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On Critique and Mediality in Gottsched [1]

While ›mediality‹ is a topic that has emerged relatively recently in German philosophical circles, [2] the suggestion in the following pages is that debates surrounding *Medialität* have some common roots in a particular moment of 18th-century German thought. For already in the disputes around poetic thinking, poetic language and the role of rules versus inspiration in artistic production in the early 18th century, the issue of a mediality *avant la lettre* could be said to constitute a ›red thread‹ connecting that era's diverging practices of philosophical, literary and historiographical writing. As an example of this we take Johann Christoph Gottsched's treatment of the medial distinctions between philosophy, poetry and history in his *Versuch einer critischen Dichtkunst* (1730). [3] In particular we will examine Gottsched's concerns for poetic style and its relationship to philosophical and historiographic practices of knowledge, and above all Gottsched's description of the principles of connectibility that define poetic thinking. For Gottsched, that is, the ability to arrive at connections between things is the hallmark of poetic thinking, and this *Zusammenhang* can be viewed as the quintessence of mediality per se. Hence while Gottsched is not a very popular figure in contemporary *Germanistik*, thanks in part to Lessing's attack in his 17th Literaturbrief, and is next to invisible in the German philosophical canon, his *Critische Dichtkunst* sheds light on philosophy's debts to literary theory as well as on the roots of contemporary philosophical media theory. [4]

THE POET, THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE CRITIC

In his *Critische Dichtkunst* Gottsched attempts to delineate the purposes and tools of poetry with respect to other forms of artistic and writerly production. As Gottsched explains, in a deeply Aristotelian vein, the poet's job is to produce imitations of all sorts: »[E]in Poet [ist] ein geschickter Nachahmer aller natürlichen Dinge« (p. 147), and therefore poetry might be considered the ›interdisciplinary‹ field of invention par excellence. [5] Indeed the poet must be familiar with all kinds of natural things if he is to produce the imitations that constitute good poetry, for »[e]s ist keine Wissenschaft von seinem Bezirke ganz ausgeschlossen. Er muß zum wenigsten von allem etwas wissen, [weil] [e]in Poet hat ja Gelegenheit, von allerley Dingen zu schreiben« (p. 154). From this requirement for knowledge of all things follows a duty that the poet, alone among fellow imitators, writers and artists, must fulfill: »Er muß sich vielmehr bemühen, von allen, zum wenigsten einen kurzen Begriff zu fassen« (p. 155), and »vor allen Dingen aber ist einem wahren Dichter eine gründliche Erkenntniß des Menschen nöthig, ja ganz unentbehrlich« (p. 156). Because the poet may imitate any and all things human, in order to have such a broad and basic knowledge, clearly the poet requires »Gelehrsamkeit, Erfahrung, Übung und Fleiß« (p. 143).The sheer range, in other words, of the imitations produced in poetry requires a vast knowledge and competence on the part of the poet.

In his differentiation of the poet from other artists, Gottsched acknowledges that other art forms also involve imitations of a wide range of natural things, i.e. painting, sculpture, bronzing, dance and music (p. 147). For the poet, in contrast, language is the medium of imitation, and not sound, color or form. The medium of language thus differentiates the poet from other artists, but at the same time brings poetry closer to the fields of history, rhetoric, and *Weltweisheit*, which like poetry share a concern with all things human. The experts in these latter fields work within the medium of language, but on the other hand they do not engage in imitation of natural things as artists do. The historian describes events; the orator persuades to action; the *Weltweiser* teaches us about the basis of all things (p. 148). None of these, however, constitutes a primarily imitative task as in the case of the poet. In this respect the poet produces imitations, which make him like the other artists, but uses the medium of language, which renders him again different.

Although Gottsched attempts to specify the character of the poet in contradistinction to the other significant linguistic engagements with all things human (history, rhetoric, *Weltweisheit*), he nonetheless describes a particular bond between philosophy and poetry, owing to the specialized knowledge of the philosopher as to the character of the poet: »Wenn man nun ein gründliches Erkenntniß aller Dinge Philosophie nennet: so sieht ein jeder, daß niemand den rechten Character von einem Poeten wird geben können, als ein Philosoph« (p. 145). This basic knowledge of all things is, for Gottsched, the point of intimacy between the poet and the philosopher: poetry must have some knowledge of all things in order to be able to imitate them, and philosophy as a basic knowledge of all things would know also the truth of the poet.

The intimacy between philosopher and poet, each as a knower of all things in their own ways, is significant for the history of the relationship between philosophy and literature. Aristotle is paradigmatic, for »[e]r hat das innere Wesen der Beredsamkeit und Poeterey aufs gründlichste eingesehen, und alle Regeln, die er vorschreibet, gründen sich auf die unveränderliche Natur der Menschen, und auf die gesunde Vernunft« (p. 146). While Gottsched relies throughout his corpus on the authority of a selected canon of authors of antiquity and France, this reliance is not an index of unoriginality. For precisely in such strategic rhetorical and argumentative reliance on a canon are to be found the gestures of nascent critique, i.e. a point of 18th-century innovation, namely in Gottsched's description of the critic:

»Nicht ein jeder hat Zeit und Gelegenheit gehabt, sich mit seinen philosophischen Untersuchungen zu den freyen Künsten zu wenden, und da nachzugrübeln: Woher es komme, daß dieses schön und jenes häßlich ist; dieses wohl, jenes aber übel gefällt? Wer dieses aber weis, der bekömmt einen besondern Namen, und heißt ein Criticus. Dadurch verstehe ich nämlich nichts anders, als einen Gelehrten, der von freyen Künsten philosophiren oder Grund anzeigen kann.« (p. 145) [6]

Although Gottsched has argued that the philosopher alone would understand the nature of a true poet, nonetheless not all philosophers investigate the liberal arts and the reasons for which we find some things beautiful and some things ugly. Someone who can, however, philosophize in this way is called a critic, a specialized kind of philosopher who understands taste and the reasons for beauty.

This stab at a definition of critique is, as Rüdiger Campe describes it, a turning point in which the new sciences of the 17th century bear upon the development of a distinct field of literary criticism in the 18th century. Hence Campe defines this development of critique as the »Kontaktstelle von Philosophie und Poesie«. [7] Critics are, Gottsched writes, »philosophische Poeten, oder poesieverständige Philosophen« (p. 145), and therewith Gottsched establishes a reciprocal intimacy between poetry and philosophy by way of critique. [8] While imitation is what the poet shares with other artists, the poet's range of knowledge brings him closer to the philosopher. What is more, the critic, as the philosopher who understands beauty and also knows about all things (which things the poet is able to imitate), is that much closer to the poet.

The triumvirate of poet, philosopher and critic, along with the characterizations of imitative arts vs. linguistic occupations, evoke a constellation of disciplinary connections and associations that cuts across imitative, linguistic, critical practices. In each case, the media and the methodologies are shown in their affiliations and disjunctions, as Gottsched's taxonomy of artistic and linguistic practices indicates. Gottsched's account of Aristotle's critical achievement is in its turn also a critical achievement; for the elucidation of Aristotle's accomplishment carves out for Gottsched a certain critical niche that is not exhausted in his dependence upon Aristotle. Thus by establishing the relationships between philosopher, poet, and critic, Gottsched invents himself, in his

own rehearsal of Aristotelian poetics and in his reflections on the knowledge required of all things to produce imitations, as a critic. For this reason, although Gottsched's treatment of the disciplines may appear as a form of submission to a humanistic tradition that he merely transmits, in fact Gottsched's invocation of the critic de facto brings him into the lineage of disciplines that he describes. In that respect Gottsched enacts a fundamental critical gesture precisely in delineating the field of the critic. [9]

THE POET AND THE HISTORIAN

Gottsched's critical delineation of the interrelations between philosopher, poet and critic comfortably permit blending and overlap; in contrast to this he seems to harbor ambivalence about the proximity of the historian to the poet – specifically, the epic or narrative poet. Although the historian is said to borrow elements of poetic style, I will suggest that Gottsched's account of the purpose of history begs the question of whether it is borrowing that is at stake here. For with regard both to the style of the historian and the content of historical narratives, Gottsched's attempts to maintain strict disciplinary distinctions are undercut by an insistence on the poetic qualities of history and the position of historiography between philosophy and poetry.

What may be surprising in the context of postmodern discussions of the rhetoric of historiography is that Gottsched's concern is not formal, for instance insofar as both historian and epic or dramatic poet produce narratives. [10] The narrative aspect of historiography is taken for granted. The more sensitive aspect of proximity between poetic and historical practices pertains to their shared engagement with fictionalizing:

> **»Der Geschichtschreiber, sagt man, schildert ja auch diejenigen Personen, Sachen und Örter ab; von welchen er uns Erzählungen macht. Er führt seine Helden wohl gar redend ein, und läßt sie oft Dinge sagen, die sie zwar hätten sagen können, aber in der That niemals gesagt haben.« (p. 148)**

The *Geschichtschreiber* of Gottsched's description, obviously not bound by the conventions of present-day historiography, is said to invent elements that may not actually have happened. Gottsched's critical concern is rather to differentiate the historian from the poet despite the fact that both may make use of fictions in order to tell their stories. His resolution to this problem of the proximity of the *Geschichtschreiber* to the poet, owing to the shared practice of fictionalizing, requires precisely the acknowledgment of the utterly ›interdisciplinary‹ overlap between the two: »[N]icht alles, was ein Geschichtschreiber thut, das thut er als ein Geschichtschreiber« (p. 148). The historian may use practices from other disciplines, but he does so as a borrower or outsider. In the same context, Gottsched allows that writers of history – as in Tacitus – may also moralize and offer political commentary. Analogously we could say that to the extent that the commentary is political or moral, it is de facto not properly historical and therefore does not threaten to confound the boundaries between politics, morality and history. The practice of historiography might include content that properly belongs to other fields; in Gottsched's view, this interdisciplinarity – as long as it is acknowledged as such *(»als ein Geschichtschreiber«)* – in effect confirms the distinctness of the proper realm of poetry vs. historiography.

A similar disavowal is required when Gottsched considers the stylistic qualities of historical writing. He notes that Thucydides, Xenophon, Livius and others make use of a »dichtende [...] Einbildungskraft« to which they are not bound »als Geschichtschreiber« (p. 149). Gottsched declares that they employ poetic imagination, which does not properly belong to the historian. History contains images, characters and »erdichtete [...] Reden [...]«, which are »poetische Kunststücke, die ein Geschichtschreiber nur entlehnet, um seine trockene Erzählungen dadurch ein wenig anmuthiger zu machen« (pp. 148–149). The quality of ›liveliness‹ in historical writing also results from such borrowing. Where Gottsched reports that Florus and Curtius were criticized by some *Kunstrichter* for their »gekünstelten Beschreibungen« (p. 149), his view is that the very condemnation of their style as ›poetic‹ indicates that »lebhafte [...] Beschreibungen eigentlich in der Dichtkunst zu Hause [sind]« (p. 149.). Also the fact that Florus and Curtius were condemned for exhibiting a *poetische Schreibart* with respect to their metaphors, rich descriptions and poetic expression shows again, for Gottsched, that such elements are properly poetic and not historical (p. 359). Precisely such a recognition that historiography borrows from non-historical practices grants historiography

a status as a distinct activity, in Gottsched's estimation. [11] Here the acknowledgment of the poetic character of the historian's writing does not undermine the distinction between poetry and historiography, but instead confirms it. Thus on several grounds, the *Geschichtschreiber* is perhaps uniquely close to the poet in Gottsched's account; for all things are represented in his work, they are represented in language, and they are offered with lively description, and the writer is furthermore at liberty to contribute all sorts of comments that are not strictly speaking historical. The very condemnations of historical uses of poetic styleserve for Gottsched as proof of the distinctness of these enterprises. [12] What is more, Gottsched's own position in this account of the poetics of historiography is a critical one, as Gottsched offers his philosophical-poetic judgment as to the appropriateness of poetic devices to historiographical practices.

In the passages discussed so far, Gottsched emphasizes the borrowed character of literary and other devices for the production of historiography. On the other hand, Gottsched's references to the relationship between historiography and poetry also indicate a profound ambivalence as to how necessary poetic elements are to historiography, and hence as to the distinctness of these forms of production. We have seen that the intrahistorical use of such poetic elements as images, vivid characterizations and invented speech that render the »trockene Erzählungen« a bit more graceful *(anmuthiger)* are »only borrowed« *(nur entlehnet)* by the historian. They seem, however, to be necessary, »weil [der Geschichtschreiber] einer andern Kunst Hülfe *braucht*, seine Arbeit zur Vollkommenheit zu bringen« (p. 149, emphasis added). This indicates that historiography seems in fact to be dependent on poetry, for these poetic devices render it complete. Insofar as the historian here *requires* other arts in order to complete his work, the history-poetry distinction seems less definitive than Gottsched has otherwise indicated.

Where philosophy is introduced into the disciplinary constellation, it becomes clearer that liveliness and grace do belong to historiography in its own right. That is, Gottsched claims that poetry is between philosophy and history, because philosophy offers moral teachings but is not pleasant to read for most people; and conversely history is pleasant to read, but has no morality to offer (p. 221). Gottsched notes that without the artistic-poetic quality of liveliness history would be dull; and thus to the extent that, in this account, history is characterized in its essence as ›pleasant to read‹, it would therefore *require* the liveliness that Gottsched elsewhere claims is not properly historical. In other words, the pleasantness that defines history in this account is absolutely essential, not decorative or superficial. In juxtaposing history to philosophy, Gottsched reinforces the incontrovertibility of the demand for poetic elements in historiography. That demand and necessity undercuts Gottsched's characterization of the borrowing between poetry and historiography, insofar as in the triangulation with philosophy it becomes more apparent that the appeal to readers is part of what makes history history. In this regard Gottsched's spatial metaphorics of ›betweenness‹, in his attempt to situate poetry between philosophy and history, compete with his explanation of the procedural and stylistic differences between historiography, philosophy and poetry. The ›borrowing‹ by the historian of the tools of another craft appears here as the use of the historian's own, fully necessary, tools.

Even the fictionalizing that Gottsched has granted a borrowed place in historiography can be read as not borrowed but entirely necessary to the task of historiography. For while Gottsched notes that it is right to criticize historians of antiquity for changing, adding, or omitting elements of their stories, he also asks how such writers should have written in such a fashion when they write of people long after their deaths, implying that only by way of such fictionalizing would historiography have been possible (p. 149). Again, Gottsched appears to acknowledge the deeply poetic and fictive nature of historical writing, its mixed character and dependence on elements that come from other disciplines of writing. The ›borrowing‹ is a necessary one, and the poetic qualities of liveliness and fictionalizing seem to be essential for historiography. What is more, Gottsched's treatment of historical poetry and its connection to the Muses implicitly reasserts the interdependence of history and poetry (p. 231). Gottsched's taxonomy of poetic types according to their content includes historical poetry in addition to dogmatic and prophetic poetry. Gottsched offers the reminder that historical poetry is entirely indebted to the Muses, that traces of ancient history are found everywhere in poets, and that Clio was, as a Muse, dedicated to history. The account of the Muses serves as a methodological as well as mythological justification for the intertwining of historiography and poetry. Indeed Gottsched indicates that memory itself is utterly indebted to poetry, as the Muses are evoked to assist in the evocation in literary form of forgotten or unknown things.
Thus even in his attempts to point to the distinct nature of historiography and its

relationship to other kinds of writing, Gottsched ends up portraying a far more intimate, and even dependent, relationship than he otherwise asserts. Historical writing is shown to be shot through with other elements, i.e. liveliness, rich description, poetics, moralizing, fabulation and so forth. The proper character of historiography does not exclude these literary elements, but seems instead to require them. Although the lines between historiography and poetry do not seem as solid as Gottsched's own account suggests, the fact that he attempts to draw them is significant, once again, for the emergence of the critical position out of the examination of rhetorical devices within historiography and poetry. That is, Gottsched's critical function reappears in this constellation, as the disciplinary positioning of Gottsched's own reflections. The task of the critic is here enacted in Gottsched's positioning of the poet ›between‹ the philosopher and the historian.

POETIC THINKING

Thanks to his emphasis, in the *Critische Dichtkunst* and elsewhere, on reason and rules of composition, Gottsched has been dismissed and disdained – hence Beiser quotes J.E. Schlegel to the effect that Gottsched offers a homely recipe book for composing poetry. [13] Although Beiser's goal is to rehabilitate him, Beiser offers a rather limiting view of Gottsched as »the high noon of rationalism« in his argument for a direct line of aesthetic rationalism from Leibniz to Lessing. [14] In fact Beiser's philosophical retrieval of Gottsched precisely elides the interdisciplinarity and discipline-shaping turn that Gottsched's interest in poetic style and critique highlights. In particular, the strictly philosophical interest in an objective standard of taste eclipses the way that Gottsched brings together poetic style with rationalism. My suggestion is that Gottsched's philosophical commitments to reason render him a thinker of mediality *avant la lettre*, for in Gottsched's treatment of poetic thinking, reason turns out to be a close cousin to sheer connectibility. To be clear: rule-giving as such does not fully characterize the rationality that Gottsched imputes to poetic thinking. Instead the poetic thinking that informs the style of poetry and, as we have seen, of historiography, involves a promiscuous *Witz*. In reclaiming Gottsched for a rationalist philosophical tradition, Beiser overlooks how *Witz* for Gottsched is founded on principles of connectedness that have less to do with rules than with wildly heterogeneous associations.

This point requires elucidation, for it is at the heart of what Gottsched means by a *poetische Schreibart*. With reference to his *Redekunst* Gottsched suggests that the poetische Schreibart is »der Vortrag vieler zusammenhängenden Gedanken […] welcher durch solche Sätze und Redensarten geschieht, daraus man ihre Verknüpfung deutlich wahrnehmen kann« (p. 421). What is significant here is that the connection between the thoughts is primary: the thoughts themselves fit together *(zusammenhängen)*, and poetic writing exposes or permits the perception of their connection *(Verknüpfung)*. The difference between poetic writing and other writing lies in the thinking behind the words, »in der Art zu denken« (p. 423). Poetic thinking for Gottsched is the prerequisite of poetic writing; and it is not a matter of decorations, or verse, or choice of words. Gottsched then asks, »Wie denken aber die Poeten?«, and considers the possibilities of commonsense and divine inspiration. Gottsched's answer is that poets think like other rational people – possibly even more rationally than others: »Jede Zeile muß, so zu reden, zeugen, daß sie einen vernünftigen Vater habe« (p. 424). Reason must in this regard be the author of poetry, and therefore must belong to the thinking of the poets. Gottsched thus writes that the poets require »eine gesunde Vernunft, richtige Begriffe von Dingen, und eine große Kenntniß von Künsten und Wissenschaften« (p. 424).

This might seem to justify the claim for a rationalist »high noon« in Gottsched. But Gottsched revisits the question and comes to say that in fact reason cannot be the difference between a poetic and prosaic way of thinking: »Die Vernunft kann und soll es […] nicht seyn« (p. 426). Instead poetic thinking is a matter of *Witz*; this is Gottsched's answer both in his treatment of the character of the poet (p. 152) and in his inquiry into poetic thinking. When Gottsched proceeds to analyze it in more detail, however, *Witz* seems to be more complicated than a faculty or capacity. Rather it involves temporality, impressionability, and the perception of similarity, for it is a

> **»Scharfsinnigkeit, wodurch [gewisse Geister] gleichsam in einem Augenblicke hundert Eigenschaften von einer Sache, die ihnen vorkömmt, wahrnehmen. Was sie wahrnehmen, das drücket sich, wegen ihrer begierigen Aufmerksamkeit tief in ihr Gedächtniß: und so bald zu anderer Zeit etwas vorfällt, das nur die geringste Aehnlichkeit damit hat; so bringt ihnen die Einbildungskraft dasselbe wiederum hervor. So ist ihnen denn allezeit eine Menge von Gedanken fast zugleich.« (pp. 426–427)**

In manifold ways, and in one moment, *Witz, Scharfsinnigkeit*, imagination and memory come together, according to Gottsched, to produce the various elements of poetry – similarities, allusions, wordplays, images, et al.

What is significant here for the argument about Gottsched and mediality is that *Witz*, the special capacity that makes poetic thinking different than other thinking, is a labile connectibility, a promiscuous possibility of combination: »[D]as Gegenwärtige bringt sie aufs Vergangene; das Wirkliche aufs Mögliche, das Empfundene auf alles, was ihm ähnlich ist, oder noch werden kann« (p. 427). One temporality is connected to another; one mode of existence is connected to another; similarity or even any possible similarity, connects things to one another. This last point is particularly labile; for if anything *empfunden* can be connected to anything else that is or could be *empfunden*, then the limits of not actual but even possible connections would seem to be very hard to discover. What connection, in other words, is *not* thinkable within these parameters?

If Gottsched's poetic way of thinking is to be understood as rationalist, then that »rationality« is embedded in a promiscuous *Witz* that connects unconnected thoughts by way of memory, similarity, possible similarity, and feeling – a range of associations that finds here no clear restriction. Such a gamut of combinations would render extremely elastic any rules that might be formulated for the poetic style of writing. For this reason, it is too restrictive to consider rules and rationality as Gottsched's main criteria for poetic thinking. Indeed already in Gottsched's own time his ›reception‹ as an out-and-out rationalist was debatable. Abraham Gotthelf Kästner's treatment of Gottsched in his own century, for instance, indicates that it is not anachronistic to consider Gottsched as an aesthetic, poetic thinker. [15] The »rule« for Gottsched's rationality is a sheer possibility of connectedness, where there is no one principle governing what can be connected to what. The connectedness that for Gottsched characterizes the reason behind poetry is a promiscuous possibility of affiliation, association and relation; it is not a matter of logic, calculation, consequentialism or abstraction. This is, I would argue, the nascent thought of »mediality« in Gottsched. It is a connectibility without conditions, a »-*barkeit*« in the sense that Samuel Weber ascribes to Walter Benjamin a thinking of »-*barkeiten*«. [16]

The *Witz* that Gottsched claims as central for poetic thinking is open to the manifold connections of thoughts to one another. The connections that are evoked here are wildly multifarious. Different properties of one thing, minimal similarities between things, present and past, present and future, actual and possible, experience and anything that is or could be similar. The range of possibilities here – and even the explicit mention of possibilities and the possibilities of things to become alike – seems to set no limits as to the functions of poetic thought in its *Scharfsinnigkeit*. The promiscuous connectibility of times, thoughts, things and modes of existence that Gottsched ascribes to the thoughts of the poet is not rational in the sense of logical, orderly, and above all necessary. The poetic thinking is precisely ungoverned by necessity and open to contingency – to *possible* similarities and connections. This is, once again, a promiscuous reason that is open, labile and promises connectibility without reference to a stable criterion for such connections.

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The promise of connectibility here offers a glimpse of what we might consider a prehistory of Medialität, at the point where criticism emerges out of the intersection of philosophical and literary considerations. The inventiveness of the historian's fictionalized speeches; the political commentary that might accompany a historical account; the devices which render history pleasant, in contrast to philosophy – these are quintessentially connectible, as befits a proto-medial investigation into the relationships of poetry, historiography and philosophy. What is more, the position of Gottsched as a critic who formulates the role of the critic likewise requires a certain medial status. Hence Gottsched's taxonomic efforts with regard to disciplines, uses of language, and kinds of thinking might on one hand seem to invoke rules and rationality, but on the other hand also evoke fluctuations in the very definitions toward which they reach. The connectibility that Gottsched describes undercuts the precision he seeks. In this respect the transdisciplinary success of media theory in contemporary German thought recapitulates the proto-medial inquiries that would seek to define precisely a labile, ungovernable connectibility that both inhabits and confounds the demarcations of poetic, historical and philosophical thinking.

ENDNOTEN

[1] My thanks go to Séan Williams for ideas and comments.

[2] See for instance Sybille Krämer (ed.): *Performativität und Medialität*, München 2004, and Sybille Krämer: *Medium, Bote, Übertragung. Kleine Metaphysik der Medialität*, Frankfurt a.M. 2008.

[3] See Johann Christoph Gottsched: *Versuch einer critischen Dichtkunst*, Ausgewählte Werke, Joachim Birke and Brigitte Birke (eds.), vols. 6.1-2, Berlin 1973. All references with page numbers in the text are to this work.

[4] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing: *Literaturbriefe*, Werke und Briefe, Gunter E. Grimm (ed.), vol. 4, Frankfurt a.M. 1997, p. 499. Frederick Beiser retrieves Gottsched as a central figure in the development of an eclipsed, pre-Kantian understanding of aesthetic reason as cognitive, in contrast to Kant's insistence that aesthetic judgment is non-cognitive (see Frederick Beiser: *Diotima's Children: German Aesthetic Rationalism from Leibniz to Lessing*, Oxford 2009, p. 16f., henceforth quoted as Beiser 2009). As Eric Blackall points out, Gottsched's *Erste Gründe der gesammten Weltweisheit* (1734) was a widely consulted textbook of philosophy in the eighteenth century (see Eric Blackall, *The Emergence of German as a Literary Language 1700-1775*, Ithaca 1978, p. 48).

[5] Gottsched's reflections on imitation are obviously indebted to Aristotle's *Poetics*, but his focus in this passage is less on the differences between kinds of poetry, and instead more on the differences between Dichtkunst and other enterprises.

[6] Unlike the *große Haufe* and its uneducated feeling, the critic has reasons or grounds for its taste (p. 145). In the context of Gottsched's own debts to and interest in Leibniz, here would lie an opening toward a Heideggerian treatment of Gottsched's notion of the critic, along the lines of Heidegger's lectures on Leibniz in his 1955-1956 course that were published as Martin Heidegger: *Der Satz vom Grund*, Pfullingen 1957. That is, the critic is the one who gives the grounds or reasons for the fine arts, and this rendering of reasons is, in a certain stage of the unfolding of his analysis, the quintessential gesture of metaphysics at the heart of critcal poetics.

[7] Rüdiger Campe: *Affekt und Ausdruck: Zur Umwandlung der literarischen Rede im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Tübingen 1990, p. 64, henceforth quoted as Campe 1990. Campe's monumental work offers infinitely more detail concerning the interdisciplinary character of Gottsched's enterprise, in particular with respect to the rhetorical context and its relationship to an emerging hermeneutic culture. Campe lays out the ways in which critique became a form of writing and knowledge in its own right, beginning with Gottsched's and Bodmer's critiques of rhetoric and poetry, which lay the ground for critique of works of literature (p. 4). Likewise Campe argues for the differentiation – precisely by way of this critique of rhetoric and poetry – of the traditional combination in rhetoric of the elements of ingenium and judicium (p. 5). Here critique represents the reconsideration of poetic production according to scientific rules. Campe's treatment resists the canonical terminology of classicism, romanticism and so forth, in order to present in its full originality the development of the notion of critique. See Istvan Gombocz: »Review of Rüdiger Campe: *Affekt und Ausdruck: Zur Umwandlung der literarischen Rede im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*«, in: *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology 92* (1993). pp. 95–97.

[8] Although he introduces the concept of the critic in the context of all the fine arts, poetry seems to enjoy a distinct position in Gottsched's consideration of the critic, because it is produced in language, and language is for Gottsched more directly tied to thinking than the other media by which arts produce their imitations – e.g. stone, paint, or sound. Indeed the sheer postulation of a critic as a poetic philosopher or philosophical poet testifies to Gottsched's estimation of the kinship between the poet and the philosopher as closer than between any other field and its potential critics, who would not share in the medium they judge.

[9] Gottsched acknowledges that his description of the critic borrows from the Earl of Shaftsbury, among others (p. 145). P.M. Mitchell suggests that Gottsched did not necessarily read the German translations of Shaftesbury but instead either relied on French translations or on reviews of Shaftesbury (see P.M. Mitchell: *Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766): Harbinger of German Classicism*, New York 1995, p. 29.

[10] The paradigmatic argument for the formal relationships between historiography and literature is found in Hayden White: *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Baltimore 1973.

[11] In a related vein, Andres Straßberger investigates the ›philosophical‹ sermon as treated by Gottsched, where the relationship between philosophical, moral and theological insights is likewise a question of distinct but connected activity (see Andres Straßberger: *Johann Christoph Gottsched und die ›philosophische‹ Predigt: Studien zur aufklärerischen Transformation der protestantischen Homiletik im Spannungsfeld von Theologie, Philosophie, Rhetorik und Politik*, Tübingen 2010).

[12] The affinity between the poet and the historian appears in a very different context in Gottsched's chapter on the periodic style. In the context of asserting that a natural word order is desirable in poetry, Gottsched comes to a moment of infrequent criticism of Aristotle (p. 357) on the grounds of lenience *(Gelindigkeit)*. In *Poetics* 22 (erroneously cited as 23), Aristotle rejects a criticism by a historian against the tragic poets for placing prepositions after their objects; Aristotle defends the poets and praises them for being less prosaic (see Aristotle: *Poetics*, Steven Halliwell (transl.), Cambridge 1995). For Gottsched, Aristotle's praise of the divergence from natural word order de facto offers proof that natural word order exists – in contrast to the claims of Bodmer, the »Swiss Milton«, who suggests that among the Greeks there was no concern for rearranging word order. The rules of word order, like the regimen governing disciplinary differences with respect to historians using poetic elements, are proven in Gottsched's view as long as their breach is acknowledged.

[13] Beiser 2009, p. 90. As the compiler of a canon of rules for German grammar, Gottsched likewise was clearly a thinker of rules. As Benjamin Bennett points out, however, for Gottsched (and Bodmer and Breitinger) the formulation of rules had not, as in the French tradition of poetic rules, the goal of offering rules of application to a fixed, canonical language. Instead for the early 18th-century German treatment of poetic language the question was, Bennett writes, what it means to have a common language in the first place (see Benjamin Bennett: *Beyond Theory: Eighteenth-Century German Literature and the Poetics of Irony*, Ithaca 1993, p. 232). This implies that Gottsched's attempts to formulate rules must be understood in the context of disorientation with regard to the foundationless development of German as a literary language.

[14] See his chapter on »Gottsched and the high noon of rationalism«. Beiser argues that Kant's emphasis on the non-cognitive aspect of the aesthetic judgment has overshadowed, for all subsequent reception of aesthetics, the possibilities represented in Gottsched and others of objective principles of taste (Beiser 2009, p. 16).

[15] See Hermann Stauffer: *Erfindung und Kritik: Rhetorik im Zeichen der Frühaufklärung bei Gottsched und seinen Zeitgenossen*, Frankfurt a.M. 1997, p. 232 – with reference to Abraham Gotthelf Kästner: *Gesammelte poetische und prosaische schönwissenschaftliche Werken*, 4 vols., Berlin 1841.

[16] Samuel Weber: *Benjamin's -abilities*, Cambridge 2008.

»DREHMOMENTE«
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