

**A HISTORY OF POETICS**

**German Scholarly Poetics and Aesthetics in International Context, 1770-1960**

Sandra Richter

**With a Bibliography of Poetics**

by Anja Hill-Zenk,

Jasmin Azazmah, Eva Jost and Sandra Richter

To Jörg Schönert

## Table of Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Preface</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>I. Introduction</b>   | <b>9</b>  |
| 1. Poetics as Field of Knowledge   | 11        |
| 2. Periods and Text Types  | 21        |
| 3. Methodology   | 26        |
| <b>II. Aesthetics and Academic Poetics in Germany</b>  | <b>32</b> |
| 1. Eclectic Poetics: Popular Philosophy (1770–1790)  | 36        |
| (a) The Moralizing Standard Work: Johann Georg Sulzer (1771–1774)  | 39        |
| (b) Popular Aesthetics as a Part of ‘Erfahrungsseelenlehre’ in 1783:<br>Johann Joachim Eschenburg, Johann August Eberhard, Johann Jacob Engel                  | 44        |
| 2. Transcendental Poetics and Beyond: Immanuel Kant’s Critical<br>Successors (1790–1800)   | 55        |
| (a) Critical Poetics and Popular Critique: Johann Heinrich Gottlob<br>Heusinger (1797)   | 57        |
| (b) Systematical and Empirical Poetics on a Cosmological Basis:<br>Christian A.H. Clodius (1804)   | 59        |
| (c) Towards a Realistic Poetics: Joseph Hillebrand (1827)  | 63        |
| 3. Historical and Genetic Poetics: Johann Justus Herwig (1774),<br>August Wilhelm Schlegel (1801–1803/1809–1811) and<br>Johann Gottfried Herder’s Heritage     | 66        |
| 4. Logothological Poetics after Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling:<br>Friedrich Ast (1805) and Joseph Loreye (1801/2, <sup>2</sup> 1820)                      | 77        |
| 5. Post-idealist Poetics   | 86        |
| (a) An Empirical Idealist Poetics: Friedrich Bouterwek (1806)  | 86        |
| (b) Religious Poetics: Wilhelm Wackernagel’s Lectures (1836/7) and<br>the Catholics  | 90        |
| (c) The Turning Point after Hegel and Beyond:<br>Friedrich Theodor Vischer (1846–1857) and the New Challenges<br>(Johann Friedrich Herbart, Robert Zimmermann) | 96        |
| (d) Literary Poetics: Rudolph Gottschall (1858)  | 103       |
| 6. Pre-Empirical and Empirical Poetics since 1820  | 111       |
| (a) Poetics as Life Science: Moriz Carriere (1854/ <sup>2</sup> 1884) and (1859)   | 113       |
| (b) Psychological Poetics: From Gustav Theodor Fechner (1871/1876),  |           |

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Heinrich Viehoff (1820) and Rudolph Hermann Lotze (1884) to<br>Wilhelm Dilthey (1887) to Richard Müller-Freienfels (1914/1921) | 117         |
| (c) Processual Poetics: Wilhelm Scherer (1888)   | 142         |
| (d) Evolutionary Poetics: Eugen Wolff (1899)   | 149         |
| 7. Comprehensive Poetics   | 152         |
| (a) On the Way to a New Discipline Called ‘Literary Science’<br>(“Literaturwissenschaft”): Ernst Elster (1897)                 | 152         |
| (b) Back to Poetics: Hubert Roetteken (1902/1924)  | 156         |
| 8. Poetics and ‘Geisteswissenschaft’   | 160         |
| (a) Renewed Historical Poetics: Wilhelm Dilthey (1905)   | 163         |
| (b) On the Way to Epistemological Poetics: Emil Ermatinger (1921)  | 167         |
| (c) Bi-polar Poetic Formalism: Oskar Walzel (1926)   | 170         |
| (d) Typological Poetics: Hermann Hefele (1923)   | 173         |
| 9. The Turn Towards Language: Theodor A. Meyer (1901)  | 177         |
| 10. Phenomenological and Ontological Poetics: Edmund Husserl and<br>Roman Ingarden (1931)                                      | 181         |
| 11. Anthropology, Existentialism and Hermeneutics: the Influence of<br>Søren Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger                  | 188         |
| (a) On the Way to Hermeneutical Poetics: Theophil Spoerri (1929)   | 190         |
| (b) Existentialist Poetics: Johannes Pfeiffer (1936)   | 195         |
| (c) Anthropological Poetics in Refined Genre Theory: Emil Staiger<br>(1939/1946)   | 199         |
| 12. The Long Life of the ‘Artwork of Language’ (“Sprachkunstwerk”)   | 206         |
| (a) The Great Amalgamation: Wolfgang Kayser (1948)   | 207         |
| (b) Back to a Poetics of Style: Herbert Seidler (1959)   | 209         |
| 13. Poetics Under the Fascist Regime – Biology, Race and Morphology  | 213         |
| (a) Problems of German Poetics: Karl Justus Obenauer (1936)  | 215         |
| (b) Poetry and ‘Volkheit’ – a New Old Literary Science:<br>Heinz Kindermann (1937)   | 218         |
| (c) Biologist Approaches: Ludwig Büttner (1939)  | 222         |
| (d) Morphological Poetics: Günther Müller (1944)   | 226         |
| (e) Towards a Methodology of a ‘General Literary Science’ (“Allgemeine<br>Literaturwissenschaft”): Julius Petersen (1939)      | 231         |
| 14. New Approaches in a Reproductive Era   | 238         |
| (a) Author Poetics From America: Joachim Maass (1949)  | 239         |
| (b) Holistic Poetics in General Literary Science: Max Wehrli (1951)  | 242         |
| 15. Conclusion: Tendencies, Trends and Sunken Goods  | 248         |
| <br><b>III. Bibliographies</b>   | <br>257     |
| 1. A Bibliography of German Poetics  | [+110pp.]   |
| 3. Other Poetics (Selected Bibliography)   | [+10 pp.]   |
| 4. Bibliography of Research  | [+20pp.]    |
| <br><b>IV. Additional Material: Prints and Pictures</b>  | <br>[+5pp.] |

## Preface

A history of poetics, a device for orientation I know not.<sup>1</sup>

Poetics has always been a key to the history and systematic order of the humanities: the renaissance ‘poeta doctus’ proved his scholarly knowledge and stylistic competence by writing a poetological treatise. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, poetics was seen as the core area of the humanities – as the ‘logic’ of the humanities. Nevertheless, we know astonishingly little about the different national histories of poetics; less can be said about international developments and exchanges. Wilhelm Scherer is still correct when he states that a history of poetics is missing.

These deficiencies originate from the conflicting nature of poetics itself: on the one hand, poetics participates in the general history and theory of science and the humanities but is neglected to a large extent by these fields of study. The reason is simple: poetics deals with poetry – and not with the ‘hard sciences’. On the other hand, poetics is close to the study of literature, to criticism and its history. But critique tends to focus on its ‘beautiful object’ and to ignore its own history, especially after, in the final decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ‘great theory’ ended. Facing so many difficulties, this study on German poetics in international context cannot be anything but an expedition into little-mapped terrain. Some islands, the aesthetics of the ‘big thinkers’ of course, are extremely well studied. This study can build on this research but is designed to discover the lesser known texts.

The findings presented here result from Sandra Richter’s Emmy Noether research group on ‘Poetological Reflection. Poetics and Poetological Lyric Poetry in Aesthetic Context’. Some parts of it that could only be sketched here are further developed in the following contributions and articles.

---

<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm Scherer: *Poetik* [1888]. Mit einer Einleitung und Materialien zur Rezeptionsanalyse, ed. by Gunter Reiss. Tübingen: Niemeyer (dtv) 1977, p. 29: “Eine Geschichte der Poetik, ein Hilfsmittel zur Orientierung kenne ich nicht.”

By Sandra Richter:

- (published under her maiden name Sandra Pott) *Poetiken. Poetologische Lyrik, Poetik und Ästhetik von Novalis bis Rilke*. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter 2004.
- (published under her maiden name Sandra Pott) *Poetics of the Picture. August Wilhelm Schlegel and Achim von Arnim*, in: *The Image of Words. Literary Transpositions of Pictorial Ideas*, ed. by Rüdiger Görner. München: Iudicium 2005 (Institute German Studies X), pp. 76–90.
- (published under her maiden name Sandra Pott) *Poetologische Reflexion. "Lyrik" in poetologischer Lyrik, Poetik und Ästhetik (19. Jahrhundert)*, in: *Lyrik im 19. Jahrhundert. Historische Gattungspoetik als Reflexionsmedium einer kulturwissenschaftlichen Germanistik*, eds. Steffen Martus, Stefan Scherer, Claudia Stockinger. Bern: Lang 2005 (Publikationen zur Zeitschrift für Germanistik NF 11), pp. 31–60.
- (published under her maiden name Sandra Pott) *Von der Erfindung und den Grenzen des Schaffens. Fallstudien zur Inventio-Lehre in Poetik und Ästhetik*, in: *Imagination und Invention, Paragrana 2* (2006), eds. Toni Bernhart, Philipp Mehne, pp. 217–242.
- (published under her maiden name Sandra Pott) *International, nationale und transnationale Poetik: Hugh Blair auf dem Kontinent und einige Bemerkungen über den Transfer poetologischen Wissens seit 1790*, in: *Triangulärer Transfer: Großbritannien, Frankreich und Deutschland um 1800, Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift 56/1* (2006), eds. Sandra Pott, Sebastian Neumeister, pp. 99–114.
- *Anschaulichkeit versus Sprachlichkeit. Ein paradigmatischer Scheingegenatz in Ästhetik und Poetik (ca. 1850 bis 1950)*, in: *Die Künste und ihre Wissenschaften im 19. Jahrhundert*, eds. Oliver Huck, Sandra Richter, Christian Scholl. Hildesheim (forthcoming).
- (with Hans-Harald Müller) *Nationale Philologien – europäische Zeitschriften. Zur Rezeption von Poetik und Literaturtheorie in den wissenschaftlichen und literaturkritischen Zeitschriften zwischen 1880 und 1930*, to be published in the papers of the conference on European Philologies, VW-Foundation. Osnabrück University, April 2007.

- Lyrik im Ausgang aus der Stummfilmzeit: Claire Golls *Lyrische Films* (1922), to be published in the papers of the conference on Intermediality and Literature, Thyssen-Foundation. Freiburg University, February 2007.
- Unsichere Schönheit? Die Geburt der Ästhetik aus der Kritik des Skeptizismus, in: Unsicheres Wissen in der Frühen Neuzeit, eds. Carlos Spoerhase, Dirk Werle, Markus Wild. Berlin, New York 2008 (forthcoming).
- Wie kommt das Bild in die Lyriktheorie? Präliminarien zu einer visuellen Theorie der Lyrik, in: Das lyrische Bild, eds. Nina Herres, Csongor Lörincz, Ralf Simon. Munich 2008 (forthcoming).

By Gunilla Eschenbach: Imitation und Parodie. Poetologische Lyrik und Poetik im George-Kreis.

By Eva Jost: Dichtung als Sensation. Die populäre Moderne: Otto Julius Bierbaum.

For the generous support and funding the group has received in the Emmy Noether programme, I wish to thank the German Research Foundation. During the years of research necessary for a study like this the junior research group was hosted by various institutions: by Hamburg University (Institute of German Studies II), King's College London (German Department) and Stuttgart University (Neuere Deutsche Literatur I). We wish to thank all three Universities for their hospitality. Many colleagues are responsible for the warm welcome and the fruitful time that the group had in Hamburg, London and Stuttgart. I can only name a few of them: Jörg Schönert did his utmost to support and help the group intellectually as well as administratively. Peter Hühn has been a corner-stone for the integration of any English content. Hans-Harald Müller, whose principal field of research is on empirical poetics around 1900, became an intellectual counterpart for the group. The colleagues and friends from the research group 'Narratology' at the University of Hamburg (German Research Foundation) as well as Philip Ajouri (Stuttgart University) contributed to our interests by their own research. Lutz Danneberg and his 'Research Centre of Historical Epistemology and Hermeneutics' (Humboldt University Berlin), Simone Winko, director of the Center of Literary Theory at the University of Göttingen, Christoph König's 'Network Philologies in Europe' (University Osnabrück) and Marcel Lepper (German Literary Archiv Marbach) enriched the project through many discussions.

I am in great debt to Jasmin Azazmah, Mara Delius, Gunilla Eschenbach, Kristof Gundelfinger, Eva Jost, Tim Kopera, Deirdre Mahony, Petra Mayer and Oliver Krug. Without them, this manuscript would not exist: Gunilla Eschenbach and Eva Jost did some of the research on individual scholars. Mara Delius, Tim Kopera, Oliver Krug and Kristof Gundelfinger helped to find and analyse the material. Anja Hill-Zenk was responsible for the bibliography of poetics and was helped by Jasmin Azazmah, Eva Jost as well as myself. Last but not least, I wish to thank my curious students at Hamburg University, who stimulated this book by continuous questioning. Yet the book was written in London; therefore, its language is English.

Stuttgart 2008



## I. Introduction

In his famous book on *Truth and Method* (1960) Hans-Georg Gadamer reports a big shift in historiography: the scientification born in 19<sup>th</sup> century poetics. This scientification is not only said to have introduced logic and the natural sciences but also to have colonised the humanities under the flag of objectivity. According to Gadamer, one person is especially to blame for this colonisation and he directly attacks him: Wilhelm Dilthey, Gadamer writes, against his own better knowledge, subordinated his poetics to the ideal of the natural sciences. Although Dilthey himself never forgot the romantic idea of ‘spirit’ (“Geist”) and, in his letters to Wilhelm Scherer, practised ways of scholarship Gadamer esteems, Dilthey was blinded by the ideas of logic conclusion, of ‘induction’ and objectivity.<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, Gadamer argues, Dilthey neglected the core ideas of the humanities: ‘individual tact’ (“individuelle[n] Takt”), ‘culture of the soul’ (“seelische Kultur”), authority and tradition.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, in his early writings on poetics Dilthey announced his aim to rebuild the humanities on the basis of empiricism and psychology.<sup>4</sup> But in contrast to what Gadamer asserts, Dilthey’s goal was not to extinguish individuality. On the contrary, Dilthey hoped to be able to prove it. For this reason the poet, his experience, his fantasy, in short everything that distinguishes his extraordinary personality, nature and talent from non-creative people became Dilthey’s field of study. Through the study of the poet’s experience Dilthey sought to find a ‘systematic poetics’ – a poetics that shows the laws of individuality and therefore serves as the ‘logic’ or the ‘general science’ (“allgemeine Wissenschaft”) of the humanities.<sup>5</sup>

Gadamer is also wrong in a second aspect. He accuses the 19<sup>th</sup> century alone and especially Dilthey of having established the reign of the natural sciences in the humanities. History proves to be more complicated: the ‘scientification’ of poetics can be traced back (at least) to

---

<sup>2</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer: *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: Mohr 1960, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Tom Kindt, Hans-Harald Müller: Dilthey gegen Scherer. Geistesgeschichte contra Positivismus. Zur Revision eines wissenschaftshistorischen Stereotyps, in: *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 74/4 (2000), pp. 685–709.

<sup>5</sup> Wilhelm Dilthey: Die Einbildungskraft des Dichters: Bausteine für eine Poetik, in: W.D.: *Philosophische Aufsätze*. Altenburg: Pierer, 1887, p. 107.

Christian Wolff's rational psychology (1727)<sup>6</sup> and to Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's reflections on aesthetics as a discipline (*Aesthetica*, 1750/1758). Wolff and Baumgarten focused on one question: how to judge emotions? While Wolff dedicated his psychology to the examination of cognition, Baumgarten grounded a new doctrine on Wolff's system: according to Baumgarten 'sensitive cognition' ("cognitio sensitiva") is analogue to reasonable judgement.<sup>7</sup> Matters of taste and imagination in turn become the touchstones of aesthetics as well as of the philosophy of cognition and judgement – a development that has its long afterlife in 19<sup>th</sup> century poetics and aesthetics until Dilthey.

Taking this complex constellation into account I will show how complicated the late 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century history of poetics is, thereby building on the increasing research interest in aesthetics and poetics. The last seven years have seen the publication of various broad-scale 500- to 700-pages anthologies on aesthetics of all kinds. To name only a few of them: *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics* (2001, 2005) aims at a comprehensive overview which includes histories of aesthetics, the individual arts as well as current issues.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to this, *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics* (2003) identifies general and specific issues with a focus on the method of aesthetical study.<sup>9</sup> Last but not least, Blackwell publishers present a double-sided account of aesthetics: the anthology *Continental Aesthetics*

---

<sup>6</sup> The book is known as 'German Metaphysics' but published under the title: *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt*; Christian Wolff, Frankfurt: Andreä & Hort, 1727; see Matthew Bell: *The German Tradition of Psychology in Literature and Thought, 1700–1840*. Cambridge : Cambridge UP 2005, pp. 22f.; Jean-François Goubet, Oliver-Pierre Rudolph (eds.): *Die Psychologie Christian Wolffs. Systematische und historische Untersuchungen*. Tübingen 2004 (Studien zur Europäischen Aufklärung 22).

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten: *Aesthetica*. Hildesheim: Olms, 1970 (Reprint Frankfurt at Oder 1750). Baumgarten was not the only one to formulate such an attempt. His disciple Georg Friedrich Meier developed a similar theory. See Meier's aesthetic chief work "Die Anfangsgründe aller schönen Wissenschaften und Künste" (3 parts, Halle 1748–50. Reprint of the 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1754) at Hildesheim/New York: Georg Olms Verlag 1976), in which he summarizes his aesthetic views. Cf. also "Frühe Schriften zur ästhetischen Erziehung der Deutschen" (3 parts), ed. by Hans-Joachim Kertscher and Günter Schenk, Halle Saale: Hallescher Verlag 1999-2002. Cf. also Jean-François Goubet, Gérard Raulet (eds.): *Aux sources de l'esthétique. Les débuts de l'esthétique philosophique en Allemagne*. Paris 2005 (Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme 2005; Collection Philia); Stefanie Buchenau, Élisabeth Décultot (eds.): *Esthétiques de l'Aufklärung. Akten des Kolloquiums 'Esthétiques de l'Aufklärung (1720–1780)'*, *Revue Germanique Internationale* 4 (2006).

<sup>8</sup> Berys Gaut, Dominic McIver Lopes (eds.): *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, New York: Routledge 2005 (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Jerrold Levinson (ed.): *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*. Oxford: OUP 2003.

(2001)<sup>10</sup> followed by the companion *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art. The Analytic Tradition* (2004).<sup>11</sup> Both studies give the impression that a geographical line could be drawn between two entirely different traditions of aesthetics, one aiming at metaphysics and hermeneutics ('the Continental tradition'), the other at the analysis of art and its perception ('the Anglo-American tradition'). This impression is misleading, not only historically but also systematically.<sup>12</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics has been both, analytical and hermeneutical or metaphysical, regardless of the country of origin.

This book is, in part, written against general assumptions about 'the tradition of aesthetics' and broad geographical denominations; rather, it aims to show how little we know about aesthetics, starting with a sub-field of aesthetics that is poetics. Not only key developments of poetics will be examined but also its results as well as its unresolved problems. Some of them appertain to the development of the 19<sup>th</sup> century national philologies.<sup>13</sup> These national philologies still participated in the reflections on poetry that had already been developed in the light of a European 'res publica litteraria'. Yet national philologies also tended towards specific national canons of literature and towards a more or less specific national poetics. In this volume I will deal with the history of German poetics and ascertain if this 'national' poetic thought shared at least some systematic knowledge about poetry as well as about its production and perception with other national or even local traditions of poetological thinking.<sup>14</sup> For that purpose, I will firstly ask how to explain poetics (chapter 1). Secondly, a

---

<sup>10</sup> Richard Kearney, David Rasmussen (eds.): *Continental Aesthetics. Romanticism and Postmodernism. An Anthology*. Cambridge: Blackwell 2001. See also the smaller but more focused volume by J.M: Bernstein (ed.): *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Lamarque, Stein Haugam Olsen (eds.): *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art. The Analytic Tradition*. Cambridge: Blackwell 2004.

<sup>12</sup> On this problem see the helpful review of 'Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art' by Roger Pouivet in: *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 45/1 (2005), pp. 88–94.

<sup>13</sup> See the contributions in Frank Fürbeth, Pierre Krügel, Ernst E. Metzner a. Olaf Müller (eds.): *Zur Geschichte und Problematik der Nationalphilologien in Europa: 150 Jahre Erste Germanistenversammlung in Frankfurt am Main (1846–1996)*. Tübingen 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Studies on comparative poetics are rare – even more so if the transfer of knowledge is called into question. More or less inspired by a comparative approach are Georges Saintsbury: *A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe. From the Earliest to the Present Day*. 3 vols. Edinburgh, London: Blackwood 1961; René Wellek: *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750–1950*. 4 vols. New Haven, London: Yale UP 1950 sq.; Jean Bessière, Eva Kushner, Roland Mortier, Jean Weisgerber (eds.): *Histoire des poétiques*. Paris: PUF 1997; Lubomír Doležal: *Occidental poetics: tradition and progress*. Lincoln, Nebraska [et al.]: Univ. of Nebraska Press 1990.

few words will be said on its periodisation (chapter 2). Thirdly, a brief remark on method will stress my particular aim (chapter 3).

## 1. Poetics as Field of Knowledge

In the middle ages, scholars studied the ‘ars poetica’ in the rhetoric-course of the ‘trivium’.<sup>15</sup> Until late in the 18<sup>th</sup> century ‘ars poetica’ comprised the examination and practice of poetry, of texts in verse (‘oratio ligata’),<sup>16</sup> of texts which may also benefit from a certain liberty of inventing and presenting them (‘licentia poetica’) and which need not necessarily persuade but educate and delight people (‘prodesse et delectare’).<sup>17</sup> Therefore, not only metrics and versification but also general questions about the poet, his topics and his audience were part of the ‘ars poetica’. These questions did not vanish in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century poetics and keep playing a role in current literary scholarship. The following list of questions on, and topics of, poetics depicts this fictive entity of poetological knowledge spread throughout poetological texts in various times and places. This list is meant as an addition to Heinrich Lausberg’s systematic account of rhetoric.<sup>18</sup> Although no poetological text will be aware of every component named, the synchronised and fictive framework of questions and topics might be of some use to the historical as well as systematic study of poetics. The fictive

---

<sup>15</sup> On the early history of poetics Heinrich F. Plett (ed.): *Renaissance Poetics*. Berlin, New York 1994; Barbara Bauer: *Jesuitische ‘ars rhetoric’ im Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe*. Frankfurt a.M. 1986; Volkhard Wels: *Der Begriff der Dichtung vor und nach der Reformation*, in: *Fragmenta Melanchthoniana 3: Melanchthons Wirkung in der europäischen Bildungsgeschichte*, eds. Günter Frank, Sebastian Lalla. Heidelberg 2007, pp. 81–104; Jörg Robert: *Methode – System – Enzyklopädie. Transformationen des Wissens und Strukturwandel der Poetik im 16. Jahrhundert*, in: *Maske und Mosaik. Poetik, Sprache, Wissen im 16. Jahrhundert*, eds. Jan-Dirk Müller, Jörg Robert. Berlin, Münster i.W. 2007; Ingo Stöckmann: *Vor der Literatur: eine Evolutionstheorie der Poetik Alteuropas*. Tübingen 2001 (Communicatio 28); Stefanie Stockhorst: *Reformpoetik. Kodifizierte Genustheorie des Barock und alternative Normenbildung in poetologischen Paratexten*. Tübingen 2008 (Frühe Neuzeit 128).

<sup>16</sup> Ludwig Fischer: *Gebundene Rede. Dichtung und Rhetorik in der literarischen Theorie des Barock in Deutschland*. Tübingen 1968 (Studien zur deutschen Literatur 10).

<sup>17</sup> On 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century poetics Ingo Stöckmann: *Vor der Literatur. Eine Evolutionstheorie der Poetik Alteuropas* (fn. 15); Jörg Wesche: *Literarische Diversität. Abweichungen, Lizenzen und Spielräume in der deutschen Poesie und Poetik der Barockzeit*. Tübingen 2004 (Studien zur deutschen Literatur 173); Dietmar Till: *Transformationen der Rhetorik. Untersuchungen zum Wandel der Rhetoriktheorie im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. Tübingen 2004; Volkhard Wels: *Der Begriff der Dichtung vor und nach der Reformation*, in: *Fragmenta Melanchthoniana. Vol. 3: Melanchthons Wirkung in der europäischen Bildungsgeschichte*, eds. Günter Frank, Sebastian Lalla. Heidelberg 2007, pp. 81–104.

<sup>18</sup> Heinrich Lausberg: *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft*. Munich 1960.

framework functions as tacit knowledge which can be activated should it be required.<sup>19</sup> With the help of this list a study on the history of poetics will inform about different historical stages in the development of poetics:

## 0. Context

### 0.1 Writer

0.1.1 Reason for writing a poetological work

0.1.2 Tradition/influenced by

0.1.3 Adversaries

### 0.2 The poetological text

0.2.1 Main idea

0.2.2 Non-literary and literary fields of knowledge (which the text refers to)

0.3 Comparative poetics: other nations and literatures

### 0.4 Knowledge Claim

0.4.1 Normative/descriptive

0.4.2 Systematical/historical

0.4.3 Essentialist/pragmatic

## 1. Production

1.1 Concept of the poet: poeta vates, poeta doctus, versificator, genius, poeta magus, the calculating poet

1.2 Act and process of production

1.2.1 Erotics: courtship

1.2.2 Enthusiasm

1.2.3 Mania: kiss of the muses

1.2.4 Furor poeticus/“Dichtungstrieb”

1.2.5 Imagination

1.2.6 Fantasy

1.2.7 Temper/Character

1.2.8 Taste/Goût/Geschmack

1.3 Concept of poetry (in relation to the arts, regarding the evolution of poetry, in contrast to myth, theology, philosophy, rhetoric, dialectics, ut pictura poesis, beauty and ugliness, humour, satire)

1.3.1 Inventio: perception and apperception, materiae

1.3.2 Dispositio: ordo naturalis vs. ordo artificialis, amplificatio

1.3.3 Mimesis

1.3.4 Sublime

1.3.5 Nature and art, ars and techné

1.3.6 Lexis/elocutio: virtutes elocutionis (aptum/decorum, puritas, perspicuitas)

## 2. Text/textual structure

---

<sup>19</sup> A similar approach is to be found in Katrin Kohl: *Poetologische Metaphern: Formen und Funktionen in der deutschen Literatur*. Berlin, New York 2007.

- 2.1 Genre/style:
  - 2.1.1 Genus humile/subtile
  - 2.1.2 Genus medium/mixtum
  - 2.1.3 Genus grande/sublime
  - 2.1.4 Personal style
  - 2.1.5 Genre (and the evolution of genre)
- 2.2 Partes orationis (textus):
  - 2.2.1 Exordium
  - 2.2.2 Narratio
  - 2.2.3 Argumentatio (partitio/divisio, probationes)
  - 2.2.4 Peroratio (enumeratio, affectus)
- 2.3 Metre
- 2.4 Rhythm
- 2.5 Verseform
- 2.6 Rhyme
- 2.7 Topoi/loci
- 2.8 Ornatus: ornatus in verbis singulis (antiquitas, fictio, tropos), ornatus in verbis coniunctis (figurae verborum, figurae sententiae), compositio
- 2.9 Simplex et unum: 'unity of the work'
  
- 3. Performance and Presentation
  - 3.1 Media
  - 3.2 Memoria
  - 3.3 Pronuntiatio/actio
  - 3.4 Mimic art
  
- 4. Reception
  - 4.1 Concept of the Audience/the Reader (national/international)
    - 4.1.1 Reader
    - 4.1.2 Historical audience and market
    - 4.1.3 Influence on
  - 4.2 Officia oratoris (poetae): probare/docere, delectare, movere
  - 4.3 Aims of presentation
    - 4.3.1 Catharsis
    - 4.3.2 Pathos, compassion, sympathy/antipathy
    - 4.3.3 Ethos
    - 4.3.4 Persuasio
  - 4.4 Judgement, evaluation

In the period in question here, poetics explores its boundaries in a way that is inspiring still from a today's perspective.<sup>20</sup> Poetics participates in a variety of scholarly processes,

---

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Louis Armand (ed.): *Contemporary Poetics. Redefining the Boundaries of Contemporary Poetics in Theory and Practice, for the Twenty-First Century*. Northwestern UP 2007.

influences these processes and stresses some questions or keywords accordingly. It is necessary to highlight just five of these processes: firstly, around 1830, history of literature establishes itself as its own genre – be it for the public or for the purposes of national philology.<sup>21</sup> Histories of literature deal in great length and detail with writers, literary texts and their historical backgrounds. In contrast to the history of literature, poetics focuses on the core aspects and problems of literature in general. For that reason, the early Dilthey understands poetics as a theory or as ‘the logic’ of the humanities – a logic that does not necessarily care for historical ‘incidentals’.<sup>22</sup> As a consequence, poetics is not executed in one specific discipline; poetics turns into a field of study which occupies literary historians or scientists and philosophers, as well as classical philologists.

This ahistorical understanding of poetics shapes the whole corpus of poetics to different extents: poetics becomes detached from literary history but complements it as well. Even Oskar Ludwig Bernhard Wolff (1799–1851), professor at Jena University, in his popular historical anthology *Poetischer Hausschatz des deutschen Volkes* (1839, thirty-one editions until 1901) includes an introduction to poetics.<sup>23</sup> This introduction consists of several contemporary notions on poetry – from Kant’s *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Hegel’s and Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Solger’s aesthetics, as well as from August Wilhelm Schlegel, but it does not refer to the history of the *Hausschatz* as a whole.<sup>24</sup> Poetics and literary history are

---

<sup>21</sup> Michael S. Batts: *A History of Histories of German Literature 1835–1914*. Montreal [et al.]: McGill-Queen’s Univ. Press, 1993; Michael Schlott (ed.): *Wirkungen und Wertungen. Adolph Freiherr Knigge im Urteil der Nachwelt (1796–1994)*. Eine Dokumentensammlung. Unter Mitarbeit v. Carsten Behle. Göttingen: Wallstein 1998 (Das Knigge-Archiv 1); Michael Ansel: *G.G. Gervinus’ Geschichte der poetischen National-Literatur der Deutschen. Nationbildung auf literaturgeschichtlicher Grundlage*. Frankfurt a.M. et al. 1990 (Münchener Studien zur literarischen Kultur in Deutschland 10); Tom Kindt, Hans-Harald Müller: *Nationalphilologie und ‘Vergleichende Literaturgeschichte’ zwischen 1890 und 1910. Eine Fallstudie zur Konzeption der Wissenschaftshistoriographie der Germanistik*, in: Lutz Danneberg, Wolfgang Höppner, Ralf Klausnitzer (eds.): *Stil, Schule, Disziplin. Analyse und Erprobung von Konzepten wissenschaftsgeschichtlicher Rekonstruktion (I)*. Frankfurt a.M. et al. 2005, pp. 335–361.

<sup>22</sup> This understanding has its forerunners. Already in 1871, Heymann Steinthal describes rhetorics, poetics and metrics as the ‘rational foundation’ (“rationale Grundlage”) for literary history; Steinthal: *Einleitung in die Psychologie und Sprachwissenschaft* (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1871). 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Berlin: Dümmler 1881, p. 35.

<sup>23</sup> The 32<sup>nd</sup> edition does not contain the poetic chapter any longer. The reason for this change might be that the 31<sup>st</sup> edition is renewed not by Wolff himself; see Wolffs *Poetischer Hausschatz des Deutschen Volkes*. Entirely renewed by Heinrich Fränkel, with an introduction by Wilhelm Münch, 31<sup>st</sup> ed. Leipzig: Wiegand, 1866.

<sup>24</sup> See Oskar Ludwig Bernhard Wolff: *Poetischer Hausschatz des deutschen Volks. Ein Buch für Schule und Haus*. 21<sup>st</sup> ed. Leipzig: Wiegand 1863, pp. 61–69. Wolff trusts on phantasy in order to

presented in parallel, not in common. The same is true for G. A. Zimmermann's *Handbuch der Deutschen Literatur Europa's und Amerika's* (1876). It contains a long and separate third part on verse poetics, rhetoric and style.<sup>25</sup>

A similar double development of differentiation and complementation applies, secondly, for rhetoric or eloquence. Although poetics consists of rhetorical assumptions, the study of rhetoric becomes more and more a subject for specialised treatises. In short: 19<sup>th</sup> century poetics participates in the general tendency of a 'de-rhetoricisation' that has begun already in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>26</sup> This separation of rhetoric and poetics has different consequences: It can mean the simple exclusion of poetics from rhetoric or vice versa. This exclusion of poetics can be illustrated with the example of Christian Friedrich Koch's *Deutsche Grammatik* (1848, six editions until 1875) and his *Figuren und Tropen, Grundzüge der Metrik und Poetik* (1860, four editions until 1880). In the first edition of the *Deutsche Grammatik* Koch distinguishes between grammar, rhetoric and metric; from the second to the fourth edition he combines these areas whilst in the fifth and sixth edition his posthumous editor Eugen Wilhelm differentiates the fields again. Different patterns of this exclusion can be shown: Rhetoric vanishes or dissolves into the areas of style and metric as in Karl Borinski's popular *Deutsche Poetik* (1895).<sup>27</sup> In turn, literature becomes an autonomous art that is separated from rhetoric purposes such as the persuasion of a public. Nevertheless, rhetoric knowledge implicitly structures poetics. For instance, rhetoric is kept alive in Wilhelm Scherer's posthumously published oeuvre. The thorough and witty founding father of a whole philological school refers not only to the rhetorical order of speech, but also to the fact that rhetoric has provided a framework for poetics – a framework that can still be adopted

---

explain the concepts of poetry and poetics; *ibid.*, p. 61: "Poesie ist das freie Spiel der schöpferischen Phantasie und des Gemüthes in allgemeinsten Bedeutung, ohne bestimmt ausgesprochenen Zweck, [...]."/ '###.' *Ibid.*: "Dieses freie Spiel der vereinten Phantasie und des Gemüthes muß, um in allen Theilen vollkommen zu sein, von der Vernunft und dem Verstande geleitet sein. Die Poetik beschäftigt sich nur mit den äußeren Formen der Poesie, und hat es daher vorzüglich mit den Regeln, welche der Verstand hier aufstellt, zu thun [...]."/ '###.'

<sup>25</sup> G.A. Zimmermann: *Handbuch der Deutschen Literatur Europa's und Amerika's*. Dritter Theil, enthaltend einen Abriss der Literatur-Geschichte, Verslehre, Poetik, Rhetorik und Stilistik nebst Zugaben verwandten Inhalts. Ein Lese- und Hülfsbuch für den Unterricht in der deutschen Sprache. Chicago: Enderis 1876.

<sup>26</sup> Dietmar Till: *Poetik a.d. Grundlagen: 'Rhetorisierte' Poetik*, in: *Rhetorik. Begriff – Geschichte – Internationalität*, ed. by Gert Ueding. Tübingen 2005, pp. 143–151, p. 144.

<sup>27</sup> On style see also Hans-Harald Müller: *Stil-Übungen. Wissenschaftshistorische Anmerkungen zu einem (vor-)wissenschaftlichen Problem*, in: *Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik von 1960 bis heute*, eds. Ulrike Haß, Christoph König. Göttingen 2003, pp. 235–243.



and modified in current poetics. In stating this, Scherer explicitly contradicts 19<sup>th</sup> century common sense: that rhetoric, style and poetics could be seen as separate fields of knowledge.<sup>28</sup>

This separation is further developed through the history and philosophy of language. History and philosophy of language transform the relation of rhetoric, language and poetry as well as the methods used to examine them. Following the examples of Herder, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and the philosopher of language Heymann Steinthal (1823–1899), Karl Heinrich Ludwig Pölitz (1772–1838), professor of the ‘Staatswissenschaften’ (natural law, international law, cameralism) in Leipzig and author of several books which from today’s perspective fall under the heading of ‘cultural history’, publishes a four-volume book on *Das Gesamtgebiet der deutschen Sprache* (1825).<sup>29</sup> He not only examines the history of the German language but also its genres: eloquence, prose, and poetry. The only connection that remains between these three is language; furthermore, poetry is envisaged as an autonomous art governed by its own principles.<sup>30</sup> Persuasion, the classical rhetoric purpose, is omitted.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Wilhelm Scherer: *Poetik* [1888]. Mit einer Einleitung und Materialien zur Rezeptionsanalyse, ed. by Gunter Reiss. Tübingen: Niemeyer (dtv) 1977, p. 27: “Diese gesamte Kunst der Rede ist in dem traditionellen Titel ‚Rhetorik, Poetik[,] Stilistik‘ enthalten. Aber dieser deutet hin auf ein Fachwerk [the reference is Wilhelm Wackernagel 1836], welches auf der Vereinzelung der Disciplinen beruht. Wir constatirten dagegen, daß sich die Forderung gerade nach einer umfassenden Betrachtung der Kunst der Rede ergibt.”/ ‘###.’

<sup>29</sup> Amongst his uncountable amount of works is also an *Aesthetik für gebildete Leser* (1806).

<sup>30</sup> Karl Heinrich Ludwig Pölitz: *Das Gesamtgebiet der deutschen Sprache, nach Prosa, Dichtkunst und Beredsamkeit theoretisch und practisch dargestellt*. 3<sup>rd</sup> vol.: *Sprache der Dichtkunst*. Leipzig: Hinrich 1825, p. 4: “Wenn der eigenthümliche Charakter der Prosa auf der Darstellung der unmittelbaren Zustände des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögen, und der eigenthümliche Charakter der Beredsamkeit auf der Darstellung der einzelnen Zustände des menschlichen Bestrebungsvermögens vermittelt der Sprache beruht; so beruht der eigenthümliche Charakter der Sprache der Dichtkunst auf der Darstellung der individuellen Gefühle vermittelt der Sprache, unter der Bedingung der Idealisierung dieser Gefühle durch die Selbstthätigkeit der Einbildungskraft.”/ ‘###.’ See also Karl Tumlirz: *Poetik*. 1<sup>st</sup> part: *Die Sprache der Dichtkunst. Die Lehre von den Tropen und Figuren* [...]. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Prague: dominicus 1881; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Prague: dominicus 1892; 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Leipzig: Freytag 1902; 5<sup>th</sup> augm. ed. Vienna: Tempsky, Leipzig: Freytag 1907.

<sup>31</sup> This way to deal with poetry fits well into Pölitz’s work which can be characterised as Kantian and oriented towards progress; Jochen Johannsen: *Heeren versus Pölitz. Herders ‘Ideen’ im Streit zwischen empirischer und philosophischer Geschichte*, in: *Vom Selbstdenken. Aufklärung und Aufklärungskritik in Herders ‘Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit’*. Contributions to the Conference of the International Herder Society, eds. Regine Otto, John H. Zammito. Heidelberg 2001, pp. 199–213.

Yet conflicting tendencies should be mentioned.<sup>32</sup> Adolf Calmberg (1885–1915), a writer as well as a teacher of the German language and literature (Zurich), adheres to rhetorical descriptions. According to Calmberg, poetry is still to be described as a special kind of speech – as ‘poetic speech’ (“poetische Rede”).<sup>33</sup> The public seems to have esteemed his traditional approach as his *Kunst der Rede* was often reprinted (1881, <sup>2</sup>1885, <sup>3</sup>1891). Nevertheless, Calmberg also reduces the overlap of rhetoric and poetics to the very general ideas of speech: to the steps of the rhetor (inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronuntiatio) and the style (aptum/decorum). The purposes of poetry can differ from those of rhetoric when it comes to genres like entertainment poetry, and, in contrast to the rhetor, the poet is allowed to make extensive use of his ‘licentia poetica’ in order to write beautifully.<sup>34</sup>

Thirdly, problems of presentation and some questions of production move into the study of style.<sup>35</sup> Already in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, with Christian Thomasius, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and others, the anthropological preconditions of good or even genial writing are a matter of interest.<sup>36</sup> After Friedrich August Wolf and Friedrich Schleiermacher, scholars focus on personal style.<sup>37</sup> Although poetics adopts these ideas, treatises on style and on poetics form different corpora that overlap only to a limited extent. This is the case for instance in Wilhelm Wackernagel’s lectures on *Poetik, Rhetorik und Stilistik* (1836) which already in their title announce both a combination, and a separation, of the fields in question.

---

<sup>32</sup> Again, it needs to be said that further research is required. In his case, it would be helpful to examine a considerable amount of 19<sup>th</sup> century rhetorical treatises and to find out about their attention for the field of poetics. Advice can be found in Dieter Breuer, Günther Kopsch: *Rhetoriklehrbücher des 16. bis 20. Jahrhunderts. Eine Bibliographie*, in: *Rhetorik*, ed. Helmut Schanze. Frankfurt a.M. 1974, pp. 217–355.

<sup>33</sup> Adolf Calmberg: *Die Kunst der Rede. Lehrbuch der Rhetorik, Stilistik, Poetik*. Leipzig, Zurich: Orell Füssli & Co. 1884, p. VIII.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, § 66, pp. 216f.

<sup>35</sup> There is a lack of research concerning this development. Neither a date nor the main texts of this tendency can be named; c.f. Lutz Danneberg, Wolfgang Höppner, Ralf Klausnitzer (eds.): *Stil, Schule, Disziplin. Analyse und Erprobung von Konzepten wissenschaftsgeschichtlicher Rekonstruktion* (I). Frankfurt a.M. et al: Peter Lang Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften 2005.

<sup>36</sup> Till: *Poetik a.d. Grundlagen* (fn. 26).

<sup>37</sup> Wolf’s stress lies on ‘the own productive talent’ (“eigenes produktives Talent”), Friedrich August Wolf: *Darstellung der Altertumswissenschaft nach Begriff, Umfang, Zweck und Wert* [Museum der Alterthums-Wissenschaft, 1807]. Berlin 1985 (Dokumente der Wissenschaftsgeschichte), p. 5; Müller: *Stil-Übungen* (fn. 27), pp. 237f.; see also Gerrit Walther: *Friedrich August Wolf und die Hallenser Philologie – ein aufklärerisches Phänomen?* in: *Universitäten und Aufklärung*, ed. by Notker Hammerstein. Göttingen 1995 (Das Achtzehnte Jahrhundert; Suppl. 3), pp. 125–136. On Schleiermacher and the prehistory of his thoughts on style Denis Thouard: *Dalla grammatica allo stile*:

Things are different, fourthly, with the relation of poetics to criticism.<sup>38</sup> Whereas late 18<sup>th</sup> century popular philosophy, to a large extent, derives its scope, concepts, inspirations and questions from current criticism, this marriage dissolves in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Only few poetics attribute some poetological relevance to criticism: Rudolf Gottschall (1823–1909) being a journalist himself admits that writing reviews influences his poetics. Scherer critically examines the impact of criticism on the production and reception of literature. Ambitious poetics around 1900 tends to disregard criticism, and late in the 1950s the author Joachim Maass raises his voice against stupid and subjective judgements made by badly informed journalists.

These processes of differentiation, complementation and critical discussion are complemented by new alliances: Fifthly, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on, poetics and the newly emerging philosophical discipline of aesthetics have been difficult to divide.<sup>39</sup> Although the term aesthetics, set up by Baumgarten, refers to theories of the beautiful and the epistemology of the arts, books on aesthetics published before 1890 usually include a section on poetics. Friedrich Theodor Vischer's six volume *Aesthetik* for example, dedicates a whole volume to

---

Schleiermacher e Adelung. Riflessioni sull'individuazione nel linguaggio, in: *Lingue e Stile* 3 (1994), pp. 373–391.

<sup>38</sup> Herbert Jaumann: *Critica. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Literaturkritik zwischen Quintilian und Thomasius*. Leiden et al. 1995 (Brill's studies in intellectual history 62); Steffen Martus: *Werkpolitik. Zu Literaturgeschichte kritischer Kommunikation vom 17. bis ins 20. Jahrhundert, mit Studien zu Klopstock, Tieck, Goethe und George*. Berlin, New York 2007.

<sup>39</sup> A study on the history of aesthetics in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century is itself a great desideratum. Although some older volumes offer helpful insights they neither meet current standards nor do they aim at integrating all the developments. See Robert Zimmermann: *Ästhetik. Erster, historisch-kritischer Teil: Geschichte der Ästhetik als philosophischer Wissenschaft*. Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller 1858; Max Schasler: *Ästhetik. Grundzüge der Wissenschaft des Schönen und der Kunst*. Leipzig: Freytag 1886; Hermann Lotze: *Geschichte der Ästhetik in Deutschland*. Munich 1868; Bernard Bosanquet: *A History of Aesthetics*. London: Swan Sonnenschein 1898 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Allen and Unwin 1922). Amongst current approaches, Manfred Frank: *Einführung in die frühromantische Ästhetik. Vorlesungen*. Frankfurt a.M. 1989; Andrew Bowie gives an inspiring insight into the ambivalence of the concept of 'subjectivity' in the principal aesthetic sources from Kant to Nietzsche. See Andrew Bowie: *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*. Manchester, New York: Manchester UP 1990. Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert introduces into some of the 'big texts'; see A.G.-S.: *Einführung in die Ästhetik*. Munich: Fink 1995. The most helpful works contributing to a general history of aesthetics are the following: Michael Titzmann: *Strukturwandel der philosophischen Ästhetik. Der Symbolbegriff als Paradigma*. Munich: Fink 1978; Georg Jäger: *Das Gattungsproblem in der Ästhetik und Poetik von 1780 bis 1850*, in: *Zur Literatur der Restaurationsepoche*, eds. Jost Hermand, Manfred Windfuhr. Stuttgart: Metzler 1970, pp. 371–404; Carsten Zelle: *Die doppelte Ästhetik der Moderne. Revisionen des Schönen von Boileau bis Nietzsche*. Stuttgart: Metzler 1995.

poetics, and also popular aesthetics such as the often re-edited poetics by Carl Lemcke (1831–1913), poet, co-founder of the poet circle ‘Das Krokodil’, professor and director of the Stuttgart gallery, discuss poetry in large chapters.<sup>40</sup> Treatises on poetics, vice versa, often not only refer to aesthetic premises but also introduce aesthetic ideas – like Dilthey’s *Einbildungskraft des Dichters* (1887). Nevertheless, the close relationship between aesthetics and poetics dissolves around 1890. On the one hand, aesthetic treatises move away from more specific theories of the arts. Being inspired by empirical aesthetics and aiming at original approaches, they often focus on one specific aesthetical issue such as the essence of art,<sup>41</sup> the more or less psychological theory of artistic creation,<sup>42</sup> the examination of aesthetical attractions, emotions and conceptions,<sup>43</sup> the differences between mere aesthetical effects and the beautiful,<sup>44</sup> and the attempt to describe aesthetics as a ‘science of values’ (“Wertwissenschaft”).<sup>45</sup> Aesthetics like these refer to the arts only from rather abstract perspectives observing the arts only as examples to prove general theoretical arguments.<sup>46</sup> This is also true for the large debate on a general ‘art science’ in the 1910s.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, only the widely known aesthetics which indicate new or old trends are quoted in poetics: Theodor Lipps’s *Grundlegung der Ästhetik* (1903) for instance, in which the principle of lust as a basis for aesthetical effects is – after Kant and Gustav Theodor Fechner – again spelled out,<sup>48</sup> or Johannes Volkelt’s attempt to revitalise normative aesthetics.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> See Carl Lemcke: *Populäre Aesthetik. Mit Illustrationen.* Leipzig: Seemann 1865 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1844; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1870, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 1873, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. 1879, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. 1890). Lemcke is in favour of a rather classical poetics; e.g. he attacks the 17<sup>th</sup> century poet Daniel Casper von Lohenstein for using too many tropes and figures and highlights the value of simple speech (Lemcke 1865, p. 515, 517).

<sup>41</sup> Konrad Lange: *Das Wesen der Kunst. Grundzüge einer realistischen Kunstlehre.* 2 vols. Berlin: Grote 1901.

<sup>42</sup> Ernst Meumann: *System der Ästhetik.* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer. 1919. (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1914).

<sup>43</sup> Theodor Ziehen: *Vorlesungen über Ästhetik.* 2 parts. Halle a.d.S.: Niemeyer 1925.

<sup>44</sup> Karl Groos: *Einleitung in die Aesthetik.* Gießen: Ricker 1892.

<sup>45</sup> Jonas Cohn: *Allgemeine Ästhetik.* Leipzig: Engelmann 1901.

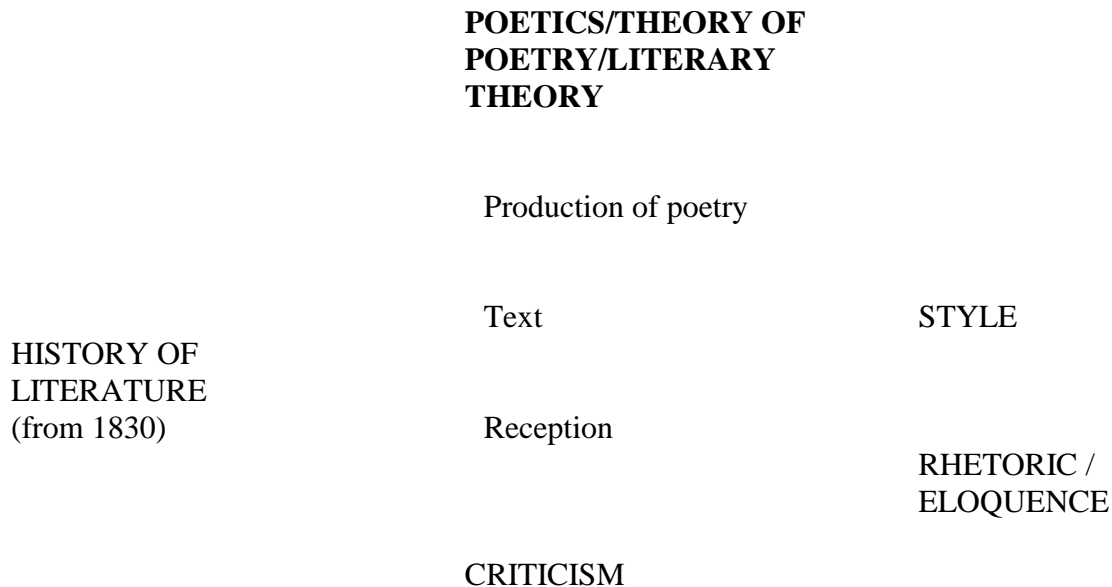
<sup>46</sup> See for instance the often reedited and popular work by Robert Pröllß that reduces aesthetics to a minimal amount of principles – and ends up with stating common late 19<sup>th</sup> century assumptions; Robert Pröllß: *Katechismus der Ästhetik. Belehrungen über die Wissenschaft vom Schönen und der Kunst.* Leipzig: Weber (1878; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1889); reprinted with a less didactical title: *Ästhetik. Belehrungen über die Wissenschaft vom Schönen und der Kunst.* 3<sup>rd</sup>, augm. a. corr. ed. Leipzig: Weber 1903. The same is true for Max Diez: *Allgemeine Ästhetik.* Leipzig: Göschen 1906 (Sammlung Göschen 300), a popular work that saw two new prints with Göschen publishers (1912, 1919) and a third one with the recognised scientific publishers Walter de Gruyter (Berlin 1922).

<sup>47</sup> For an overview see Emil Utitz: *Grundlegung der allgemeinen Kunstwissenschaft.* 2 vols. Stuttgart: Enke 1914.

<sup>48</sup> On its history see the chapters on Kant and his successors as well as on Gustav Theodor Fechner.

These five developments are illustrated in the following figure, which represents a synchronized cross-section:

AESTHETICS - German -  
 (Theory of the beautiful,  
 Epistemology of the arts;  
 Later: hermeneutics)



This figure raises the question of whether the field of poetics can be perceived as a separate entity and, if so, which features characterise it? I may suggest the following working definition: An x is a type of poetics if

- (1) it deals with a considerable amount of the poetological topics illustrated by the list above.
- (2) it develops relations such as described in the synchronized scheme.
- (3) it tends to a more or less systematic view of texts (in most cases, literary texts) which could be either normative or empirical.

In order to limit this study I focus on those poetological treatises that present poetological topics in the form of a monograph or a long chapter of an aesthetic treatise that is comparable

---

<sup>49</sup> Johannes Volkelt: System der Ästhetik. 3 vols. Munich: Beck 1905–1914.

to a monograph. I will therefore exclude poetological texts that focus either on history like Alexander Jung's well-informed *Vorlesungen über die moderne Literatur der Deutschen* (1842) or on particular aesthetic aspects – as Karl Rosenkranz's *Ästhetik des Häßlichen* (1853). Contemporary historical overviews on poetics will only play a role if they contribute important insights to the historical discussion. I will consider a historically specific perspective in the next chapter.

## 2. Text Types and Periods

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at least three text types of scholarly poetics developed. They illustrate the enormous attention that was paid to poetics by the reading and writing public:<sup>50</sup> (a) firstly, an academically and aesthetically ambitious, more or less analytical poetics re-emerged shortly after popular philosophy (Johann Georg Sulzer, Johann August Eberhard, Johann Jacob Engel) and Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790). Until now research has largely ignored the fact that Christian August Heinrich Clodius (1772–1836, professor of philosophy in Leipzig), in the year 1804, wanted to re-establish poetics as a systematic discipline. Although admiring Kant, Clodius returned to Baumgarten and rediscovered psychology as a principle guide to the study of poetics. It seems that this approach did not disappear during the time in which the philosophy of history with its historical speculations was predominant. On the contrary, it is astonishingly revitalised by the post-idealist philosopher Vischer. In the second book of his *Aesthetics* (1847/48) Vischer pleads vividly for a psychology of the poet. Scherer, who consequently announced an empirical and philological poetics, as well as Dilthey, profited from his work.

In the meantime, historical and genetic poetics (Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Justus Herwig, August Wilhelm Schlegel) as well as cosmological poetics developed (among Friedrich Wilhelm Josef Schelling's admirers). The speculative outcome of these tendencies

---

<sup>50</sup> In his helpful article on poetics Dietmar Till (fn. 26) describes this development as a 'marginalisation' of poetics. This is convincing if one limits the concept of poetics – as Till does – to normative poetics and examines its relation to rhetoric. However, already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this limitation does not cover the aims of the poetics treatises published. With regard to these publications we understand poetics as an analytical as well as normative discipline. Therefore, the development of poetics shall not be described as marginalisation but as a differentiation that ended up in the dissolution of poetics into different areas of study – as Till to some extent envisages it himself; D.T. (fn. 26), p. 149.

seems to have inspired post-idealistic poetics to embrace empirical studies. Rudolph Gottschall, for instance, derived his poetic theory from the close observation of literature. Short after his poetological treatise, Moriz Carriere published one of the first pre-empirical aesthetics which draws on Vischer as well as Schelling. Empirical aesthetics and poetics emerged a few years later, culminating in the influential volumes of Gustav Theodor Fechner, Rudolph Hermann Lotze and Wilhelm Dilthey.

After Dilthey lost his faith in his project to establish poetics as the logic of the humanities (around 1890), other tendencies toward scientific poetics took centre stage. They prove the richness of a discipline that spread itself widely and now become differentiated: some of the new poetics were oriented towards literary science (Ernst Elster) or literary theory, a concept which has only been used in a programmatic way since the 1920s,<sup>51</sup> towards the study of 'Geist' (Dilthey, Emil Ermatinger, Oskar Walzel, Hermann Hefele), language (Theodor Alexander Meyer), ontology (Roman Ingarden), existentialism and anthropology (Theophil Spoerri, Johannes Pfeiffer, Emil Staiger); others were inspired by Goethe's morphology (Günther Müller). During the Nazi period these concepts were kept alive but infiltrated with Nazi thought. Nazi germanists aimed at 'scientific' groundings of literary science in blood and race, in combination with heroic ethics. After 1945, Nazi watchwords were deleted in most texts and many Nazi germanists lost their jobs but poetological thinking did not change much.

Yet although the title of poetics was still prominent until the 1950s and covered the area of literary theory, treatises now begin to introduce new keywords,<sup>52</sup> for example 'Theorie der Dichtung' – a theory that is said to be still interested in enlightening the 'fundamental

---

<sup>51</sup> Ralf Klausnitzer: Koexistenz und Konkurrenz. Theoretische Umgangsformen mit Literatur im Widerstreit, in: *Kontroversen in der Literaturtheorie/ Literaturtheorie in der Kontroverse*, eds. Ralf Klausnitzer, Carlos Spoerhase. Bern et al. 2007 (Publikationen der Zeitschrift für Germanistik NF 17), pp. 15–48, p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> On these processes Fritz Martini: "Poetik", in: *Deutsche Philologie im Aufriß*, 2. überarbeitete Auflage, Berlin: E. Schmidt 1952 ed. by Wolfgang Stammeler; Gerhard Storz: *Wendung zur Poetik. Ein Literaturbericht*, in: *Der Deutschunterricht* 2 (1952), pp. 68–83. – Storz himself had published a popular work on poetics a few years before in which he gives the word a very emotional meaning. By referring to threatening experiences during the war, the text focuses on the relevance of poetry and promises a 'poetics for lovers' in order to rescue poetry and poetics in a difficult time; Storz: *Gedanken über die Dichtung. Poetik für Liebhaber*. Frankfurt a.M.: Societäts-Verlag 1941.

concepts of poetics' ("Grundbegriffe der Poetik").<sup>53</sup> Already in 1947 there were notions of the new text type of 'Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft' in which several methodological approaches were presented in parallel.<sup>54</sup>

Around 1960 the belief in the various different kinds of poetics finally phased out (Max Wehrli). When the new generation of academics developed an interest in analytical or political approaches, poetics became 'literary theory' although it still focused on poetological topics.<sup>55</sup> The reason for this development lay in a serious critique: Poetics of the 1930s, 40s and 50s were judged as far too traditional and vague, written from a point of view that only adored poetry and was, in part, inspired by fascist aesthetic ideals. Literary theory claimed to renovate the description of literature by introducing new analytical tools and methods such as social history. However, it is no wonder that some tendencies again claimed the title of poetics and tried to fill it in their own way: Prague Structuralism is one of the best-known movements that referred to core concepts of ancient aesthetics as well as to aspects of traditional poetics (e.g. 'elocutio');<sup>56</sup> its general aim was to revitalise these concepts and approaches in an analytical way.<sup>57</sup>

Compared to these texts and developments, (b) a second group of poetological texts in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries can be described: school poetics. The study of poetics in schools takes a different direction from the approach of scientific poetics and will therefore be excluded from this book in order to be studied separately.<sup>58</sup> At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, school

---

<sup>53</sup> See the double play by Hans Achim Ploetz: *Die Theorie der Dichtung. Ein Beitrag zur gegenwärtigen Poetik*. Inaug. Diss. at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-University Berlin. Berlin: Triltsch & Huther 1936, pp. 5f., fn. 3: "Trotzdem besteht kein einleuchtender Grund, den Namen 'Poetik' gegen andere einzutauschen, solange diese neue Bezeichnungen nur Teilgebiete der Poetik umfassen oder weiteste Allgemeinheiten nennen, z.B. Poesieästhetik, theoretische Literaturlehre, Literaturästhetik, allgemeine Literaturwissenschaft." / '###.'

<sup>54</sup> Richard Newald: *Einführung in die deutsche Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft*. Lehr: Schauenburg 1947; see Jörg Schönert: "Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft". *Zur Geschichte eines Publikationstypus der letzten 50 Jahre*, in: *Jahrbuch der ungarischen Germanistik* (2001), pp. 63–72.

<sup>55</sup> Another prominent title of the 1960s was also "philosophy of poetry" but this notion still marks a more traditional account; Gerd Wolandt: *Philosophie der Dichtung. Weltstellung Gegenständlichkeit des poetischen Gedankens*. Berlin: de Gruyter 1965.

<sup>56</sup> Matthias Aumüller: *Innere Form und Poetizität. Die Theorie Aleksandr Potebnjas in ihrem begriffsgeschichtlichen Kontext*. Frankfurt a.M.: Lang 2005 (*Slavische Literaturen* 35); Till (fn. 17), p. 150.

<sup>57</sup> Doležel (fn. 14).

<sup>58</sup> An additional study on school poetics in the 19th and 20th century is about to be prepared by Anja Hill-Zenk.



poetics still refer back to aesthetics but in the course of the century, less scientifically oriented normative poetics become the rule. This development has to be seen in relation to the changing ideas about, and regulations of, the study of German in schools. Even though knowledge of poetics was always demanded in the curricula, the time allocated to its study is often limited. Also, towards the turn of the century we find that literary history starts to dominate German as a subject and even less time is spent on poetics. School poetics certainly reflect that: by the end of the century, they had usually shrunk to an appendix to literary histories or anthologies including prosody and metrics. These continue to be printed (and used) until the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after which their use in schools seems to have declined to the point where the study of poetics is executed only at universities.

A subtle judgement might also distinguish another group of poetics: popular poetics that mediate between scientific poetics and school poetics. Johannes Minckwitz (1843–1901) for instance expands his *Lehrbuch der Deutschen Verskunst oder Prosodie und Metrik* (1854) to a still limited and practical *Katechismus der Deutsche Poetik* (1868). The reverse development could be shown for Conrad Beyer's voluminous and scientific *Deutsche Poetik* (1882–83) which provides a since-then unrivalled comprehensive account of verse form.<sup>59</sup> It was not Beyer himself who was responsible for the shortened version; on the contrary, he protested energetically against this monstrous act and denied having given the 'imprimatur'.<sup>60</sup> Other cases prove to have been less difficult: Some popular poetics, though theoretically not ambitious, focused not only on the school. They decisively directed their interest towards an educated public: a systematic version of such a popular poetics was published by Werner Hahn (1816–1890), a private scholar who devoted himself to writing popular works on political history, the history of Christianity and on the history of Germanic literature.<sup>61</sup> A more aphoristic and, in part trivial, artistic poetics was published by Tony Kellen (Anton Kellen, 1869–1948). He was trained as a journalist, published especially on the history of leading women and worked as a journalist for the *Essener Volkszeitung*.<sup>62</sup> Yet all these poetic

---

<sup>59</sup> On Beyer Klaus Manger: Zum Todestag des Schriftstellers und Literaturhistorikers Conrad Beyer (1834–1906), in: Jahrbuch der Akademie gemeinnütziger Wissenschaften zu Erfurt 2006, pp. 37–41.

<sup>60</sup> See second chapter.

<sup>61</sup> Werner Hahn: *Deutsche Poetik*. Berlin: Hertz 1879.

<sup>62</sup> Tony Kellen: *Die Dichtkunst. Eine Einführung in das Wesen, die Formen und die Gattungen der schönen Literatur nebst zahlreichen Musterbeispielen*. Essen: Fredebeul & Koenen 1911. Kellen often refers to Hahn – a fact that underlines a continuity of this type of popular poetics.

treatises participate in the general characteristics and tendencies of either scientific or school poetics. Therefore, they are not dealt with in a separate chapter.

Instead, (c) a third corpus of poetological texts needs to be stressed. It is the large corpus of literature on literature: the letters and essays written by poets about their poetics ideas, semi-fictional works such as Solger's *Erwin. Vier Gespräche über das Schöne und die Kunst* (1815) as well as the so-called 'implied poetics', the poetics exemplified by a work of literature.<sup>63</sup> Although literature is not only a melting pot of poetological topics but also a self-reflexive method of poetological thinking, I have to exclude this enormous corpus here and limit myself to the study of poetics treatises.<sup>64</sup> Those readers who are interested in the various interrelations of literature and poetics should find some remarks in other books and articles emerging from the project in which this study had been prepared.<sup>65</sup>

The bibliography of German poetics forming the material basis of this study encompasses the period from 1830 to 1960. The wealth of literature in this field, which has not been collected and analysed in any systematic study before, is immense: approximately 250 first editions were found; including later editions the total runs to 550. Both scientific poetics and normative / school poetics are included. The ratio of the former to the latter stands at approximately 1:3. Although in some cases it is difficult to determine in which category to post an item, in general, questions of didactic intention and content were deciding factors. Issues of categorisation as well as cross-dissemination from one field to the other will be dealt with in detail in chapters of their own. Throughout the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the publication of poetics was limited, with one or two (versions/theories) appearing a year. A steady increase in

---

<sup>63</sup> There is a tendency in current research to call this corpus 'meta-poetic' but this term can be misleading. It suggests that poetological literature deals with poetological (also theoretical) texts on poetics from a meta-theoretical point of view – a suggestion which might be favoured by the underlying premise that literature is the one and 'authentic' language to communicate in; on this discussion, cf. Sandra Pott: *Poetiken. Poetologische Lyrik, Poetik und Ästhetik von Novalis bis Rilke*. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter 2004, ch. I.; see also Monika Schmitz Emans, Uwe Lindemann, Manfred Schmeling (eds.): *De Gruyter Lexikon Poetiken. Autoren – Texte – Begriffe*. Berlin, New York 2009.

<sup>64</sup> Further information on special topics of poetics in literature can be obtained from Dieter Burdorf: *Poetik der Form. Eine Begriffs- und Problemgeschichte*. Stuttgart, Weimar: Metzler 2001; Simone Winko: *Gefühl, Affekt, Stimmung, Emotion. Kodierte Gefühle. Zu einer Poetik der Emotionen in lyrischen und poetologischen Texten um 1900*. Berlin: Schmidt 2003; Wolfgang Bunzel: *Das deutschsprachige Prosagedicht. Theorie und Geschichte einer literarischen Gattung der Moderne*. Tübingen: Niemeyer 2005.

<sup>65</sup> See the preface of this book.

production can be noted from the middle of the century onwards, even though this is partially due to new editions of earlier works being put on the market. A peak is reached in the year 1888. Only after the mid 1920s does production lessen again and peter out to a similar rate as a century earlier.<sup>66</sup>

### 3. Methodology

The tasks described will be approached methodologically by applying questions and results from intellectual history,<sup>67</sup> historical epistemology,<sup>68</sup> history of science and science research on the study of poetics.<sup>69</sup> My goal is to inform about a field of knowledge that was favoured by several scholars, taught and developed in special institutions, presented in the media of books on poetry and perceived by a variety of popular, literary and academic audiences.<sup>70</sup> I want to enable the reader to see a panorama at least of scholarly poetics and aesthetics, of its most important questions, tendencies, practices and ideas. This panorama will be focused on

---

<sup>66</sup> Literary theories after 1970 are collected and presented on the website of the Center for Literary Theory at the University of Göttingen; [www.literaturtheorie.uni-goettingen.de/literaturtheorie/](http://www.literaturtheorie.uni-goettingen.de/literaturtheorie/). Furthermore, the German Literary Archive aims at exploring the history of the discipline through its theories, especially those after 1950; see Marcel Lepper: *Wissenschaftsgeschichte als Theoriegeschichte*, in: *Geschichte der Germanistik. Mitteilungen* 29/30 (2006), pp. 33–39; M.L.: *Wissenschaftsgeschichte im Deutschen Literaturarchiv Marbach*, in: *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Germanistenverbandes* 1 (2006), pp. 110–121.

<sup>67</sup> If we refer to intellectual history we wish to stress that we examine a field of scholarship which is part of larger systems of education and produces its own characteristic ideas. On current approaches in intellectual history see the following periodical publications: *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1940ff); *Scientia Poetica* (1997ff); *Modern Intellectual History* (2004ff); *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* (2007f); *Intellectual History Review* (2007f). Some current approaches are presented in Brian Young, Richard Whatmore (eds.): *Palgrave Advances in Intellectual History*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2006; *Journal for the History of Ideas* 67/1 (2006), Special Issue.

<sup>68</sup> The reference to historical epistemology is designed to underline the fact that poetics has often been recognized as an important area within epistemology or an area which applies epistemological premises. On current approaches in historical epistemology see the website of the Forschungsstelle *Historische Epistemologie und Hermeneutik*; [www2.hu-berlin.de/fheh/](http://www2.hu-berlin.de/fheh/).

<sup>69</sup> Poetics has often been inspired by other areas of science, even the natural sciences. Therefore, we wish to highlight that poetics is to be regarded as a part of the history of science itself. On the fruitful relations between history of science, science research and literary science Jörg Schönert (ed.): *Literaturwissenschaft und Wissenschaftsforschung. DFG-Symposium 1998. Stuttgart, Weimar 2000* (*Germanistische Symposien; Berichtsbände* 21).

<sup>70</sup> In doing so we owe a great debt to Klaus Weimar's standard work *Geschichte der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Paderborn 2003. Weimar already traced important lines of the development of a 'Literaturwissenschaft' that – in part – encompasses the study of poetics. Other than Weimar we do not claim to write the history of 'Literaturwissenschaft' but to present a corpus of texts that influenced its development. Still helpful for such a purpose is also

implicit or explicit theoretical premises. Therefore, the history of poetics announced by the title of this volume is correctly spelled out as ‘history of the theoretical premises of poetics’.<sup>71</sup> Often, these premises are also regarded as the ‘method’ of poetics. Still, methodology had only been invented through and after Dilthey’s rediscovery of the ‘hermeneutica artificialis’, the reflection on method in his *Entstehung der Hermeneutik* (1900).<sup>72</sup> If I use the notion of method it is, therefore, a backward construct which often only covers pre-methodological observations and statements.

Furthermore, the question ought to be raised of whether or not poetics came to an end when modern methodology began. The reason for this lies not only in the development of poetics but also in the development of hermeneutics after 1900: Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century philological practice linked the ‘hermeneutica docens’, the teaching of reading and commenting on texts, only vaguely with the ‘hermeneutica utens’, the reflection on philological activities.<sup>73</sup> Poetics did not even need to reflect both of these aspects; it had been its ongoing promise to provide some knowledge about both of them. Things changed when modern methodology (after Dilthey) started to perceive philological practices from a meta-perspective, thereby making the aspect of the application of theories an issue of constant debate. Poetics, in turn, lost its innocence as well as its unique position between the reflection and application of philological and literary knowledge.

---

Sigmund von Lempicki: Geschichte der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts. Göttingen 1920.

<sup>71</sup> To name only a few of the most important ones: August Boeckh: *Enzyklopädie und Methodenlehre der philologischen Wissenschaften*. Erster Hauptteil: Formale Theorie der philologischen Wissenschaft [1886], ed. by Ernst Bratuscheck. Stuttgart: Teubner 1966; Julius Petersen: *Die Wissenschaft von der Dichtung. System und Methodenlehre der Literaturwissenschaft*. Berlin: Junker & Dünnhaupt 1939; Horst Oppel: *Die Literaturwissenschaft in der Gegenwart. Methodologie und Wissenschaftslehre*. Stuttgart: Metzler 1939; Viktor Zmegac (ed.): *Methoden der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft. Eine Dokumentation*. Frankfurt: Athenäum-Verlag 1971; Albert Klein, Florian Vassen, Jochen Vogt (eds.): *Methoden der Literaturwissenschaft*. Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann 1971/1972; Manon Maren-Grisebach: *Methoden der Literaturwissenschaft*. Tübingen/Munich: Francke 1970. See as well the ‘meta-reflection’ on method by Lutz Danneberg: *Methodologien. Struktur, Aufbau und Evaluation*, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1989.

<sup>72</sup> Lutz Danneberg: Dissens, ad personam-Invektiven und wissenschaftliches Ethos in der Philologie des 19. Jahrhunderts: Wilamowitz-Moellendorf ‘contra’ Nietzsche, in: *Kontroversen in der Literaturtheorie/ Literaturtheorie in der Kontroverse*, eds. Ralf Klausnitzer, Carlos Spoerhase. Bern et al. 2007 (Publikationen der Zeitschrift für Germanistik NF 17), pp. 93–147, pp. 143–147.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

In the course of this competition between modern methodology and poetics, poetics aims at discovering hermeneutics on its own: firstly, hermeneutics is introduced when anthropology and existentialism are used, in order to defend the irrational and secret moments of poetry against the scientification of poetics. Among the advocates of such an understanding of literature and theory are Theophil Spoerri and his Zurich colleague Emil Staiger, as well as Staiger's student Peter Szondi. Still, the constitution of the famous research group "Poetik & Hermeneutik" (first meeting in Gießen, June 1963) profits from this approach. Its underlying and promising irrationality is documented through the combination of the two ambiguous fields of knowledge: poetics and hermeneutics.<sup>74</sup> Secondly, a more rational hermeneutics becomes relevant when methodology has successively entered the game and attention is drawn to the question of the adequate or inadequate interpretation of texts and its rules. Poetics – or parts of poetics – decisively modify themselves again into 'Literaturwissenschaft' ('literary science'), an area that in Anglo-American writing still finds its equivalent in the term 'poetics'.<sup>75</sup>

If I speak about 'German poetics', German is only an abbreviation. I take into account the different national histories of poetics in the German language: Works on poetics were written in Switzerland, Austria, Germany and elsewhere, for example through German studies of foreign countries ('Auslandsgermanistik'). Especially Switzerland might have brought up one of the most characteristic types of poetological thinking: an anti-modern one, conceived by the Zurich professors in literature Emil Ermatinger, Theophil Spoerri and Emil Staiger. This type of poetics still adhered to aesthetic ideals of the Weimar classics; it was heavily attacked by the public as well as by authors and scientists in 1966 when Staiger held his "Zürcher Preisrede" on contemporary literature and criticism.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> Klaus Weimar: *Historische Einleitung zur literaturwissenschaftlichen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr 1975, p. 26. See also Oliver Müller: *Subtile Stiche. Hans Blumenberg und die Forschergruppe "Poetik und Hermeneutik"*, in: *Kontroversen in der Literaturtheorie/ Literaturtheorie in der Kontroverse*, eds. Ralf Klausnitzer, Carlos Spoerhase. Bern et al. 2007 (Publikationen der Zeitschrift für Germanistik NF 17), pp. 249–264.

<sup>75</sup> For a reflection on the notion of poetics Uri Margolin: *The (In)dependence of Poetics Today*, in: *PTL. A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 4 (1980), pp. 545–586, p. 545, fn. 2.

<sup>76</sup> On the problem of different national histories of literature see Lutz Danneberg, Jörg Schönert: *Zur Transnationalität und Internationalität von Wissenschaft*, in: *Wie international ist die Literaturwissenschaft? Methoden- und Theoriediskussion in den Literaturwissenschaften. Kulturelle Besonderheiten und interkultureller Austausch am Beispiel des Interpretationsproblems (1950–1990)*, eds. Lutz Danneberg, Friedrich Vollhardt in collaboration with Hartmut Böhme and Jörg Schönert. Stuttgart 1996, pp. 7–85; on the example of Switzerland Max Wehrli: *Germanistik in der Schweiz*

Bearing these general methodological assumptions in mind, I will focus on those texts which have rarely been dealt with and avoid detailed (repetitive) presentations of those aesthetics which have – like Kant’s, Herder’s or Hegel’s writings – already received a considerable amount of attention. Referring to the dominant ‘big texts’, the first chapter will present the development of German aesthetics and academic poetics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It traces 19<sup>th</sup> century poetics back to Baumgarten by beginning with popular philosophy. In doing so I will present the authors’ reflections on methods and general poetics in order to be able to compare their suppositions. By general poetics, I mean the concepts and questions mentioned as titles in our list above (e.g. the production of texts, textual structure, performance and presentation) and not specialised areas such as verse form.

General poetics is, in part, a German peculiarity but also a European phenomenon as could be shown through comparing German texts in the area with English ones. Such a cross-cultural study could build on the research interest in popular philosophy which most recently includes aesthetics<sup>77</sup> and in idealist aesthetics, notably the Hegel-adherent Bernard Bosanquet (1848–1923), the Ruskin-admirer R.G. Collingwood (1889–1943),<sup>78</sup> as well as on the rising interest in comparative approaches in the study of romanticism.<sup>79</sup> In addition to this, such a

---

1933–1945 [1993], in: M.W., *Gegenwart und Erinnerung. Gesammelte Aufsätze*, eds. Fritz Wagner, Wolfgang Maaz. Hildesheim, Zurich 1998 (Spolia Berolinensia 12), pp. 307–320; Michael Böhler: *Länderspezifische Wissenschaftsvarianten in der Germanistik?* in: *Schreiben gegen die Moderne. Beiträge zu einer kritischen Fachgeschichte der Germanistik in der Schweiz*, eds. Corina Caduff, Michael Gamper. Zürich 2001, pp. 13–42.

<sup>77</sup> See foremost the companion by Elisabeth Décultot, Mark Ledbury (eds.): *Théories et débats esthétiques au dix-huitième siècle. Eléments d’une enquête*. Paris 2001. See also the specialized approaches by Norbert Waszek: “Aux sources de la Querelle” dans les “Lettres sur l’Éducation Esthétique de l’Homme” de Schiller: Adam Ferguson et Christian Garve, in: *Crises et Conscience du Temps*, ed. by Jean-Marie Paul. Nancy 1998, pp. 111–129; Timothy M. Costelloe: *Hume’s Aesthetics. The Literature and Directions for Research*, in: *Hume-Studies* 30/1 (2004), pp. 87–126; Paul Guyer: *The Value of Beauty. Historical Essays in Aesthetics*. Cambridge: CUP 2005; Jonathan Friday: *Art and Enlightenment. Scottish Aesthetics in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, in: *Hume-Studies* 31/1 (2005), pp. 184–186; Peter Kivy: *The Seventh Sense. Francis Hutcheson and Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics*, in: *British Journal of Aesthetics* 45/4 (2005), pp. 445–447; Norbert Waszek: *Übersetzungspraxis und Popularphilosophie am Beispiel Christian Garves*, in: *Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert* 31/1 (2007), pp. 42–61.

<sup>78</sup> William Sweet: *British Idealist Aesthetics: Origins and Themes*, in: *Bradley Studies* 7/2 (2001), Special Issue *British Idealist Aesthetics*, pp. 131–161.

<sup>79</sup> See, for instance, the first chapter on “Romantic Theoretical and Critical Writing” in the anthology eds. Steven P. Sondrup, Virgil Nemoianu in collab. with Gerald Gillespie: *Nonfictional Romantic Prose. Expanding Borders*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: Benjamins 2004 (Coordinating Committee for a Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages).

study could show to what extent ‘Auslandsgermanistik’ and English studies interfere or deviate in the area of poetics.<sup>80</sup> In 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century England, the situation of poetics differs from the one in Germany in one main aspect: the metaphysically motivated interest in aesthetics is missing – a situation which is similar in France. Whilst aesthetics soon led German poetics to establish itself as a scientific discipline, rhetoric, eloquence and studies on style dominated the English and French scenes until the late 1840s.<sup>81</sup> In addition to this, 20<sup>th</sup> century English aesthetics proved to be more focused on analytical approaches, yet did not simply ignore more hermeneutical ones as current anthologies suggest.<sup>82</sup> Taking this into account, one could contest Dilthey’s supposition:

Yes, this German aesthetics hastened the fall of the old forms in France and England and influenced the first performances of a new poetic age yet uncertain of themselves.<sup>83</sup>

Explaining why there obviously were common trends in the history of poetics in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, however, is a more difficult task. Studies not only on analogies, but also on transfer, on the book market, on translations, on scientific contact and on travel prove to be the only way to gather evidence about these trends. This history of poetics can obviously not present all sources and I want to stress its provisional character: it is intended as an introduction and a pioneering study into an international history of poetics, as well as a contribution to the history of ‘Literaturwissenschaft’,<sup>84</sup> to a history of aesthetics that still

---

<sup>80</sup> John Flood: Poetry and Song on the Isle of Wight. A Mannheim Forty-Eighter Enjoys a Victorian Holiday, in: Expedition nach der Wahrheit. Poems, Essays, and Papers in Honour of Theo Stemmler. FS zum 65. Geburtstag für Theo Stemmler, eds. Stefan Horlacher, Marian Islinger. Heidelberg 1996, pp. 381–397; John Flood: Ginger Beer and Sugared Cauliflower. Adolphus Bernays and Language Teaching in Nineteenth-Century London, in: Vermittlungen. German Studies at the Turn of the Century. FS für Nigel B.R. Reeves, eds. Rüdiger Görner, Hellen Kelly-Holmes. Munich 1999, pp. 101–115; Alexander Weber: Der Frühsozialist Thomas Hodgskin und die Anfänge der Germanistik in Großbritannien, in: IASL 31/1 (2006), pp. 51–76.

<sup>81</sup> On the French refutation and late acceptance of German aesthetics, c.f. Élisabeth Décultot: Ästhetik/esthétique. Étapes d’une naturalisation (1750–1840), in: Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale 2 (2002), pp. 157–178. and Décultot forthcoming. A comparable study on the English reception of German aesthetics remains a desideratum; Sandra Pott: Internationale Poetik (see introduction). In some areas the classic study by Abrams gives no more than a first account; M. H. Abrams: The mirror and the lamp. Romantic theory and the critical tradition. New York, NY: Norton, 1958, (Norton Library 102), for example depicts the interest that English rhetoric shows in the individual talent of the poet.

<sup>82</sup> See the differentiated approaches in Peter Lamarque (ed.): Aesthetics in Britain. The British Journal of Aesthetics 40/1 (2000), Special Issue 1960–2000.

<sup>83</sup> Dilthey 1887 (fn. 5), p. 103: “Ja diese deutsche Ästhetik hat in Frankreich und England den Fall der alten Formen beschleunigt und die ersten ihrer selbst noch ungewissen Bildungen eines neuen poetischen Zeitalters beeinflusst.”

<sup>84</sup> See Weimar (fn. 70).

deserves to be written (also with regard to the reception of aesthetic writings)<sup>85</sup> and to the various approaches to the aesthetic components of the 'Bildungsgeschichte' of the general public.

[...]

### **15. Conclusion: Tendencies, Trends and Sunken Ideas**

Wehrli's book reflects the problematic status of poetics in balancing the term with the notion 'literary theory'. Although the expressions 'poetics' and 'literary theory' often seem to be used in contingent ways, the turn from poetics to literary theory means more than a change of semantics.<sup>86</sup> It conveys a shift in focus as well as in method. Wehrli's work is representative of the idea that poetics mainly refers to the work itself, the favoured method being hermeneutics. Contrary to poetics, literary theory is more inclined towards analysis and explanation, to the study of the work in context. Such contexts can be derived either from linguistics or social history. Methods range from structuralism to modified forms of hermeneutics.

This differentiation of poetics and literary theory appears as expression and as a result of theoretical problems which had been inherent in poetics itself: whilst the dominance of rhetoric was about to be phased out, the genre of scholarly or academic poetics had served as a form in which theoretical reflections on literature could be carried out. The object of study had been clearly limited, especially since the Weimar classic: the object of study was the (more or less) fictional work of literature. From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on, the unity of the object became contested. In addition to this, theory evolved quickly. With the invention of the term 'literary theory' and the transformation of poetics, a growing need for theoretical self-reflection was announced which finally exploded the frame of poetics.

Still, this was a gradual movement not a caesura. This conclusion is proven by a focused summary of the history of poetics as documented in the previous chapters. Up to this point, this book reported on

---

<sup>85</sup> Most histories of aesthetics or aesthetical questions are characterised either by their introductory status or by their focus on a special aesthetic topic; see above.

<sup>86</sup> Georg Bollenbeck, Clemens Knobloch (eds.): *Semantischer Umbau der Geisteswissenschaften nach 1933 und 1945*. Heidelberg 2001.



the development of poetic theory in the specific genre of scholarly or academic poetics. The organising principles were implicit and explicit assumptions which underlie the relevant books or book-length chapters. As a result, fourteen main poetological tendencies could be presented, most of them spanning several different approaches.

Firstly, eclectic poetics of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was discussed in the light of contemporary problems. Still in Sulzer's 'opus magnum' morals constituted a main challenge for poetics. In addition to this, the moral impact of poetics on the growing reading public required intense reflection. Transcendental poetics (secondly) restricted these reflections in questioning the scientific status of aesthetics as a whole. Yet Kant's radical position in this respect was harmonised with older popular philosophy as well as with the newly popular cosmology. The outcome was considered problematic in the light of theoretical reflection. Yet from a pragmatic point of view, it helped poetic and aesthetic theory to flourish further. A third impulse for the growth of poetics and aesthetics came from historiographical and genetic interests in poetics as they had been executed by Herder, Herwig and A.W. Schlegel. These interests found their afterlife in literary historiography, thereby promoting the differentiation of the rising national philologies.

A fourth tendency coexisted with these interests but focused on the speculative order of genre: logothological poetics, inspired by Schelling. These accounts occupied the broad area of post-idealist poetics (fifth tendency). Yet together with Herbart's heritage and the new orientations of the Hegel-School as they could be found in Vischer, logothological poetics also inspired pre-empirical poetics. Pre-empirical and empirical poetics, the sixth tendency, proved to be fruitful in that scholars aimed at applying psychology of the peoples and 'Erfahrungsseelenlehre' to literature. Furthermore, they promoted an interest in the poet's psyche and emotive interpretations (seventh tendency) which, of course, was later criticised as amounting to naturalistic fallacies (eighth tendency).

Consequently, poetics promoted the recognition of the literary work as such. This promotion was performed in the light of highly ambitious epistemological assumptions (eighth and tenth tendencies) as well as contemporaneous philosophy of language (ninth tendency). Furthermore, the genre of poetics transformed itself into a sub-genre of Weltanschauungslehre: anthropology, existentialism, typology and hermeneutics were conjoined in the most surprising ways (eleventh tendency). This amalgamation enjoyed a long afterlife: after 1945, it was this tendency (in combination with the ninth one) that could be rediscovered easily, the reason being its distance from politics. Under the Fascist regime, some prominent poetic theories (or more exactly, literary theories) had been built upon problematic assumptions regarding race and blood (thirteenth tendency). As a consequence, poetic theory needed to be purified. Taking into account this need for purification, the 1950s appear as grey

zone, a “Janus-faced” period.<sup>87</sup> It is marked by traditional accounts but also by new attempts which sooner or later bid poetics farewell and embrace literary theory (fourteenth tendency). By this implicit and explicit gesture, the 1950s and 60s stand in direct continuity to the Nazi period in which both notions, ‘Poetik’ and ‘Literaturtheorie’ as well as pleas to accept the one and to reject the other, were to be observed.<sup>88</sup> Still, the political conditions and premises of these pleas had changed radically. Anthropological and existentialist poetics survived until the mid 1970s.<sup>89</sup> It was only in the 1980s, through introductions such as David Wellbery’s *Positionen der Literaturwissenschaft* (1985), that they were finally replaced.

Beyond these continuities, some of the tendencies mentioned are shaped by recurring interests: the first recurring interest concerns the relationship of literature and scholarship as it is reflected in literary criticism. Popular philosophy, Heusinger, Gottschall and Maass focus on the problem of how to judge a literary work adequately and how to fascinate the public with it, thereby often implicitly or explicitly promoting a poetics of rules (which, in fact, continued until the 20<sup>th</sup> century). A second interest is historiography (Herder, Herwig, A.W. Schlegel, Eugen Wolff). Religion constitutes a third interest; by Schelling, Wackernagel, Jungmann and Spoerri, religious aspects of literature are considered from different confessional and even meta-confessional perspectives. The fourth widespread interest is in the psyche of the poet, be it in the framework of ‘Erfahrungsseelenlehre’ or in psychology (popular philosophy up to Dilthey). The fifth long-lasting interest, formalism and the focus on the work as such, opposed the fourth. Formalism appears in a variety of different forms which overlap only to a minor extent. To name just the most important representatives: Herbart and Zimmermann, the Austrian tradition, Theodor A. Meyer, Walzel, Husserl, Ingarden, Staiger, Jolles and Günther Müller.

The sixth interest exceeds the previously mentioned ones: Vischer, Scherer and Wehrli all aim at meta-poetic reflections, arising from huge cross-readings, observations and combinations of previous accounts. Meta-poetic or meta-aesthetic reflections, of course, can also be found in Kant as well as in most preliminary chapters to works on poetic theory. Still, these reflections are more or less detailed

---

<sup>87</sup> Georg Bollenbeck, Gerhard Kaiser (eds.): *Die janusköpfigen 50er Jahre*. Wiesbaden 2000 (Kulturelle Moderne und bildungsbürgerliche Semantik 3).

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Wilhelm Voßkamp: *Kontinuität und Diskontinuität. Zur deutschen Literaturwissenschaft im Dritten Reich*, in: *Wissenschaft im Dritten Reich*, ed. by Peter Lundgreen. Frankfurt a.M. 1985, pp. 140–162; Marcus Gärtner: *Kontinuität und Wandel in der neueren deutschen Literaturwissenschaft nach 1945*. Bielefeld 1997.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Manon Maren-Grisebach: *Methoden der Literaturwissenschaft*. Tübingen 1970; Reinhold Grimm, Jost Hermans (eds.): *Methodenfragen der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*. Darmstadt 1973 (Wege der Forschung 290); Manfred Jurgensen: *Deutsche Literaturtheorie der Gegenwart*. Georg Lukács – Hans Mayer – Emil Staiger – Fritz Strich. München 1973; Horst Turk: *Literaturtheorie I. Literaturwissenschaftlicher Teil*. Göttingen 1976.

and valuable. In the cases of Vischer, Scherer and Wehrli, they amount to new impulses from which the area of poetic or literary theory profits enormously.

Furthermore, it is possible to identify developments of poetic theory which were driven by new academic challenges: the late 1940s/ early 1950s, the late 1960s/ early 1970s and today's academia face a considerable demand for introductions into literary theory or overviews.<sup>90</sup> The first wave of demand was caused by the lack of trustworthy poetic texts after 1945. With its reformation of study programmes in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the growing mass universities led to a second wave of demand. The far-reaching revision of the 'Lehramts'- and 'Magister'-study programmes in favour of today's Bachelor/Master-programmes increased this demand for the third time. This demand has to some extent also been economic: publishing companies transformed academic revisions into markets and chances to sell books to the student customer.

Another complex pattern in the history of poetics and literary theory is the recurring scientification.<sup>91</sup> Going beyond the scope of this study, three main scientific movements in the area of poetics can be observed: psychologism of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the want for scientifically correct literary theory in the 1960s and 70s and current 'cognitive', 'neuroscientific' literature studies or 'biopoetics'.

Psychologism has been discussed at large in the previous chapters and should, therefore, not be repeated. The 1960s/70s scientification would be an interesting case to discuss as it was promoted through the heated political debate between two generations of scholars. The replacement of poetics by the notion of literary theory was enforced through those parties of the younger generation that longed for 'scientifically correct' explanations of literature,<sup>92</sup> be they structuralist,<sup>93</sup> materialist, feminist, media- or reception oriented.<sup>94</sup> Things are different again with 'biopoetics'.<sup>95</sup> As in the 19<sup>th</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> Jörg Schönert: "Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft". Zur Geschichte eines Publikationstypus der letzten 50 Jahre, in: Jahrbuch der ungarischen Germanistik (2001), pp. 63–72.

<sup>91</sup> Lutz Danneberg, Hans-Harald Müller: Verwissenschaftlichung der Literaturwissenschaft. Ansprüche, Strategien, Resultate, in: Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie/ Journal for General Philosophy of Science 1 (1979), pp. 162–191; Rainer Rosenberg: Die Semantik der 'Szientifizierung'. Die Paradigmen der Sozialgeschichte und des linguistischen Strukturalismus als Modernisierungsangebote an die deutsche Literaturwissenschaft, in: Semantischer Umbau der Geisteswissenschaften, eds. Georg Bollenbeck, Clemens Knobloch. Heidelberg 2001, pp. 122–131.

<sup>92</sup> A helpful overview and analysis is to be found in Silvio Vietta: Kanon- und Theorieverwerfungen in der Germanistik der siebziger Jahre/ Aus der Diskussion, in: Germanistik der siebziger Jahre. Zwischen Innovation und Ideologie, eds. S.V., Dirk Kemper. München 2000, pp. 9–58.

<sup>93</sup> See the results of the conference on the history of structuralism at the German Literary Archive, Marbach Neckar as well as the preparatory study by Marcel Lepper: Die strukturalistische Kontroverse, die keine war. Die Konferenz von Baltimore und die Folgen, in: Kontroversen in der Literaturtheorie/ Literaturtheorie in der Kontroverse, eds. Ralf Klausnitzer, Carlos Spoerhase. Bern et al. 2007 (Publikationen der Zeitschrift für Germanistik NF 17), pp. 311–326.

<sup>94</sup> On the different types of reception theory Tom Kindt: Denn sie wissen nicht, was sie tun. Stanley Fish vs. Wolfgang Iser, in: Kontroversen in der Literaturtheorie/ Literaturtheorie in der Kontroverse,

century (yet in more refined ways) scholars aim at uncovering psychological motivations of poets and readers, thereby hoping to ground aesthetic assumptions in ‘hard’ biological knowledge and to bring the ‘two cultures’ together. It is not by mere accident that they are again accused of committing naturalistic fallacies.<sup>96</sup>

Every scientification tends to be surpassed by other scientific programmes or by recurring waves of descientification. Among the examples discussed, existentialist and anthropological poetics are likely to meet the criteria for descientifications; among the most recent programmes, one would name deconstruction. The scholarly consequences of these scientifications and descientifications range widely. To give only a sketch (which could and should be expanded to a wider meta-theoretical discussion): scientifications as well as descientifications are inclined to form groups of belief, joined by different generations of scholars. Once a programme has lost its allure, the relevant group is to invent itself anew – at high cognitive, and perhaps social, costs. Some scholars might have fought bitterly for ‘their’ programme, alienating colleagues or endangering the consensus as well as the methods of the discipline. Even if new accounts are valuable and enhance the public recognition of literary theory, these costs should be taken into consideration. It is not by mere accident that the philologies now, after decades of ‘methodological innovation’ and fulfilled, but also broken, theoretical or even ideological promises, face a serious discussion about their credibility.<sup>97</sup> Some programmatic novelties have indeed led to a lack of consensus among colleagues and a downfall in method.

Still, these pessimistic remarks should be contrasted with sober observations: firstly, most theoretical innovations from 1800 to the 1950s refer to those areas which were previously treated by rhetoric. If we thumb back to the list of questions on, and topics of, poetics presented in the introduction of this book, this observation can be illustrated:<sup>98</sup> Whilst rhetoric grounded its concept of the poet in enthusiasm, mania, furor poeticus, character and taste, 19<sup>th</sup> century poetics pleaded for a scientific examination of the poet’s psyche, alluding to concepts like imagination and fantasy. Mimesis, as the main rhetorical description of the poetic act, was replaced by the study of the poet’s experience –

---

eds. Ralf Klausnitzer, Carlos Spoerhase. Bern et al. 2007 (Publikationen der Zeitschrift für Germanistik NF 17), pp. 353–368.

<sup>95</sup> Karl Eibl: *Animal Poeta. Bausteine zur biologischen Kultur- und Literaturtheorie*. Paderborn 2004; Katja Mellmann: *Emotionalisierung – Von der Nebenstundenpoesie zum Buch als Freund. Eine emotionspsychologische Analyse der Literatur der Aufklärungsepoche*. Paderborn 2006 (Poetogenesis 4). Karl Eibl, Katja Mellmann, Rüdiger Zymner (eds.). *Im Rücken der Kulturen*. Paderborn 2007.

<sup>96</sup> Raymond Tallis: *License my raving hands. Does neuroscience have anything to teach us about the pleasure of reading John Donne?* In: *The Times Literary Supplement* 11 (2008), S. 13–15.

<sup>97</sup> See the Forum “Credibility. The New Challenge”, in: *The German Quarterly* 80/4 (2007), pp. 421–426.

which was later denounced for committing a naturalistic fallacy. Furthermore, the rhetorical doctrine of genre was substituted for the idea of personal style. The teachings on *memoria* and *pronuntiatio* moved into specialised treatises for actors. In addition to this, the whole area concerned with reception was transformed considerably. The rhetorical aims of presentation counted as antiquated. A broad modern audience, buyers and readers of printed books, required further study. This type of study was initiated through the description of the book market by Scherer. These inner-poetic developments reacted to external demand: to new philosophical, psychological or sociological challenges. Reactions like these kept poetic theory moving and made it a representative area of the development of scholarship in total.

All these poetological innovations ranged within boundaries and led to more or less precise but varying ideas about literature, poetics and literary theories. The stability within the variety of approaches is considerable. This observation becomes more apparent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: after the huge methodological debate about the linguistic nature of the artwork of words and the requirements for its interpretation (Th.A. Meyer), poetological invention seemed to be restricted to world views or ideologies, methodological innovations being limited to changes of context or to the import of anthropological, existentialist or biological tools of description. The Nazi period serves as the best example of this tendency: concepts such as race and blood were taken into poetics and expelled from it after National Socialism was over. Poetic theory, obviously a stable yet fragile field of knowledge, was able to move back to the late 1920s or early 1930s state of research (Kayser, Seidler). What is more, poetic theory managed to come up with other innovative concepts shortly after its ideological downfall.

Secondly, as if an invisible hand process were at work, forgotten poetological patterns of descriptions tend to come back one or two generations after they were lost. Observing most recent publications and trends, it seems as if current approaches are somewhat reluctant when it comes to innovation. Instead of proposing new theories, they move back. Sunken goods, outmoded as an 'irrational stock of poetics' in the 1960s, are about to be revitalised. Schleiermacher's, Heidegger's and Staiger's notion of "Stimmung" would be a good example for this trend.<sup>99</sup> After all the attempts to get underlying feelings out of the text and its interpretation, "Stimmung" is coming back and faces a revival which aims at going beyond Staiger in the light of current literary theory. It is only a question of time until notions like "Geist", "Erlebnis", "Gestalt", "Seele" and "Kunstwerk" will be reinvented as well.

---

<sup>98</sup> See Introduction, 1.

<sup>99</sup> David Wellbery: *Stimmung*, in: *Historisches Wörterbuch ästhetischer Grundbegriffe*, eds. Karlheinz Barck et al., vol. 5., Stuttgart, Weimar: Metzler 2003, pp. 703–33; Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht: *Schluss*

Seen from a bird's eye view, this reinvention of old poetic notions complements a larger trend in the politics of science accross Europe: the rediscovery of elements which had been expelled from the universities in the 1960s and 70s. Some of these sunken goods have been reintroduced with the whole political and administrative force of the Bologna process: rhetoric and style, for instance, have celebrated a comeback in the trivialised form of 'soft skills'. In the 1960s and 70s, rhetoric and style were regarded as being personal expressions and excluded from the scientificated canon of literary science. Consequently, literary theory was measured not by 'nice' writing but by terminology and correctness. This is understandable and respectable, also in the light of the opposition to vague notions of anthropological and existentialist accounts dominant at the time. Still, the exclusion of rhetoric and style threw out the baby with the bath water: literary theory became a more and more esoteric practice, making the reading public receptive to all too easily understood or admired, well-written, texts. This process has not been reflected up to now but would prepare the ground for a most interesting study. Such a study should combine the development of literary theory in the 1970s and afterwards with the development of academia and the public.

A book like the present one cannot fulfil this task. This study should rather end with a meditation on another sunken good, forgotten by everybody, including science policy. This dusty good is called inspiration, often considered by old-fashioned scholarly poetics. Inspiration cannot be explained (in total). Still, it would be boring to simply admire it. It might be worth asking which conditions help inspiration to emerge. In the light of this study, among these conditions would be well-reflected and well-written books on literary theory which stay away from the immediate demands of the book market or local Bachelor-/Master-study programmes. And inspiration would ask for more: for a culture of responsibility and historical awareness in which enthusiasm and respect for innovative literary theory can grow without ignorance and regret.

What would such a culture of responsibility and historical awareness look like? Taking into account the many poetological inventions discussed in this book I wish to propose four principles which could help to initiate such a culture:

- (1) *Historical awareness.* New theoretical projects should ask themselves to what extent they are new, and reflect their novelty in the light of previous theories. The approaches discussed often use a kind of rhetoric of the new and demarcate the field in order to present their aims. One of the most successful scholars to use such a type of rhetoric (without going into detail as far as

---

mit Stimmung. Der existenzialistische Sound der Dekonstruktion, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,

his sources are concerned) was the young Dilthey. Other than Dilthey, Vischer and Scherer, tend to renounce of polemics in poetics and aesthetics. Instead, they crown role models and manage to gain intellectual energy from constructive debates with their predecessors.

- (2) *Addressee orientation*. Still, to attract a general public or to fight for the recognition of literary or text theory, the rhetoric of the new is helpful and, perhaps, indispensable. This rhetoric can even be understood as an abbreviation. Essays or journal articles have to be short, persuasive and provocative – and a scholar like Vischer was a master of provocation. Yet when it comes to addressing the inner-academic public, the rhetoric of the new not only requires relativisation, but the new project will also profit from more detailed, reflected and self-critical presentations which make the project more credible for the academic audience.
- (3) *Correctness*. This specific audience would be interested in examining the argumentative correctness of new theories proposed – a project that in the 1970s had found the attention of a group of scholars associated with argumentation theory and analytical philosophy and is today covered by analytical theory of literature.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, correct arguments can decide the fate of a theoretical approach. After Husserl and the critique of the natural fallacies committed by psychologism, this approach was dead for advanced literary theory, even if psychologism survived in some degree in practical analyses and theories.
- (4) *Appropriateness*. This after-life of psychologism could be explained by the fact that it often seemed to provide appropriate interpretations, a fact which should be esteemed as well. In addition to questions of inner-theoretical correctness, theories should be apt to the objects they describe and correctly applied to their objects, thereby testing themselves.<sup>101</sup> Testing the appropriateness of a theory would mean to confront it with those literary texts the relevant theory aims at describing. The approaches discussed solved this problem in different ways. They seldom allowed themselves to go into greater detail but rather took out specific text elements only. Furthermore, they chose those texts which fitted the relevant theory. Spoerri and Staiger, for instance, both selected those poets and works for their typologies that obviously fulfilled many characteristics of the relevant type. Of course, according to Spoerri's world view, a combination of Pascal and Kierkegaard would constitute a 'normative man's' belief.

---

24 January 2007, No. 20, p. N3.

<sup>100</sup> See the overviews by Werner Strube: *Analytische Philosophie der Literaturwissenschaft. Untersuchungen zur literaturwissenschaftlichen Definition, Klassifikation, Interpretation und Textbewertung*. Paderborn et al. 1993; Simone Winko, Tilmann Köppe: *Theorien und Methoden der Literaturwissenschaft*, in: *Handbuch Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Thomas Anz. Vol. 2. Stuttgart, Weimar 2007, S. 285–372. The whole working group "ReVisionen" (with a series published with de Gruyter) has subscribed to analytical literary science.

<sup>101</sup> Danneberg, Müller (fn. 6), pp. 190f.

- (5) *Efficiency*. Beyond the principles named, new theoretical projects should consider the costs of further exploration. To install a new project could mean driving young scholars into it, to make them spend their early academic life reflecting on this new and little established approach. Would this be an effective tool to present them to the academic audience or would this rather hinder their acceptance in the field they want to qualify for? Furthermore, an intense one-dimensional theoretical claim could call into question a scholar's seriousness and cause a public scandal. In the case of Staiger, for instance, literary theory made him famous at first – and discredited him in 1966. He underestimated the costs of his wish to implement classicist views on the contemporaneous literary field.
- (6) *Relevance*. Furthermore, Staiger was wrong in considering the relevance of his views. Should a new theory be suggested, the question of inner and outer academic relevance is to be raised. The audience should be sensitive to the specific new approach. Otherwise, a lot of intellectual energy would be wasted. In turn, the new approach should consider itself in the light of current discussions in order not be entirely behind trends or to swamp the public. The young Staiger, for instance, hit the intellectual mark of his time; the later Staiger was clearly very far off it.

Taking my pleas for historical awareness seriously, I understand these principles in Fechner's sense: as preliminary remarks and non-normative suggestions for a literary and text theory in a future culture of academic responsibility.

Prints:

- Bouterwek, Titelpuffer 1., 2. Aufl.
- Spoerri, Kategorientafeln (p. 321, 322, 323)
- One of Peterich's Muses