The aspect of subjectivity in scientific thinking – where did it actually come from?

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Abstract: Subjectivity has always been a part of philosophical speculations. However, Immanuel Kant is mentioned as the main figure to bring in subjectivity in modern philosophy by comparing the Critique of Pure Reason with the Copernican revolution. We might include Descartes as well, and not least the followers of Kant, like Fichte and Hegel. Yet none of these end up with subjectivity as the only premise for thinking, but rather combine it with objectivity. Hence, subjectivity has appeared as a stranger in philosophy and yet not fully accepted. In this paper, I try to pursue the aspect of subjectivity by not looking at philosophy, but rather at psychology. The appearance of the term can be dated back to 1520 when the Croatian humanist Marcus Marulus published the thesis entitled “Psychology, the Nature of the Soul”. This thesis is lost, but by pursuing the appearance of the term, four different movements seem to contribute with and highlight an aspect of subjectivity. One is Humanism, the other is Reformation, the third is a focus on the empirical aspects of science and the fourth is the dissemination of folk culture to academics and aristocracy by means of the art of printing. The finding, therefore, is that psychology is not to be regarded as a discipline that grows out of philosophy, but rather as a discipline that conflicts philosophy, but nevertheless intervenes it and makes it progress.

Keywords: history of psychology; humanism; reformation; metaphysics; empirical psychology

1. Introduction

There is of course still a big discussion if subjectivity is to be regarded as a valid factor in scientific research and thinking. Nevertheless, subjectivity is a factor that is more or less accepted depending on the scientific perspective the researcher may have. After Kant and Kierkegaard the aspect of subjectivity has been accepted as an ingredient of philosophy. The fundamental question is rather to what extent it is a factor we should accept or avoid. In this question Kant and Kierkegaard stand on oppositional sides. Kant took subjectivity as a point of departure, but tried to derive some objective fundamentals out of it, whereas Kierkegaard accepted subjectivity as the ultimate truth. Subjective aspects, however, are traceable in all philosophy, even in Plato’s dialogues, like the Symposium, Ion, Faidros and other places where Plato opens up for deep emotional experiences. In this sense, one may say there is a continuous line in philosophy to which subjectivity has appeared as an underlying factor.

However, philosophy is highly influenced by Kant. It is characterized by admitting that subjectivity is a factor, but at the same time there is a tendency to mitigate its role as much as possible. However, Søren Kierkegaard was the first one to highlight subjectivity as a sort of ideal by launching “truth is subjectivity” as a strategic slogan (Kierkegaard 2009). He also formed it as a basis for existentialism, which in the posterity has been an accepted and well-established direction in philosophy. Yet, Kierkegaard was quite clear about the fact that the aspect of subjectivity did not belong to philosophy, but rather to psychology (Klempe 2014). Hence he was also quite clear about the fact that philosophy and psychology contradicted each other. This was an aspect that had great influence on Edmund Husserl (Hanson 2009), which is traceable in for example Husserl’s long discussions about psychologism in logic (Husserl 1970). Husserl’s aim, however, is also to establish a
transcendental foundation for, not only logic, but for philosophy and science in general (Husserl 1935), and by this to make philosophy free and maybe even detached from psychology.

In line with this, there seems to have existed a deep conflict between philosophy and psychology, and that there are reasons to look at the differences and define them as different and separate sciences. Other places, I have suggested that ontology may represent a demarcation criterion for dividing philosophy from psychology (Klempe 2015). The argument is; if psychology is about subjective impressions of particularities, the truth-value of an impression’s ontological existence is not the most interesting aspect of it. Just the subjective statement of something should be sufficient to call for psychological attention. This is not the case for philosophy, in which the truth-value of a phenomenon’s existence will be at the core of a philosophical investigation. This argument is also embedded with some historical aspects as the term ontology was not applied in philosophy before Rodolphus Goclenius launched an embryonic version of the term in his philosophical lexicon from 1613 – not as a headword, though, but as a part of an article on “Abstractio” (Mengal 2005). Furthermore, Goclenius was also the scholar that stands behind the first and still preserved thesis in the history that mentions ‘psychology’ in the title. Allegedly, Marcus Marullus had already applied the term in the title of a book published around 1520 (Krstic 1964), but this we do not have. Marullus was an important poet who belonged to the movement of Italian Humanism, and Goclenius was an important professor at the new, Protestant University in Marburg. Hence, both were associated with the new ideological movements in the renaissance, and there are reasons to see the term as being strongly associated with those movements. Thus with these aspects in mind there are reason to ask if psychology back then represented a new perspective that had not been included in philosophy earlier, and therefore add a question mark to the notion that psychology has always been a part of philosophy. This is the question I will pursue in this paper, specifically if psychology at that time is a stranger, which more or less invades philosophy, and then changes many of the philosophical premises in the posterity. This will be done by pursuing the aspect of subjectivity as one of the core characteristics of psychology, which it for sure was on a certain stage in the history.

2. Psychology as the science of subjectivity

Karl Rosenkranz (1805-1879) published in 1837 a book entitled: Psychology, or the Science of the subjective Spirit. According to the historian Frederick Copleston, he represented the “centre of the Hegelian movement” (Copleston 1963, p. 293). His emphasis on subjectivity was a consequence of Hegel’s philosophy, which must be regarded as a continuation of Kant’s critical philosophy. The twelve innate categories Kant came up with to define and form the premises for our scientific understanding of the outer world implied also that an investigation of the outer world, almost by necessity, turns out to be an investigation of the investigator even as much as the world itself. The investigator is a thinking being, and consequently there is a kind of differentiated identity between reason, or the spirit, and the real. They are united in a sense, but they are at the same time discernable. Rosenkranz brings this Hegelian point a step further by focusing on the sensory (Empfindungen) aspects that form the connection between the outer and the inner world. And this leads to psychology as “the science of the subjective spirit”, which is the subtitle of his publication on psychology (Rosenkranz 1863). Thus a sensory experience cannot be isolated from the experiencer, and this makes that the experience represents a totality, in which the spirit is highly involved. This makes that the experiences of the particular, which characterizes a sensory experience, is immediately dissolved and replaced by a general understanding, which is the contribution of the spirit. On this basis Rosenkranz states that the spirit fulfils a world that basically appears in its particularities (“Der Geist hat daher an seinen Empfindungen die Erfüllung seiner particularen Welt.” Rosenkranz 1863, p. 162).

This understanding of psychology formed the background for Søren Kierkegaard’s philosophy. Rosenkranz, and especially the first version of this publication, is one of the few contemporaneous sources Kierkegaard actually refers to (Kierkegaard 1980). This highlights that Kierkegaard must be regarded as a Hegelian, although he distanced himself from Hegel and criticized him harshly. They
both drew the same conclusion about the role of subjectivity as an unalterable factor in human understanding and reasoning. Yet there is one important difference between the two. Hegel lets objectivity and subjectivity be united in the spirit. This is also the perspective Rosenkranz promotes in his thesis. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, does not accept any unification or mediation between subjectivity and objectivity. This is the point he highlights when he criticizes Hegel’s logic. According to Kierkegaard, logic must be regarded as a static and objective science: “In logic, no movement must come about, for logic is, and whatever is logical only is” (Kierkegaard 1980, p.12f, original italics). Logic is not a part of the actual life, but a part of our way of thinking. The actual life, on the other hand, is characterized by instability in terms of movement and changes. According to Kierkegaard, these aspects are mixed up in Hegel’s logic, and Kierkegaard cannot resist the temptation to make fun of Hegel’s more or less dynamic logic:

If anyone would take the trouble to collect and put together all the strange pixies and goblins who like busy clerks bring about movement in Hegelian logic (such as this is in itself and as it has been improved by the [Hegelian] school), later age would perhaps be surprised to see that what are regarded as discarded witticisms once played an important role in logic, not as incidental explanations and ingenious remarks but as masters of movement, which made Hegel’s logic something of a miracle and gave logical thought feet to move on, without anyone’s being able to observe them. (Kierkegaard 1980, p. 12.)

It may sound as a paradox that Kierkegaard, who founded existentialism and launched the slogan “truth is subjectivity” (Kierkegaard 2009), at the same time highlights an insurmountable distinction between objectivity and subjectivity. Yet this is pointing at the core of Kierkegaard’s existentialism, specifically that a human’s life is expelled in the middle of the tension between the disparate and irreconcilable aspects of the ideal and the actual – the objective and the subjective. As long as we are living human beings, we are embedded in the subjective experiences of the actual, and this makes that truth has to be subjectivity.

Thus Kierkegaard needed to find a science that actually brings in subjectivity, and he found psychology, not least because of Rosenkranz’ book, which explicitly defines psychology as the science of subjectivity. This was, however, not the only source at hand for understanding psychology. The background for his religious and philosophical ponderings, he says, was his father. He writes about his father as one who never treated him as a child when he was a child. He rather used him as a sparring partner for his religious ponderings, and his father’s favourite reading was Christian Wolff’s “Reflections on God, the World, the Soul of Man, and Things in general” (Hannay 2001, p. 36). Yet this book was not just a speculative book about everything and nothing; it was one of the philosophical pre-works Wolff published in 1719 before he worked out one of the most important and influential contribution he came up with in philosophy: a systematization of metaphysics. Although metaphysics can be traced back to Aristotle, it had changed during the medieval time. During that time, philosophy had been intertwined with theology and theological doctrines, and consequently, metaphysics had ended up with containing exactly what the title of this book of Wolff refers to – almost everything. The publications Wolff made in the 1730ies aimed at delineate and define the content of metaphysics. These were Philosophia prima, sive Ontologia (1730), Cosmologia generalis (1731), Psychologia empirica (1732), Psychologia rationalis (1732), Theologia naturalis (in two volumes 1736-1737). Except from natural theology, which can be traced back to the Roman scholar Marcus Terentius Varro from the 1st Century BC, the other three terms, ontology, cosmology and psychology, were all invented and launched during the 16th and 17th centuries. Yet Wolff was the first one to bring them together to let them define metaphysics and what was supposed to be about. Thus this systematization had a prehistory that might be more or less narrowed down to the 16th and 17th centuries, in which the aspects of subjectivity and its relationship to psychology actually did come, several sources have to be considered and taken into account. Here, I
will point at four of them: the rise of Humanism in the renaissance, the Lutheran Reformation in Germany, the increasing interest in doing empirical research among scholars, and finally, the dissemination of folk culture among academics and the aristocracy by means of the art of printing. Additionally, the political turmoil in especially Germany at that time is of course also an important factor, but neither the term nor the content of psychology appear as most salient by examining the political and economical situation. The other four factors, on the other hand, are embedded with or pointing at psychology as an important aspect. In other words, there are reasons to pursue the aspect of psychology to get a fully understanding of the role of subjectivity in philosophy.

3. Humanism and the very first appearance of psychology

According to the historian Lewis White Beck (1969), humanism can refer to many different aspects and it varies with countries and centuries. But according to him, there is one thing humanism always have in common: “they are always against doctrines, practices, and institutions which seem to confine human interests and talents, they are protests of the whole man against the partial man produced by and for institutions and systems of thought which seem for that very reason to be oppressive and restrictive” (p. 89). The one that allegedly used the term ‘psychology’ first was the Croatian humanist Marcus Marulus (1450-1524), who applied the term in the title of his publication “Psychologia de ratione animae humanae” (“Psychology, the nature of the human soul”) from around 1520 (Krstic 1964). He lived most of his life in Split, which was a part of Dalmatia with Venice as the capital. Thus he wrote in Latin, Croatian and Italian. He is primarily known for his poems, but he wrote also theses, out of which one of them was “On the Kings of Dalmatia”, which expresses a deeply felt affiliation to this empire. The thesis on psychology is allegedly lost, but the poetry is characterized by Biblical motives that are treated with poetic freedom by means of allegories and metaphors. Thus the ideological turn humanism contributed with in European intellectual history was not only the independency of the individual, but also to highlight the importance of the text and the freedom that was embedded in a literary use of it. The notable aspect here, therefore, is the fact that the term psychology appears in the wake of this movement where independency, autonomy and literature where salient traits of the ideological atmosphere, and most likely were regarded as salient trait of “the nature of the human soul” – to quote the title of Marulus’ publication.

4. Psychology and the Lutheran Reformation in Germany

The question, however, is not to find the original content of psychology, but rather to detect the tendencies the appearance of the term actually was a part of. Another movement psychology in fact was a part of, was the German Reformation (Vidal 2011). Rudolph Goclenius the Elder (1547-1628) was a professor at the Protestant University of Marburg, and he published in 1590 an anthology entitled: “Yuchologia: hoc est De hominis perfectione, animo et in primis ortu huys, commentationes ac disputations quorundam theologorum & philosophorum nostrae aetatis” (Krstic 1964). The fact that he applied the original Greek form “yuch” instead of Marulus’ form “psych” indicates that he probably did not know very much about Marulus’ thesis. Goclenius’ thesis is still available, and the title also reveals that it is first of all about theological and philosophical questions that were at stake at that time (Mengal 2005). One important contribution to the understanding of psychology that this publication came up with was to reintroduce the distinction between the spiritual, immaterial and immortal part of the soul (i.e. anima), and the intellectual faculties of it (i.e. animus). This distinction was crucial for how the content of psychology was to be understood. Very soon, psychology became more and more associated with intellectual faculties, and not so much with the spiritual aspects of the soul. The latter became rather associated with the term “pneumatology”, which was in use up to the end of the nineteenth century (Vidal 2011). This distinction represented an important step that pointed in two directions: One is that the term psychology from the very beginning became associated with a secular meaning of it. The other is that the intellectual faculties overlapped and became intertwined with the philosophical interests.
There is, however, a close connection between humanism and the Reformation. The transition figure here was Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560), who started up as a professor in Greek in Wittenburg in 1518 after a recommendation from Erasmus of Rotterdam. Melanchthon and Martin Luther (1483-1546) started up a lifelong collaboration, which became crucial for the development of psychology. The two represented two different perspectives that more or less merged within the movement of Reformation. Luther was highly sceptical to Aristotle, and called him the worst things. Melanchthon, on the other hand, pointed at Aristotle as one of his main sources, but the understanding of Aristotle in the fifteenth century was quite different from how for example Thomas Aquinas had used him. Melanchthon pointed first of all on *De Anima* and the *Rhetoric*, which also Luther more or less reluctantly accepted, and the historian Fernando Vidal has found a quotation from the beginning of Melanchthon’s lectures on De Anima, which says a lot about how this thesis was understood in the sense that it was used as a foundation for developing a sort of anthropology that aimed at achieving a fully understanding of the human nature:

“In so doing, we shall have to explain at the same time the whole nature of the body, above all the human body. That is why this part of Physics should have as its title not only *De anima*, but also *On the nature of man in his entirety*” (Melanchthon *Commentarious*, cited from Vidal 2011, p. 38, original italics). This sentence reveals all about how a broad anthropological understanding gradually appeared as the content of psychology.

The need for a deeper understanding of the human nature among Protestants was intimately connected with the new interpretation of the Bible Luther had disseminated through the 95 theses and other scriptures. By refusing acts, doctrines, rituals and institution as the foundation for Christian justification and salvation and replaced them with focusing on the faith alone, the most important argument for this theological turn was to point at the original sin as the most fundamental and determining factor in each individual’s actual life. The original, hereditary sin permeates the human nature, and when the individual realize this fact, the individual is compelled to admit and accept the need for a saviour. Thus the knowledge of the sinful human nature became highly required to end up with a proper faith. *De Anima* contributed to this knowledge, but it was just one source out of many. Melanchthon was also the one that revived Galenos’ teaching about the four tempers that brought the mind in close interaction with the body (Petersen 1921/2015). Paradoxically enough, it was the Protestant’s theological aversion against the sinful body’s nature that opened up for a severe interest in exactly the same. And as long as psychology could be defined as the science of the human nature, it became a highly needed type of science for the Protestants.

### 5. Metaphysics as a secularized philosophy of science

However, psychology was never regarded as a part of theology. According to Luther, faith is not depending on any kind of science; it can only rely on the gospel given in the Bible. This independency went the other way round as well; the Bible could never be a source for scientific knowledge. This created the radical turn in German philosophy, which first of all made all scientific knowledge secular and detached from theological doctrines. Philosophy, therefore, had to stay alone and rely on itself as the basis for scientific knowledge. This secularization of scientific knowledge made that metaphysics in German philosophy went through a radical change as well. It had been used as a paramount label for all the old scholastic philosophy, in which Thomas Aquinas may count as an example. Although he also stated that some Christian doctrines could not be proved philosophically, like the Trinity and the original sin, the interpretation and use of both Aristotle and Plato had always been in line with what the Bible said (Hartmann 1899, Petersen 1921/2015). The aim of Thomas Aquinas’ writing was to be edifying for the reader – for the scholar as well as for the laymen. This made that metaphysics embraced all these aspects, which included both theological doctrines and philosophical speculations, and not least the different aspects that gradually appeared to become associated with the term psychology.

The scholastic understanding of metaphysics, therefore, changed radically in German philosophy in the wake of Protestantism during the 17th century. Since the Bible was not regarded as an authority in philosophy and science any more, it had to be replaced by other foundations. The
most important subject was to define the ontological foundation for both philosophy and science. However the term “ontology” did not exist before – again – Rodolphus Goclenius the elder published the highly influential Lexicon Philosophicum in 1613 (Mengal 2005). The term did not appear as a headword, but was mentioned within an article under the label “abstractio”. Yet, having been applied in this article did not set the content of the term, but it was adopted by different scholars and became more and more used and filled up with a content, which gradually became comparable with how it is used today. The Cartesian scholar Johannes Clauberg (1622-1665) published for example an “Ontosophia” in 1647, but he applied the term more or less synonymously with “metaphysics” and was “concerned with separating various disciplines from each other” (Verbeck 1999, p. 186). The final contribution to this discussion about separating the different sciences, defining metaphysics and giving psychology and ontology a specified content, was given by Christian Wolff when he, as already mentioned, defined metaphysics as consisting of the four different subjects: Ontology, cosmology, psychology and natural theology in the 1730ies.

All the three first terms must be regarded as neologisms that appeared during the 16th and the 17th centuries. Even the term “Cosmology” was used for the first time in 1656 in Thomas Blount’s English dictionary “Glossographia”. Yet this dictionary was just a compilation of strange and not so common used English terms, and consequently, cosmology was not presented within a theoretical framework. Such a presentation was done when Christian Wolff published “Cosmologia generalis” in 1731 as one out of the six volumes that altogether systematized and defined how metaphysics was to be understood.

6. Psychologia empirica and the increased interest in empirical research

To define natural theology as a delineated and independent subject reflects some aspects of the theological turmoil the German Reformation went through. Although Luther had insisted on making a clear distinction between theology and science, and this paved the way for developing a new ontology independent of theology, natural theology represented anyway a reminiscence of the need for justifying investigations of nature by means of theology. This aspect of justifying the activity of doing research is to be regarded as the overall aim of developing and defining metaphysics the way Wolff did in the early eighteenth century. The ontology justified all being as such, and the cosmology focused on the physical world and the universe. In the preface of the latter, Wolff emphasizes also that the cosmology is closely related to natural theology, but the focus is anyway different (Wolff 1731/1737). In the preface of the Psychologia empirica (1732/1738), on the other hand, Wolff emphasizes that the topic of this book is about how humans acquire ideas through experiences and observations by means of the faculties of the soul. In other words, psychologia empirica was predominantly a kind of justification of the act of doing observation and to learn from experiences. It was not about how to make psychology empirical, which represents a much later understanding. By combining all these types of justifications of investigations of the real world, metaphysics had went through a transition that started in the renaissance and culminated with these publications of Wolff from the 1730ies. Metaphysics was no longer a theodicy, or a justification of God’s existence, but rather a basis for exploring the world, or an embryonic methodology, as it formed the foundation for valid statements in all types of sciences (Petersen 1921/2015), and the Calvinist and encyclopaedist Johann Friedrich Alstedt (1588-1638) combined the two terms in a publication from 1620: Methodus metaphysicae (Muller 2001). Yet, it was of course Renée Descartes that made the relationship between the method and a new foundation for valid knowledge by publishing A Discourse of Method in 1637.

Empirical psychology was one of these meta-scientific fields, but it cannot be regarded as a natural part of metaphysics as it focused on sensation, which is about the particular. There are at least two reasons for why psychology on a certain historical point ended up as a part of metaphysics. One is the fact that observation had already been applied as a part of scientific discoveries. Both Galileo Galilei and Johannes Kepler may count as early and good examples of exactly this. However neither of them refers only to observation as such as their discoveries emerge from problematizing the cosmology presented in Plato’s dialogue Timaeus. The fundamental thesis in this dialogue of
Plato, specifically that the universe is governed by a certain order, is retained by both Galilei and Kepler, but the order is explained differently, not in terms of a geocentric perspective and that the planets move in circles, but in terms of a heliocentric standpoint and elliptic movements of the planets. Those new discoveries based on observations could not be accepted unless the basis for scientific knowledge was released from the content of the Bible, and based on the subject that made the research.

Thus, these examples of new discoveries were very much in line with the Cartesian idea of founding trustable knowledge on the subject. This became a widespread notion, but they were also very much in line with Descartes’ more conservative tendencies, which were salient in his proofs of God’s existence where the argument was related to clearness. Premodern perspectives also governed Descartes’ psychology and his psychology was not very much referred to (Vidal 2011). Christian Wolff, on the other hand became tremendous popular with his systematization of metaphysics, and *Psychologia empirica* had a peculiar breakthrough, not least by inspiring a lot of scholars that followed up by presenting metaphysics after the same pattern and systematization as Wolff had formulated. This was true especially in Northern Europe. Yet, Wolff became also popular in French spoken areas, and the *Psychologia empirica* was translated and published in an abridged version already in 1745. One of the statements given by the translator says a lot about why empirical psychology had become a part of metaphysics when he refers to “La justesse naturelle de votre esprit” (The natural correctness of your mind, Wolff 1745/1998, p. *3). This implies predominantly that we can trust human rationality, but it means also that we need to examine the human nature to get a better understanding of the foundation for all the knowledge that has been acquired through the senses. Hence scientific activities required a fully understanding of the anthropological premises for doing research. This was what *Psychologia empirica* was supposed to be about.

There is no doubt that Wolff’s psychology aimed to form a basis for scientific activities. Even *Psychologia rationalis* contributed to this by formulating the rational capacities of the soul and provided “the natural correctness of your mind”. *Psychologia empirica* on the other hand focused on the experiential aspects. The translator discusses on a certain stage the use of the term. When Wolff called the psychology ‘empirical’, he uses the Greek term for ‘experience’. The translator, on the other hand, prefers to use the French term ‘expérimentale’. Thus according to him, experimental psychology must be regarded as the same as empirical psychology. To regard them as synonyms seems to have been widespread in the immediate posterity, as both terms appeared depending on language and country. The translator also emphasizes that Monsieur Wolff through *Psychologia empirica* presents a method for making scientific discoveries:

> C’est la Psychologie expérimentale, nous dit il, qui établit & confirme ce que nous avons découvert par la Psychologie rassionnée; c’est elle qui lui fournit ses principes; a peu près commes nous voyons dans la Physique & l’Astronomie un habile Observateur tirer sucessivement de ses Observations, de quoi établir sa Théorie, & de sa Théorie de quoi apuier ses observations, & par ce double secours s’élevera de nouvelles connoissance, qui lui auraient échappé sans ce concert et cette intelligence. (Wolff 1745/1998, p. 23)

Thus, the reciprocity between observations and theory appears as a more or less necessary condition to achieve new knowledge, and this requires both the empirical and the rational psychology to attain a fully understanding of the nature of the senses and the mind.

These perspectives on the process of acquiring scientific knowledge were strange, new, and not exactly fully accepted. In the *New Essays on Human Understanding*, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz refers, through the voice of Philalethes, to the common understanding that “la Philosophie experimentale” is not able to generate “connaissances scientifique” – scientific knowledge (Leibniz 1985, p. 23).

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1. It is Empirical Psychology, he [Wolff] tells us, which establishes and confirms what we have discovered by Rational Psychology that provides all the principles. Similar to what we see in physics and astronomy, a skilful observer establishes successively from his observations the Theory, and the Theory supports his observations, and by this double assistance arises new knowledge, which would have escaped from him without this concert and intelligence. (Translated by this author.)
Even the Swedish famous scientist, Karl von Linné had some concerns about doing observations. In the introduction to the *Systemae naturae* from 1735 Linné presents some considerations around the use of observations (Frankelius 2007). According to him a scientist has to do observations, and he presents 20 paragraphs that describe some fundamental principles, but also the steps one has to take in scientific explorations. In paragraph number 18, he declares:

In every case I have applied the new method, predominantly consisting on own and private annotations, yet when it comes to observations, I have carefully learnt that very few of them are to be trusted straightaway. (Frankelius 2007, p. 107, translated by this author)

Linné, therefore, applied observations, but they did not work as a warranty for true knowledge. Instead he sketches a type of method that must be described as deductive and axiomatic. He follows three fundamental principles that form the premises for this method: (1) No new species will be created, (2) the offspring is always a replica of the parents, and (3) similarities define the specie. A fourth premise is that Linné envisages the whole nature is being governed by a purpose given by the Creator. Thus natural theology forms an important condition for Linné’s research and the method he is applying. The expediency or purpose is detected by classification and naming of the exemplar. The method therefore starts with a general understanding given by paramount labels, and the activity consists of categorizing each exemplar properly and in accordance with the overall categories. On this background the aspect of subjectivity is partly present through observations, but it is compensated for and almost set aside by the guidance of some general principles that bring the observations back to an objective and general understanding of the exemplar.

### 7. Psychology and Kant’s idea of the pure science

In all those three areas that apparently include features of subjectivity, they also seem to overrule subjectivity with an ultimate ideal of objectivity. This is also true when it comes to philosophy of science, to which Immanuel Kant and the *Critique of Pure Reason* formulated the modern basis. It is typical for his thesis and the German philosophy at that time that he, in the preface, refers to subjectivity as a premise for the whole thesis. By including the aspect of subjectivity he states that he contributes with a kind of Copernican revolution in philosophy by saying in the Preface to the second edition: “We here propose to do just what Copernicus did in attempting to explain the celestial movements”, and he continues: “If the intuition must conform to the nature of objects, I do not see how we can know anything of them a priori. If, on the other hand, the object conforms to the nature of our faculty of intuition, I can easily conceive the possibility of such an a priori knowledge” (Kant 2010, p. 13-14). By referring to the “faculty of intuition”, Kant is very close to psychologizing theory of knowledge. However, this is exactly what he aims to avoid with this thesis. *Critique of Pure Reason* is in fact an attempt at restoring the ideal of objectivity in philosophy after Wolff had included psychology as a part of metaphysics.

Kant’s critical philosophy must in many ways be regarded as a counter-attack to the fact that psychology had already invaded metaphysics and introduced the aspect of subjectivity to philosophy. This is certainly true for the first critique. Yet the strategy is predominantly to be friend with the most essential part of the enemy, which is the aspect of subjectivity. Consequently, transforming subjectivity up to a transcendental level where the a priori aspects are highlighted can provide this. According to Kant, no empirical sciences can be brought up to that level, and they will by necessity contradict with the very idea of achieving a pure science. This is why he also concludes: “Empirical psychology must therefore be banished from the sphere of metaphysics, and is indeed excluded by the very idea of that science” (Kant 2010, p. 472). However, Kant cannot place it completely aside as it has been a part of metaphysics for such a long time, and “we must permit it to occupy a place in metaphysics – but only as an appendix to it” (loc. cit.), and he continues: “It is a stranger who has been long a guest; and we can make it welcome to stay, until it can take up a more suitable abode in a complete system of anthropology – the pendant to empirical physics (loc.cit.). Immanuel Kant followed up this, first of in the last thesis he completed, the *Anthropology from a
Psychology was on the way to be an established part of metaphysics when Kant entered the philosophical arena. Although Kant refers to psychology as an old part of metaphysics, he is referring to the content and not to the term, as it was Christian Wolff and no one before him to explicitly define psychology as a part of metaphysics. Yet it is an open question what psychology was supposed to be about. Empirical psychology was predominantly about the sensorial capacity of acquiring knowledge, and rational psychology was supposed to be about the general principles that formed the reliability of knowledge acquired through senses. Additionally, however, the sensorial activity is by necessity including an aspect of subjectivity. This was what Karl von Linné referred to, and he was sceptical to trust private observations. Immanuel Kant shared this scepticism, which also was the driving force for developing his critical philosophy. He apparently included subjectivity, but in the first critique the aim was definitely to overcome it. Thus the fundamental question in this paper about how subjectivity intervened and became a part of philosophy is not completely answered yet. It is obvious though that psychology perpetuated and brought subjectivity on the philosophical stage, but we see also that all efforts in including psychology in philosophy comprise at the same time a fundamental reluctance against subjectivity. Thus the source for subjectivity is just partly given by psychology, and there must be additional source for bringing subjectivity to such an important part of philosophy.

8. Subjectivity in folk culture

The sources for subjectivity are probably not to be found in the academic writing, but maybe rather in the folk culture. There are different aspects to look at in this respect. One is the relationship between folk culture and Italian Humanism, in which literature for certain, but also music could be examined in the achievement of getting a better understanding of how the general idea of humans as subjective individuals became an accepted perspective among scholars. It could be that Marcus Marullus’ thesis on psychology and the human nature from the 1520ies could tell us something about this, but unfortunately, we do not know the content of this thesis. Yet, when it comes to literature from that time, Mikhail Bakhtin’s thesis on the French author and humanist François Rabelais (ca. 1490-1553) points at some aspects that should be taken into account in this examination of sources for subjectivity in academic writings. Rabelais’ novels are characterized by an extreme use of humour with caricatures and irony, and Bakhtin summarizes these traits by launching the technical term ‘grotesque’ (Bakhtin 1984). Bakhtin’s point is that Rabelais is not just an exceptional and independent author that invented and perpetuated the grotesque in his novels, but he stood in a tradition with deeply entrenched humorous storytelling for centuries. Thus the background for understanding Rabelais’ novels is revealed through the history of the laughter.

In Bakhtin’s thesis on Rabelais, he starts with pursuing the history of the laughter. One of the main findings in this examination is:

Laughter is not a universal, philosophical form. It can refer only to individual and individually typical phenomena of social life. (Bakhtin 1984, p. 67.)

By this statement he says that the laughter is predominantly a subjective experience; or, even more correctly: The laughter highlights the experience of oneself as a subject. This type of experience of oneself as a subject is provided by several factors. One is that the laughter itself promotes the individual’s participation in the humorous situation. Another is that this participation is related to a very peculiar situation. A third aspect is that both the participation and the laughter itself are given by and through the body. On this background the laughter is primarily a sensorial experience that is located to and depending on a certain place and time. Consequently, it appears in certain events, such as marketplaces, popular festivals and the like. These are the places where people are gathered with the presence of their bodies, but also places where intellectual and moral speeches are inappropriate unless they have the form of caricatures and irony. If so, they are more than welcome, and this is the background for Rabelais’ novels.
However the more important finding in Bakhtin’s examination of the history of the laughter is that, in the renaissance, he says, the laughter “emerged from the depth of folk culture” (Bakhtin 1984, p. 72). This implies that also all the embedded aspects of the laughter, which includes individual subjectivity, must be regarded as having been entrenched in the “depth of the folk culture” for centuries. Apparently, this may sound as a truism, but it is not seen from the perspective of how subjectivity became a part of the academic thinking. It is obvious that philosophy, with Descartes and Kant in the front, just reluctantly accepted subjectivity as a premise, and when they actually did so; their efforts were invested in turning subjectivity into a sort of objectivity. It was the same for the Lutheran Reformation. They emphasized the personal and subjective confession of a proper faith as the only foundation for salvation, but this was at the same time grounded on a doctrine formulated by St. Paul in the letter to the Romans and therefore based on a general statement. Both literature and the Reformation were closely related to the humanistic movement that governed Europe in the renaissance, so even humanism as movement must be regarded as something that “emerged from the depth of folk culture”.

9. Conclusions

Not only psychology, but also subjectivity must be regarded as a stranger in philosophy. Hence it is a mystery that both, on a certain historical point, invaded philosophy and became an important part of it. In this paper, however, it has been communicated that there must be several sources and reasons for why subjectivity appeared as a factor in philosophy. It is first of all highly related to the appearance of psychology in the sixteenth and seventeenth century where the aspect of subjectivity hardly can be detached from psychology. This is a conclusion other scholars have ended up with as valid for psychology in general (Danziger 1990). Kant, on the other hand, did neither attack subjectivity nor psychology as such, as he pinpointed subjectivity as a point of departure and applied aspects from rational psychology in the method he applied for investigation the pure reason. He rather attacked the applied aspects of empirical sciences in general, which also included empirical psychology. The aim of his critical philosophy was nevertheless to overcome the individual aspects of subjectivity, which made the outcome of observations unpredictable and unreliable. And this aim must be regarded as an attack on subjectivity as well.

The same paradoxical love-and-hate relationship to subjectivity appears as a salient trait of the Lutheran Reformation as well. On the one hand it emphasizes the personal faith as an objective source for salvation, and salvation as a general truth as long as it is in accordance with what the Bible says. Yet this implies, on the other hand, that subjective investments and efforts are necessary requirements to achieve a proper faith. This also brings in the need for psychology as proper faith is also depending on insight on the sinful human nature. This is the paradox that Kierkegaard struggled with, which ended up with the conclusion that truth is nothing else than subjectivity.

Humanism on the other hand, does not represent the same kind of paradox. By going back to Beck’s (1969) definition, he emphasizes “they are always against doctrines” (p.89). This implies that humanism is to be regarded more or less as a rebellious attitude, which can be related to a folk driven movement even as well as to individuals. Thus it seems that both the Reformation and the philosophical turn was governed by an underlying movement that perpetrated subjectivity, which stakeholders in both the Reformation and in philosophy reluctantly adopted and incorporated in a certain way. Bakhtin’s thesis on Rabelais reveals some important aspects of this folk movement, however it looks like it was the gradual appearance of psychology that brought the aspect of subjectivity in front – both in theology and in philosophy.

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