

Subjectivity, which is an error of style in German literature, is, through the deteriorated condition of literature and neglect of old languages, becoming more common. By _subjectivity_ I mean when a writer thinks it sufficient for himself to know what he means and wants to say, and it is left to the reader to discover what is meant. Without troubling himself about his reader, he writes as if he were holding a monologue; whereas it should be a dialogue, and, moreover, a dialogue in which he must express himself all the more clearly as the questions of the reader cannot be heard. And it is for this very reason that style should not be subjective but objective, and for it to be objective the words must be written in such a way as to directly compel the reader to think precisely the same as the author thought. This will only be the case when the author has borne in mind that thoughts, inasmuch as they follow the law of gravity, pass more easily from head to paper than from paper to head. Therefore the journey from paper to head must be helped by every means at his command. When he does this his words have a purely objective effect, like that of a completed oil painting; while the subjective style is not much more certain in its effect than spots on the wall, and it is only the man whose fantasy is accidentally aroused by them that sees figures; other people only see blurs. The difference referred to applies to every style of writing as a whole, and it is also often met with in particular instances; for example, I read in a book that has just been published: _I have not written to increase the number of existing books_. This means exactly the opposite of what the writer had in view, and is nonsense into the bargain.