

## Abstract

Jonas Schiött, *Anders Wedberg och filosofihistorien: Den svenska 1900-talsfilosofins förändring* [*Anders Wedberg and the history of philosophy: The transformation of Swedish 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy*]. Dissertation in Swedish. Department of History of Ideas and Science, Göteborg University, Sweden, 2000.

The subject of this dissertation is the philosopher Anders Wedberg (1913-78) and his impact on the course of Sweden's philosophical development during the mid part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This development was one towards an integration with the tradition of analytical philosophy, and was so successful that this tradition has dominated philosophy at Swedish universities ever since Wedberg's days. My main thesis is that focusing on the contributions Wedberg made to the history of philosophy, and the debates surrounding his new approach to this subject, provides the best means of understanding how and why change was brought about.

The way in which Wedberg wrote history of philosophy was strongly opposed to the established traditions. To him, the purpose of history was to be useful in the present day. Philosophers were therefore encouraged to take what they could use from the history of philosophy, discarding the remainder. Wedberg's own *History of Philosophy* provided a striking example of this method: he ignored or downplayed the importance of many thinkers belonging to the established canon, instead concentrating his efforts on those who seemed to have some relevance to the problems facing modern analytical philosophy. The criticism that was aimed at Wedberg for this clearly shows the dividing lines between competing traditions of thought.

To Wedberg's mind, the aim of philosophy in general was to become more scientific. This would enable philosophy to make itself useful to other sciences, by helping them clarify their concepts and methodologies. In pursuit of this objective, a weeding out of non-scientific methods and theories from philosophy itself was first required. Conceptual analysis and logical formalization were the most important tools for this work. It was also important for philosophers to maintain a healthy respect for the achievements of the empirical sciences – an empirical method was considered an important part of what separated science from mere speculation.

**Keywords:** Anders Wedberg (1913-78), analytical philosophy, history of philosophy, 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy, Swedish philosophy, intellectual change.