

## OBITUARY

**Eckart Scheerer (1943 -1997)**

Eckart Scheerer lost the long struggle with illness on 3 March 1997. Without him, *Psychological Research/Psychologische Forschung* would not be the flourishing journal it is today. In fact, there is a good chance that it would have been part of the past instead of the present and the future.

There is a deep relationship between Eckart Scheerer and this journal. His years as the Coordinating Editor (1979 to 1991) and his even longer term on the Editorial Board are just the surface. When he took over the editorship, which had actually started in 1978, the journal reached the end of its somewhat variegated post-war history (see Scheerer, 1988) and came to float on calm water, gradually sharpening the then seminal profile it has today. In commenting on the driving forces for him to invest his time and effort in the journal – and at times it really was a burden to him – Eckart Scheerer (1991) mentioned two points. The first one is related to history – the journal as a monument to the Berlin school of *Gestalt* psychology. The second one is related to the scope of the journal – it is broad and not restricted to a single topic like perception, memory, learning, action, or motor control. Both these points indicate the basis of the person-journal relationship – the match between the characteristics of the journal and the characteristics of the scientist, Eckart Scheerer.

In fact, Eckart Scheerer's concerns about the history of ideas matched the role of *Psychological Research/Psychologische Forschung* as one of the classic journals that has been the voice of *Gestalt* psychology. His broad interests as an experimentalist and his concerns about too narrowly focused thinking (without thinking about the intellectual environment or being concerned about various ideas in different fields of research) matched the broad scope of the journal. Still, the journal could not completely satisfy his philosophical and historical interests. Therefore, parallel to the journal, Eckart Scheerer accepted another long-

lasting editorial responsibility that was to become at least equally important for him over the years, viz. his responsibility for the psychological section of the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*.

Eckart Scheerer was born in 1943 in Stuttgart. He started his education in Psychology in 1961 in Tübingen and received his diploma in 1965 from the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, where he was one of the first graduates from the just established program in psychology. He stayed at Bochum, where he received his doctoral degree in 1970 and his *venia legendi* for psychology in 1976, until his move to Oldenburg in 1979. These early years were dedicated to experimental research on visual information processing and reading. However already at that time the interests emerged that eventually were to become characteristics of Eckart Scheerer and his intellectual style: he was a scholar in the best sense, with a strong interest in the history of ideas and the logical foundations of general theoretical approaches, such as behaviorism, psychophysics, phenomenology, *Ganzheitspsychologie* and connectionism. In some sense he was a borderer, a philosopher among experimental psychologists and an experimentalist among philosophers. In that role he was a unique scientist. His death leaves us with a noticeable gap.

Herbert Heuer, Dortmund  
Wolfgang Prinz, München

**References**

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