research work, and its theoretical development, methodology and treatment techniques. In addition, *Psyche* is and remains a forum that gives space to all attempts to evaluate and interpret cultural, social, and political developments through the concepts of psychoanalysis. To such a range of contributions also belong interpretations of works of art, literature, music, and film, as well as the analytic discussion of themes of contemporary history (included the history of psychoanalysis), social politics (migration), sociology, ethnology, and gender studies.

Psyche is the only monthly psychoanalytic journal – not only in Germany, but also in the international community at large. It is not an exaggeration to say

that, in its more than 65 years of history, *Psyche* has reflected and given a unique picture of German psychoanalysis since World War II. The journal has not only documented for the German-speaking world central aspects of the development of psychoanalytic theory and practice, but has also contributed to it.

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