

A New Concept of Psyche

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Brief preliminary remarks ¹

Motto: "We should question the mother in her home, the children on the street and the common man at the market, and then watch their mouths to see how they talk ..."
(Martin Luther) - to find out what concerns them.

I think psychology today is in crisis because it defines itself too one-sidedly as a science. This neglects scientifically elusive topics. This includes not only a number of everyday problems, but in particular the big human issues.

With my concept, I want to open up another perspective on understanding the psyche - from a purely scientific, to view that is more lifelike. Following Luther's motto, I see language as the most suitable instrument for this. It makes statements about how people experience themselves and the world - with corresponding differentiations and importances.

I look at psychology from the perspective of a metapsychology which

1. Offers - like language - the greatest possible '**differentiations**' of the psyche and
2. Takes into account their most important '**dimensions**'. (Rank and importance).²

On 1. The **Differentiation**

"Language is yet more than blood."
Franz Rosenzweig

The differentiation is based on the formation of analogies between patterns of language and patterns of that, which is psychically relevant, including the psyche itself. ³

Substantiation

Psyche itself can only be determined indirectly. One can draw conclusions about the psyche from people's behavior and dreams, from culture, from history of humankind and many other sources - but especially from language. No other instrument gives us as much information about everything psychically relevant as language. Language appears to be the best method to capture, describe, order according to its meaning and reflect on everything that is important for people in relation to the world, their fellow human beings and themselves.

¹ a) Due to the shortness of this article only keyword-like. Detailed in chapters 'Metapsychology' and 'Psychology' in <https://new-psychiatry.com/metapsychology-and-psychology/>.

b) I first published the first version in Academia letters in 8/2021, <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL3270>.

² In this way, psychologically relevant phenomena are differentiated "horizontally" - analogous to pattern of language - , and represented vertically by "dimensions" according to their importance.

³ 'Psychically relevant' means everything that has importance for people. 'Psyche' means the personal psychical relevant.

What does that mean in relation to psyche?

The psyche can only be determined indirectly. One can draw conclusions about the psyche from people's behavior and dreams, from culture, from history of humankind, many other sources - but especially from language.

I start from analogies between language and psyche.⁴ A person's psyche includes everything that concerns the person, and everything that concerns them, in turn, finds the most important and differentiated expression in language. For this reason, it makes sense to derive structures of psyche from structures of language.⁵

In analogy to the grammar of language, one could speak of a "grammar of the psyche".

- Just as language differentiates our existence, I differentiate the psyche. Therefore, I assume that basic characteristics of the language in relation to its structure, dynamics, and quality statements are similarly found in the psyche.
- In other words, Psyche shows similar characteristics to language in terms of its structure, dynamics, and meaning contents.⁶

Implementation

First, I derive basic patterns of the psychical relevant as well as the psyche from basic patterns of language.

As a simple basic pattern of a (developed) language, one can use the classification in nouns, verbs, adjectives and syntax.

- Nouns primarily represent things, people and other forms of being.
- Verbs primarily represent modalities, activities, processes and times.
- Adjectives primarily represent properties and qualities.
- The syntax with subject and predicate represents relationships of nouns, verbs and adjectives.

For the psyche itself (as personal form of the psychical relevant), this means:

Psyche is both - related to and also personal representative of

- Things, persons and other "forms of being"
- Modalities, activities, processes and times
- Properties and qualities
- Subject(s), object(s) and their contexts.

I call this basic pattern the "four main aspects of differentiation", which are further differentiated into 23 further aspects. For reasons of space, this cannot be shown here and must be viewed in the [Summary table](#) (1st column Asp. AI-AIV and Asp. A1-A23).⁷

⁴ Lévi-Strauss and Lacan had a similar idea and postulated a "homology" between language and (but only) the unconscious.

⁵ In this work, I start from simple grammars of developed languages, which essentially coincide in their rules.

⁶ More on this in the unabridged version.

⁷ One can collect, name and classify everything, which is psychically relevant, with such a division of language structures.

On 2. The **Dimensions**

Ortega y Gasset: "... it is by no means indifferent how we formulate things. The law of life perspective is not only subjective but rooted in the nature of things ... itself. ... The mistake is to assume that it is up to our arbitrariness to assign things to their proper rank." ⁸

I postulate in the first level of classification three basic dimensions of the psychical relevant in general and the psyche in particular: absolute, relative and 0 dimension.⁹ These provide information about the rank and fundamental importance of every psychical relevant. This means that everything that is psychically relevant has one of these three importances: Either something has absolute or relative or (almost) no importance. Further, I assume (similar to Ortega) a basic hierarchical order of these importances. ¹⁰

The Absolute is the decisive and determines the psyche. The Absolute is superordinate to all other psychic aspects (therefore also to superego, id and ego) and determines them.

The respective Absolutes also determine the interpersonal realm.¹¹

Elsewhere, I hypothesize that the main cause of mental disorders is a confusion of this hierarchy.¹²

Advantages of this concept

The psychical relevant and the psychical are seen from a metapsychological view offering a much broader framework and a more lifelike classification than a merely scientific view. As a result, nothing psychical relevant and psychical is overlooked or misclassified from the outset.¹³

This also means a partially different conception of the psyche and the self.

Psyche as the 'personal psychical relevant' includes, represents and reflects all that is relevant to it. That includes not only the person her-/himself but generally everything else what is relevant to her/him.

The self I define as the personal absolute.¹⁴

⁸ Ortega y Gasset In: „Triumph des Augenblicks Glanz der Dauer“ DVA Stuttgart, 1983 S. 75ff. Translated by me.

⁹ In language, too, similar differences in meaning are made with absolute words and absolute statements on the one hand and relative words and relative statements.

¹⁰ For further classification of the dimensions, see [Summary table](#) 1st column Asp. Aa1-Aa7.

¹¹ The absolute can be a true or a multiplicity of pseudo-absolutes. More in <https://new-psychiatry.com/metapsychiatry-and-psychiatry/>.

¹² More in the publication, 'Metapsychiatry' in <https://new-psychiatry.com/metapsychiatry-and-psychiatry/>.

¹³ Thus, the mentioned Summary table can serve as a basis to classify any psychically relevant term.

¹⁴ More on this definition of self in https://new-psychiatry.com/metapsychology-and-psychology/#Own_Self-Definition.