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in cooperation with
Monika Fick (RWTH Aachen University)

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From the Editor

Nachdem das *Lessing Yearbook / Jahrbuch* seit 2010 an der RWTH Aachen zu Hause war, ist sein Redaktionssitz mit der Veröffentlichung dieses Bandes (2016) an die Germanistik-Abteilung der University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign – in den Mittleren Westen der Vereinigten Staaten also – gewechselt, wo auch die Zeitschrift *German Quarterly* herausgegeben wird und das Jahrbuch, zumindest teilweise, von der gleichen Infrastruktur wird profitieren können.

Vieles wird in den kommenden Jahren dasselbe bleiben. Erfreulicherweise wird Monika Nenon auch künftig die Rezensionenabteilung des Jahrbuchs betreuen. Zur Freude des Redaktionsteams hat sich der Wallstein Verlag weiterhin bereit erklärt, das Jahrbuch in seiner gewohnten attraktiven und sorgfältig lektorierten Form für die Lessing Society zu produzieren. Auch die fruchtbare Zusammenarbeit mit der Lessing Akademie wird fortgesetzt werden. Die Lessing Society wird weiterhin Panels bei den Tagungen der *Modern Language Association* und *German Studies Association* organisieren sowie ferner auch regelmäßig ihre eigenen, auf Person und Denken Lessings und seine Zeit konzentrierten Konferenzen veranstalten.

Unsere Absicht ist weiterhin am Prinzip festzuhalten, Bände ohne spezifische thematische Einheit, wie dieser Band für 2016, jeweils mit Jahrgängen mit einem thematischen Schwerpunkt abzuwechseln, wobei ein Call-for-papers an die Mitglieder der Lessing Society und andere Interessierte ausgehandelt werden wird, in der Hoffnung, damit weiterhin einen möglichst breiten Autoren- und auch Wirkungskreis für das Jahrbuch zu schaffen. Beachten Sie also die *Notes & Notices*, die Website und die *facebook*-page der Lessing Gesellschaft. Eine weitere Überlegung wäre, ob sich mehr mit dem Forums-Gedanken im *Lessing Yearbook / Jahrbuch* machen ließe – kurze Beiträge zu einem aktuellen Forschungsthema, die sich explizit als Teil eines Dialogs verstehen. Schließlich wäre es, vor allem mit der jetzt bald fünfzig-jährigen Existenz der *Lessing Society* und des *Lessing Yearbooks / Jahrbuchs* vor Augen, kein schlechter Augenblick, die Wissenschaftsgeschichte zu pflegen und vielleicht auch einmal ansatzweise die Frage zu stellen, wie Lessing und sein Jahrbuch in die Geschichte der Aufklärungsforschung hineinpassen.

Interessanterweise ist das *Lessing Yearbook / Jahrbuch*, wie übrigens der Doppelname schon zeigt, fast einzigartig in der heutigen Germanistik und Aufklärungsforschung, indem es auf durchaus erfolgreiche Weise sich sowohl an ein deutsch- als auch ein englischsprachiges Publikum richtet. Diese Zweisprachigkeit ist ein wichtiges Prinzip, an dem ebenfalls festgehalten werden soll, weil es das Jahrbuch zu einem Publikationsorgan für die besten Forschungsbeiträge zur Aufklärung generell und zu Lessing

spezifisch sowohl im deutschsprachigen als auch im anglophonen Raum und darüber hinaus macht.

Was für die Relevanz und Komplexität Lessings spricht, ist, dass sein Werk – und das gilt auch für die europäische Aufklärung generell, die ebenfalls im *Lessing Yearbook / Jahrbuch* diskutiert wird – sich immer wieder für neue, interessante, zuweilen provokative Annäherungs- und Denkweisen anbietet. Es ist sicher auch die Varietät der Ansätze, die die ganze Bandbreite zwischen genauester Philologie und anspruchsvollen kulturwissenschaftlichen Zugangsweisen einschließt, die das *Lessing Yearbook / Jahrbuch* zu einem interessanten Projekt gemacht haben und weiterhin machen werden. Auch wenn wir heute sicher vieles anders sehen mögen als in Lessings Zeit, zeigt das Jahrbuch, dass er als Autor und Denker im Moment genauso aktuell ist wie vor zweihundert Jahren.

Gern möchte ich an dieser Stelle all denjenigen, die für das Fortbestehen des Jahrbuchs im letzten Jahrzehnt eine führende (und manchmal sogar entscheidende) Rolle gespielt haben – unter ihnen Guy Stern, Richard Schade, John A. McCarthy, Herbert Rowland und Barbara Fischer (aber auch viele andere) – danken. Insbesondere gilt dies auch für Monika Fick und Monika Nenon, Lessing-Forscherinnen par excellence, über deren enzyklopädische Kenntnisse über Lessing und seine Zeit ich immer wieder staune und deren selbstloser Einsatz für das *Lessing Yearbook / Jahrbuch*, zusammen mit den Anstrengungen von Sabine Durchholz, die uns glücklicherweise auch für diesen Band noch zur Verfügung stand, den Wechsel zu einem neuen Standort sehr viel leichter gemacht hat und von dem unsere Arbeit am Jahrbuch sicher auch in der Zukunft noch profitieren wird.

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A Collision of Values: Text, Music,
and Nascent Enlightenment in
J. C. Gottsched's and J. S. Bach's *Trauerode*

STEVEN R. HUFF • DANIEL ZAGER

»Ein Zeugnis unsres Jammers ...«
Trauerode

In the initial pages of *Die Musik des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Carl Dahlhaus focuses on problems of stylistic periodization for music of the eighteenth century.¹ The music of the opening decades of this century may justifiably be categorized within the boundaries of a Baroque stylistic period, the music of the closing decades within a Classical period. The problem, of course, has long been how to conceptualize the music produced between these two stylistic poles standing at the beginning and end of the century. The notion that a Baroque period in music extended to 1750 is, in the opinion of Dahlhaus, a result in part of the Bach biographer Johann Nikolaus Forkel's 1802 *Über Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke*, a work which, in elevating Bach to the status of a »national monument,« provided subsequent historians a convenient *terminus ante quem* for Baroque music. Dahlhaus points out that much of Bach's compositional work after 1730 »was the late work of an esoteric who knowingly withdrew from the world and drew the compositional consequences from that. This makes the proposition of a musical-historical caesura around 1750 fully illusionary. The end of the Baroque preceded Bach's death by decades.« Dahlhaus goes on to state: »the view that the stylistic break that divides the seventeenth century (whether one calls it a Baroque era or not) from the eighteenth century falls between 1720 and 1730 has become the consensus of music historians.«² On the opposite end of the century, the Classical style, or the Viennese Classicism identified chiefly with the later works of Haydn and with Mozart, may be recognized beginning ca. 1780. That the period occurring between ca. 1720 and ca. 1780 presents the music historian with a thicket of stylistic change and aesthetic debate is signaled by the various labels (some borrowed from art-historical and literary criticism) that have been used to categorize the music of this period. The terms pre-classic, galant, rococo, *Empfindsamer Stil*, and *Sturm und Drang* all have been employed to characterize either the whole of this period or, especially in the case of the last two terms, specific composers, repertoires, and styles of music composed during this era. While many music historians have utilized the term »galant« as an

overall label for this period of stylistic change, others have preferred to link this musical period with the Enlightenment. In commenting on Dahlhaus's study, David A. Sheldon notes that Dahlhaus sees the period from 1720 to 1814 »in terms of Enlightenment values [...]. The key word for Dahlhaus in this regard, one that he uses over and over, is *raisonnement*.«³

Affairs in the realm of early eighteenth-century letters offer the literary historian equally daunting and largely parallel challenges. We fondly regard as the final death knell to the Baroque Johann Christoph Gottsched's triumphant effort to oust opera – »that most baroque of literary genres« – from its quarters in Hamburg.⁴ But we can do this only with an eye conveniently closed to several important facts. Long before Gottsched began accusing opera of promoting the irrational and the immoral, the Hamburg civic opera led a fiscally troubled existence rooted not in any lack of public interest, but in the general economic climate. An extended period of war (1699-1721), and a bout with the plague (1713) to which a full eighth of Hamburg's population succumbed, brought about a drastic decline in prosperity that had a devastating effect on more than just the opera. When the Neuber troupe – Gottsched's vehicle for realizing his theater reforms – triumphantly took over the stage from the opera in 1738, it met with a similar fate. Their production of Gottsched's *Sterbender Cato* was received so poorly that by the second performance a mere twelve persons were in attendance. Not long thereafter opera returned to the opera house (a fact usually ignored in the standard literary histories). Audiences had refused to shift their allegiance to a drama that inspired little more than sheer boredom; Baroque sensibilities, the fascination with grandiose spectacle, had not yet waned. Both this stubborn persistence of the Baroque in the face of Gottsched's newfangled rationalism, and the concomitant transition away from the Baroque toward Enlightenment and ultimately classical norms with which Dahlhaus grapples, are doubtless symptomatic of the same underlying phenomenon: a time of tremendous ferment in which competing value systems vie for dominance in a new cultural-historical landscape.

The 1727 *Trauerode*, with text by Gottsched and music by Johann Sebastian Bach, provides an ideal case study by which to explore, from both literary and musical perspectives, the stylistic and ideological collision of Baroque and Enlightenment values characteristic of this period of transition. Furthermore, an exploration of the chapter on the cantata in Gottsched's 1730 *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst vor die Deutschen* confirms previous – if largely ignored – suggestions that this monumental theoretical treatise constituted one of the earliest calls for the introduction of Enlightenment tenets into the music of its time.⁵

I

Upon the death of Christiane Eberhardine, Electress of Saxony and (though she would never set foot in the country) Queen of Poland, a consistorial decree proclaimed that during the lengthy period of official mourning – a full four months from September 7, 1727 to Epiphany 1728 – no music whatsoever, public or private, should be performed. This included »das Orgelschlagen, alle anderen Saiten- und Freuden-Spiele, das Figuralingen in allen Kirchen, bei Hochzeiten, Kindtaufen, Leichenbegängnissen, auf der Gasse, [und] von den Schülern vor den Thüren.«⁶ The one exception was Bach's Cantata BWV 198, the *Trauerode*. The cantata was commissioned for a memorial service in Christiane Eberhardine's honor, which was held in Leipzig's Pauliner-Kirche, the university chapel. The city's leading poet and renowned professor of rhetoric, Gottsched, and its famed musician, Bach, were enlisted to supply text and music. Perhaps because it was an occasional work, the cantata today attracts little interest. Germanists have neglected it entirely, and musicologists value it for the most part only because Bach used large sections of it in the now lost *St. Mark Passion*.⁷ But this roughly half-hour exception to a four-month musical blackout is in many ways a remarkable work deserving further scrutiny. While contemporary reports indicate that the work was indeed well received, and twentieth-century scholars have praised it for its subtle beauty and unity of structure, closer analysis of the cantata as a cultural-historical artifact reveals it to be a mirror of a series of most intriguing conflicts and tensions. Those present at its premiere, for example, would have recognized in it uncomfortable (if unavoidable) reminders that Christiane Eberhardine's marriage to August der Starke represented what was surely one of the least felicitous unions in Saxon history.⁸ Though she could perhaps tolerate his notorious philandering by conveniently looking the other way, her pious devotion to her Lutheran faith prevented her from following her husband when he converted to Catholicism in order to accede to the Polish throne. This refusal earned her the affectionate nickname »die Betsäule Sachsens« and made her into a beloved heroine before her Protestant subjects. But recognition of her heroic qualities in the *Trauerode* of necessity meant an unspoken and potentially perilous deprecation of the Elector.⁹

From another vantage point the work bears telling evidence, as we hope to show, of differing aesthetic presuppositions between its poet and its composer; and from an angle of historical retrospection, the work constitutes an eloquent reflection of the religious and philosophical, that is to say ideological, tensions inherent in the complex transitional period between Baroque and Enlightenment during which the cantata was conceived.

In terms of both content and structure, Gottsched's text evinces all the

characteristics of a standard early eighteenth-century heroic ode. Although there was already at this time considerable experimentation with some of the more elaborate ode forms of classical antiquity,¹⁰ Gottsched's poem conforms neatly to an understanding of the ode he would delineate three years later in the *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst*.¹¹ The word »ode« he takes there to be an exact equivalent of the word »Lied.« It is a poem meant to be sung and as such ought to be composed of regular, unchanging strophes: »Die Strophen einer Ode, oder wie unsere Alten nach Art der Griechen sagten, die Gesetze derselben, müssen also auch, bey unserer heutigen künstlichen Musik, eine gewisse Länge und Anzahl der Zeilen beybehalten; wenn sie sich auf eine gewisse Melodie sollen singen lassen.«¹² Gottsched also recommends that the content of a given strophe culminate in the final line or two. One need not go as far as an epigrammatic point, he says. One must only take care not to extinguish the fervor established in the foregoing lines.¹³ In this passage, it is worth noting, the prescriptive force of Gottsched's words applies not only to poets but to musicians.

Odes may serve the praise of heroes and conquerors, as well as wine and love. But the poet must insure that the tone matches the topic. Odes in praise of great individuals, Gottsched insists, »müssen in der pathetischen und feurigen [...] Schreibart gemacht werden«:

In [dieser Schreibart] beherrscht die Bewunderung und Erstaunung den Poeten, die ihm alle Vorwürfe [= poetic subject matter] vergrößert, lauter neue Bilder, Gedanken und Ausdrückungen zeuget; lauter edle Gleichnisse, reiche Beschreibungen, lebhaftere Entzückungen wirket; kurz, alle Schönheiten zusammen häufet, die eine erhitzte Einbildungskraft hervorbringen kann.¹⁴

Of the sixteen model odes that Gottsched assembles in his handbook as examples for the student of poetry, all are strophic. All but one have the same number of syllables from line to line. The exception, a poem by Simon Dach, allows for some metrical variation within a strophe, but uniformity is retained from one strophe to the next. The *Trauerode* in its original form fulfills these criteria. The verse utilizes four-foot iambic lines, eight lines per strophe, with the rhyme scheme ABBACDDC, and with the semantic content always culminating in the final lines of each strophe. Gottsched cannot have been too pleased when Bach reorganized the ode's nine strophes into ten sections in order to accommodate the music's recitative-aria structure.¹⁵

While the poem – before Bach's intervention – was traditional for the period in its form, considerable tension manifests itself in its thematic content. On the one hand, if we grant it the status of »heroic ode,« the

work constitutes a rather typical example of its genre. The expressions of universal (and therefore exaggerated) praise or, in the case of a deceased hero, mourning are formulaic and can be found in all such occasional poetry. Thus Gottsched begins with the ineffable grief felt by all of Saxony at Christiane Eberhardine's death, as conveyed in the first strophe:

Dein Sachsen, dein bestürztes Meißen,
erstarrt bei deiner Königsgruft;
das Auge trânt, die Zunge ruft:
Mein Schmerz muß unaussprechlich heißen.¹⁶

Then, in the third strophe, he indicates a desire that the rest of the world share in the grieving and that the quaking tones of the mourning bells be perceived throughout all Europe as a sign of Saxony's misery:

O, könnte nur dies bange Klingen,
davon das Ohr uns täglich gellt,
der ganzen Europäerwelt
ein Zeugnis unsres Jammers bringen!

On the other hand it does not suffice to consider the *Trauerode* in the light of its generic proximity to the heroic ode alone. Gottsched's text is a work of occasional poetry and was thus conceived within the context of a specific time and place. As such, a comparison to other contemporary texts composed for analogous occasions is illustrative. If we place the *Trauerode* alongside the text of *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit* (BWV 106), another funerary cantata set to music by Bach presumably in 1707, we immediately notice some pronounced differences. Apart from the obvious formal dissimilarities, the crucial and most striking difference between the two texts lies in the message. BWV 106 is essentially a *memento mori* in finest Baroque style. The first half, in particular, underscores the transitory nature of mortality:

Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit. In ihm leben, weben und sind wir, so
lange er will. In ihm sterben wir zur rechten Zeit, wenn er will.
Ach, Herr, lehre uns bedenken, daß wir sterben müssen, auf daß wir
klug werden.
Bestelle dein Haus; denn du wirst sterben und nicht lebendig bleiben!
Es ist der alte Bund: Mensch, du must sterben!¹⁷

If the first half of the text focuses on dismal ephemerality, in typical Baroque antithetical form the second half – beginning with the line, »Ja,

komm Herr Jesu!« – draws attention to the glories and rewards of the next, genuine life. Not only for the deceased, but also for the participating congregation, the poem constitutes a stoic covenant to desert the world and willingly commend one's soul to the Redeemer:

In deine Hände befehl ich meinen Geist; du hast mich erlöset, Herr, du
getreuer Gott.

Heute wirst du mit mir im Paradies sein.
Mit Fried und Freud fahr ich dahin in Gottes Willen,
getrost ist mir mein Herz und Sinn,
sanft und stille,
wie Gott mir verheißen hat:
Der Tod ist mein Schlaf worden.

Glorie, Lob, Ehr und Herrlichkeit
sei dir, Gott Vater und Sohn, bereit,
dem Heiligen Geist mit Namen!
Die göttlich Kraft
macht uns sieghaft
durch Jesum Christum, amen.

This antithetical configuration is familiar to us as the underlying dramatic structure informing much of seventeenth-century German tragedy. It represents nothing less than the grand *psychomachia*, the confrontation between flesh and spirit, mortality and immortality, in which, as the last strophe reassures, immortality will claim the victory.

The thematization of the triumphant battle against, and renunciation of, the world, while quite inconspicuous in the Latin requiem mass, is a red thread running through the (albeit less formalized) German Protestant tradition of funerary music from Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien* (e.g., »Es ist allhier ein Jammerthal, / Angst, Not und Trübsal überall, / des Bleibens ist ein kleine Zeit, voller Mühseligkeit / und wers bedenkt ist immer im Streit«) to Brahms's *Deutsches Requiem* (e.g., »Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt, sondern die zukünftige suchen wir«).¹⁸ Gottsched's text, by comparison, is of an altogether different ilk. A few perfunctory, quite underplayed nods to the renunciation motif are overshadowed, beginning with the opening lines, by a distinct clinging to the present world:

Laß, Fürstin, laß noch einen Strahl
aus Salems Sternengewölben schießen,
und sieh, mit wieviel Tränengüssen
umringen wir dein Ehrenmahl.

And continued, as cited previously, in the lines following:

Dein Sachsen, dein bestürztes Meissen,
erstarrt bei deiner Königsgruft;
das Auge trânt, die Zunge ruft:
Mein Schmerz muß unbeschreiblich heißen.

Whereas the generic German funerary text, steeped in Reformation and Baroque sensibilities, must despise any lingering in the present and glorify the entry of the deceased into the eternal, in Gottsched's poem all Saxony mourns because Christiane Eberhardine has departed the realm of the transitory. The moment of triumph and rejoicing becomes an occasion for grieving. Through the voice of the poet the congregation implores the Electress, in effect, to cast her gaze once more upon the earth. The focus is explicitly earthly rather than otherworldly.

Indeed, in the final lines of the ode Gottsched substitutes for the standard congregational covenant to relinquish this world in favor of more ethereal realms – a crucial component in BWV 106 – a radically different kind of covenant, when in the Chorus ultimus he places the following words into the congregants' collective mouth:

Doch Königin! du stirbest nicht,
man weiß, was man an dir besessen;
die Nachwelt wird dich nicht vergessen,
bis dieser Weltbau einst zerbricht.
Ihr Dichter, schreibt! wir wollens lesen:
sie ist der Tugend Eigentum,
der Untertanen Lust und Ruhm,
der Königinnen Preis gewesen.

Here the victory is not one of heaven over worldly crassness. Instead, the version of immortality Gottsched has in store for Christiane Eberhardine will be rooted firmly in the »Nachwelt« which here clearly implies the terrestrial rather than the celestial. The acquiescence to tradition in the fourth line of the strophe (»bis dieser Weltbau einst zerbricht«) is halfhearted and deceptive: In the traditional funerary text the world will not someday disintegrate, as Gottsched has it. Earthly existence is rather by definition already in a state of decay (cf. above Schütz: »Es ist allhier ein Jammerthal«). And the congregational covenant deviates entirely from anything at all resembling an oath of renunciation, as Gottsched subverts it into a self-serving commitment to read the words of the poets. The exaltation of the divine realm is deflated, even the glorification of the Electress must share the stage

with the glorification of the poet, and the poet is in this case none other than Gottsched himself.

The discrepancy between Gottsched's funerary text and the rest of German funerary tradition can be accounted for by the fact that Gottsched's text is grounded not in a Reformation or Baroque world view, but rather in the sensibilities of the nascent Enlightenment. This puts him immediately at cross-purposes with Bach. Whatever one may conclude from the results of recent studies pointing to Bach's inconsistent orthodoxy or calling into question his purity of ideological motive, a great distance still separates Bach's ostensibly problematic religiosity from anything resembling the wholesale appropriation of early Enlightenment values unmistakably evident in Gottsched's text.¹⁹ These values manifest themselves most readily in the rhetorical fabric of which the poem is woven. Characteristic for the period, wordplays equating light and clarity with reason, as does the term »Aufklärung« itself, quickly became clichés. In the *Trauerode* they conveniently serve the dual purpose of eulogizing Christiane Eberhardine and, perhaps more importantly, extolling the value matrix against which she is successfully measured. Thus the motif of the ray of light (»Strahl«) in the opening line is developed hyperbolically in the sixth strophe:

Ein starker Glanz von hundert Sonnen,
der unsern Tag zur Mitternacht
und unsre Sonne finster macht,
hat dein verklärtes Haupt umspinnen.

And also in the seventh:

Was Wunder ists? Du bist es wert,
du Fürbild aller Königinnen!
Du mußt allen Schmuck gewinnen,
Der deine Scheitel itzt verklärt.

This was not the first time Gottsched employed such rhetoric in the celebration of Enlightenment norms. In an earlier ode to Peter the Great he had praised the Czar as »[den] Fürsten der Scythen, der den Dunst der alten Barberei durch *seiner Weisheit Strahl* von allen Moscovitern vertrieben [und] Europa mit einem gesitteten Volke beschenkt hatte« (emphasis added).²⁰ The death of the enlightened ruler threatens to darken the cultivated civilization he leaves behind:

Ihr Völker klagt! denn Moscau weinet,
Europa, komm, verhülle dich!

Ihr Länder, denen itzt fast keine Sonne scheint,
 Seht! euer Glantz verfinstert sich.
 Verdunkelt euch ihr hellen Lichter,
 Womit der Norden-Himmel blitzt:
 Der Held, den Rußlands Thron besitzt,
 Umflohrt durch seinen Fall viel tausend Angesichter:
 Der Augenmerck der gantzen Welt,
 Der Moscowiter Haupt, der große Petrus fällt.²¹

As in his ode to Peter the Great, the rhetoric of the Enlightenment in Gottsched's *Trauerode* conspicuously crowds out the rhetoric of religion. Whereas the text of the funerary cantata BWV 106 contains ten explicit references to Christian deity (e. g., »Gott,« »Herr,« »Herr Jesu,« »dem heiligen Geist«) – not to mention pronoun referents, Gottsched's poem, which is exactly three times longer, contains only two indirect references: one a metaphor (»vor des Lammes Throne«), the other a metonym (»Schöpfer«). Similarly, in the opening lines the word »Himmel« is embroidered (or avoided) to become »Salems Sterngewölben.«

Gottsched's secularization of the funerary genre fits a pattern that can be detected in the intellectual development of the pastor's son from theology student in Königsberg to professor of philosophy and pillar of the Enlightenment in Leipzig. At the age of eighteen, after four years of study, he had written a dissertation (»De conversione hominis et gratia dei in eadem efficaci et sufficienti«) on the subject of divine grace, in which he concluded that grace is not bestowed upon the sinner in an unmediated manner (which he refers to derisively as »Enthusiasterei«), but rather by natural – as opposed to spiritual – means.²² The critical exposition was quietly rejected after a first reading because of its dangerously unorthodox reasoning. In Leipzig six years later, when Gottsched presented his dissertation for his »Magisterium,« the scenario is repeated with ironic variations: Thanks to an influential, like-minded professor the essay on the origin of evil is deemed acceptable, but a near scandal breaks out when at the well-attended public defense an equally influential scholar accuses Gottsched of promoting heretical viewpoints.²³ Precisely during the three-year period between the masters disputation and the composition of the *Trauerode*, Gottsched – no doubt steeled by these confrontations with orthodoxy – is especially active as a proponent of freedom of thought and as an almost virulent critic of religion. In this spirit he holds several academic addresses on the theme of religious tolerance. Although some of his thoughts constitute little more than banalities, there was nevertheless much at risk for such a freethinker, who was willing to proclaim such utterances as the following:

Das meiste Blut, so jemals die Erde getrunken hat, ist durch die Religion getrunken worden. Die Religion allein hat mehr Menschen gefressen, als das Schwert jemals ermordet hat, als das Wasser jemals ersäufet, als das Feuer jemals versehret hat [...]. O wie glücklich würden die Sterblichen in der Welt leben, wenn entweder allenthalben eine nöthige Übereinstimmung der Meinung und eine Gleichförmigkeit der äußerlichen Ceremonien im Gottesdienste herrschen möchte oder doch zum wenigsten eine allgemeine Religionsfreiheit eingeführt würde.²⁴

Elsewhere, referring to the difficulties in the Netherlands, he suggests that a nation can only achieve happiness when it has extinguished its passion for religion.²⁵ Against this background, Gottsched's use of the term »Glaubenspflegerin« as an epithet for Christiane Eberhardine in the *Trauerode* seems to point to a distinct duplicity on his part. Or if one is not willing to go so far, one may at least conclude that the word conjured up appreciably different sentiments in Gottsched's mind than in Bach's.

With the ode's final lines, »Ihr Dichter, schreibt! wir wollens lesen,« Gottsched unsolicitedly forces upon his listeners a communal commitment to read the words of the poets, thereby effectively rendering them, in every sense of the phrase, a captive audience. This rhetorical ploy denotes another facet of Gottsched's vigorous program of secularization. His motives behind the extolment of the poet at the expense of both religion and the Electress become readily transparent in the light of what we know about the circumstances surrounding the commission of the *Trauerode*. Just prior to Christiane Eberhardine's death Gottsched had been elected »Senior« of the Deutsche Gesellschaft in Leipzig. A language society like many founded in the seventeenth century, its main purpose was the promotion of German language and culture in reaction against the steady incursion of foreign, especially French and Italian, influences. Gottsched assumed the leadership of the organization at a period when it had fallen into a state of decline and disinterest, and his immediate task was to reinvigorate the society and shape it into an instrument with which he could administer his own agenda, which was of course in many ways already consistent with that of the Deutsche Gesellschaft. Gottsched's strategy involved the launching of a two-pronged attack: first against the use of French among German nobility, and secondly against the sacrosanct position of Latin among academic circles. The former he undertook by successfully recruiting persons of nobility into the ranks of the society. These in turn engaged in effective proselytism for Gottsched's cause among their own peers, to whom Gottsched otherwise had little access.

Within the academy, on the other hand, Gottsched required no such assistance. As a well-published professor of philosophy and rhetoric, Gott-

sched, even at the young age of twenty-seven, already enjoyed considerable esteem among his colleagues. Once he assumed the leadership of the Deutsche Gesellschaft, he would use his influence among his university colleagues to gradually arrange for the society to receive most of the commissions for poetry or oratory delivered at official university occasions. Although the Deutsche Gesellschaft was not legally affiliated with the university, through Gottsched's dealings it would quickly become the semi-official voice of the institution. Prior to Gottsched's ascendancy Latin was the language of all such ceremonial occasions. Starting with the *Trauerode* Gottsched systematically arranged for German to replace Latin as the academic *lingua sacra* in Leipzig.

When contemplating Gottsched's role in the production of the *Trauerode* we must not be misled by the fact that the noble student Hans Carl von Kirchbach formally initiated the commission for the funerary celebration with petitions to university authorities (September 12) and subsequently to the Saxon court (October 3), for Kirchbach not at all coincidentally was an active member of the Deutsche Gesellschaft and a close associate of Gottsched to whom the latter had already entrusted significant organizational duties. The suspicion that arises here, namely that Gottsched himself was the prime mover behind the petition and that Kirchbach merely served as a kind of front agent, is surely justified.²⁶ The *Trauerode* thus represented a splendid coup for Gottsched's two-pronged strategy aimed simultaneously at German nobility and learned circles. Just how splendid, can be seen in contemporary eye-witness reports of the occasion which note wholly without disapprobation the use of German in the text.²⁷ Referring specifically to the German funerary oration, sandwiched between the two parts of the *Trauerode*, and written and delivered by Kirchbach himself, the *Zeitung für Gelehrte Sachen* remarked: »Er [= Kirchbach] hat von allen hohen Anwesenden den Ruhm erhalten, daß er durch seine wohlbelegte Rede gezeigt, wie geschickt und wohl man sich in der deutschen Sprache ausdrücken könne.«²⁸ From Gottsched's perspective Christiane Eberhardine's death was doubtless only a secondary impetus to the composition of the *Trauerode*. The whole occasion, as he viewed it, was designed instead to extoll the virtues of the German poet.

But not only the electress and not only religion are slighted in Gottsched's text. In addition to the forced commitment to read the words of the poets in the final lines of the ode, the second strophe contains a not even subtle denigration of music:

Verstummt, verstummt, ihr holden Saiten!
Kein Ton vermag der Länder Not
bei ihrer teuren Mutter Tod,
O Schmerzenswort! recht anzudeuten.

This further implicit valorization of poetry, now at the explicit expense of music, constitutes a genuine provocation. The idea that music was incapable of adequately expressing the deeply-felt grief over the loss of the Electress was an insult to the musical arts in general and to Bach's talents in particular. And Bach, as we shall see, would defiantly take up the gauntlet that Gottsched has so audaciously thrown at his feet.

II

Before considering Bach's response to Gottsched's challenge, one additional section of the *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst* deserves our attention. Having already examined the *Trauerode* within the synchronic context of Gottsched's notion of the ode as a genre, and from the diachronic perspective of Lutheran funerary music, the second chapter – titled »Von Cantaten« – in volume two of Gottsched's handbook for poets would seem a likely source for further information on the proper preparation of an early eighteenth-century cantata text. But here any such expectations are in the main disappointed, for in this section Gottsched presumes to address the major part of his remarks not to poets, but to composers. In doing so, however, Gottsched formulates one of the earliest theoretical statements calling for a systematic introduction of Enlightenment, rationalist principles into the music of the period.

Gottsched begins this chapter by identifying the cantata as »eine neue Erfindung der Italiener« (59).²⁹ While he states that music is the impetus for the cantata, he stops short of providing any historical details regarding the early development of this musical genre in Italy or its cultivation in Germany (59). Subsequently, however, he differentiates recitatives, ariosos, and arias as the principal types of sections within the cantata (60-61), and he describes the conventions with respect to alternation of aria and recitative, as well as to the usual number of each in a single cantata (67). Still later, he distinguishes the cantata from the genres of oratorio, with its text of sacred or religious subject matter, and serenata, a cantata having several characters (as opposed to the more customary solo cantata) and one usually intended for some royal and festive occasion (68). Nonetheless, it quickly becomes apparent that Gottsched's attention is focused less on the history and overall characteristics of the cantata than it is on the specific interaction of the poetic and musical elements, on the inevitable tension between text and music, poet and composer. An examination of Gottsched's ideas concerning the relationship between text and music will not only shed considerable light on the emerging literary and musical ideals of the Enlightenment but will also provide a context for subsequent observations on Bach's setting of Gottsched's poetry in the *Trauerode*.³⁰

At the outset, Gottsched maintains that composers have regularly exceeded the bounds of good taste and good judgment in setting cantata texts:

Sie bemüheten sich auch nunmehr, fast alle Sylben eines solchen Liedes, durch die Verschiedenheit des Klanges, auszudrücken, und alle mögliche Abwechselungen darinn zu versuchen. Sie giengen aber allmählich gar zu weit darinnen [...]. Wo nur die geringste Spur eines Affects, oder sonst eine Stelle vorkam, die sich einigermaßen durch das Singen und Spielen nachahmen ließ: da machten sie sich rechtschaffen lustig, und hielten sich oft bey einer Zeile länger auf, als man vorhin bey ganzen Oden gethan hatte. (60)

Gottsched concluded that »Jemehr die Musik dabey gewann, desto mehr verlohrt die Poesie dabey« (60).

So far as he was concerned, the fundamental problem consisted in the subordination of the poet to the composer:

Alle laufen da hinaus, daß der Poet ein Sklave des Componisten seyn, und nicht denken oder sagen müsse, wie oder was er wolle; sondern so, daß der Musikus seine Einfälle dabey recht könne hören lassen. (62)

In complaining that composers too frequently held unrealistic and unjustifiable presuppositions concerning their expectations of poets, he provides three examples. First, Gottsched laments the fact that the opening lines of an aria are to be filled with words »dabey sich der Componist eine halbe Stunde aufhalten könne,« so that the composer can devote himself to the musical expression of words such as »Lachen, Weinen, Jauchzen, Aechzen, Klagen, Heulen, Zittern, Fliehen, Eilen, Rasen, Poltern, oder sonst ein Wort von dergleichen Art« (62). Second, he states that composers subsequently desired these opening lines of an aria to be repeated at the end. Finally, he complains that composers wanted recitatives, which provided them the least opportunity to display their compositional skills, to be as short as possible. In sum, Gottsched states: »Alle diese Regeln haben die Herren Componisten den Poeten vorgeschrieben, und diese haben sich dieselben, ich weis nicht, warum? vorschreiben lassen, ja sie wohl gar angebethet« (62).

To rectify the prevailing relationship between poet and composer, one which Gottsched perceives to be skewed in favor of the music, he goes on to specify four rules for composers. By following these guidelines, the composer should take care, »daß er nicht, durch eine verschwendete musikalische Kunst das Werk der Poesie unsichtbar mache, oder so verstecke,

daß man nichts davon vernehmen kann« (63). The first rule is one to which Gottsched returns repeatedly throughout this chapter on the cantata; indeed, it seems to be a bit of a pet peeve: Composers should not engage in countless repetitions of a line, dwelling on it for a half hour at a time (63). Earlier he had warned against repeating individual words »zwey, zehn, auch wohl zwanzig male, und zwar immer mit neuen Veränderungen« (60). While a composer may see repetition of individual words, or even an entire poetic line, as a standard way of extending and developing his musical material, Gottsched would argue that such a procedure is unnatural. Because a poet would not repeat a line or a word several times, neither, in Gottsched's view, should a composer. Clearly, he expected the musical to be congruent (according to his specifications) with the poetic.

The second rule, allied with the first, warns against extracting an individual word and extending it through a melismatic treatment. Here he complains of composers »[die] einzelne Wörter so zerren und ausdehnen, daß der Sänger zehnmal darüber Athem holen muß, und endlich von den Zuhörern, seiner unendlichen Triller wegen, nicht verstanden werden kann« (63). Later Gottsched comments further on this particular fault: »Mir kommt es immer vor, daß man vor aller Kunst in den meisten itali-enischen Musiken den Text gar verliert; weil das Ohr zwar ein ewiges ha, ha, ha, ho, ho, ho, hertrillern höret, der Verstand aber gar nichts zu denken bekömmt« (66).

Gottsched pontificates less extensively on rules three and four. In the third rule he states: »Ferner kann ein Poet fordern, daß er eine gewisse Gleichheit in der Melodie einer Arie beybehalte;« and with the fourth rule he insists that the recitatives not be set in a boring way (64). He concludes with a rationalistic principle ultimately derived from his intellectual mentor, the philosopher Christian Wolff (1679-1754): »Alle dieser Regeln sind in der Natur so wohl gegründet, daß ich nicht wüßte, wie man ihrer hätte verfehlen können« (64). In a subsequent section Gottsched attenuates these rules somewhat by explaining:

Ich will mit dem allen eine vernünftige Wiederholung gewisser nachdrücklicher Wörter, so wenig, als die Nachahmung ihrer Natur, durch die Töne verwerfen, dafern solches nur angeht. Beydes ist nicht nur erlaubt, sondern auch schön; wenn es nur mäßig geschieht. (66)

In this same section, Gottsched also offers a clear summary statement on his discussion of text/music relationships and the proper interaction of poet and composer. He states that:

Das Singen ist doch weiter nichts, als ein angenehmes und nachdrückliches Lesen eines Verses, welches also der Natur und dem Inhalte desselben gemäß seyn muß [...]. So muß es ein Musikus auch machen, und sich vor allen Ausschweifungen hüten, die seinen Gesang dem natürlichen Ausdrücke der Gedanken, der unter vernünftigen Leuten gewöhnlich ist, unähnlich machen könnten. (66-67)

After articulating these rules of text/music relationship in the cantata, Gottsched turns to composers of his own time and cites specific pieces to illustrate his presuppositions. Pride of place is awarded to »de[m] berühmten Herrn Capellmeister Hurlebusch [...], der unserm Vaterlande gewiß Ehre machete« (64). Here Gottsched speaks of Conrad Friedrich Hurlebusch (ca. 1691-1765), a German composer and organist who seems never to have settled into a permanent musical position, on more than one occasion turning down offers of a court position in his native town of Braunschweig.³¹ By citing no fewer than six Italian cantatas by Hurlebusch, Gottsched seeks to validate the principles that he has articulated, noting that »Dieser hat in sehr vielen Proben gewiesen, daß meine Forderungen in der Musik keine Chimären eines Menschen sind, der was unmögliches, oder ungerichtetes begehret« (64). Gottsched notes that Hurlebusch

hat sich darinn aller der Fehler enthalten, die bey andern Componisten so gemein sind. Die Wiederholungen sind sparsam, nämlich nicht über dreymal; die Recitative sind voller Melodie, und es ist kein einziges Wort darinn gezerret; sondern alles wird hintereinander verständlich weggesungen. (64)

One of the cantatas cited by Gottsched, *Tu parti amato Tirsi*, is preserved in manuscript in the Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek. In the first aria of this cantata, »Come lieto viveroi,« even the briefest melismatic treatment of individual words is absent. Likewise, there are no »countless« repetitions of poetic lines or individual words. To fashion a twenty-six-measure A section in this da capo aria, Hurlebusch repeats the complete text twice (mm. 12-17 and 18-24) after the opening statement (mm. 5-12). In each of these three statements, the text is stated in its entirety with minimal repetition of individual words. The same principle applies in the twelve-measure B section with its single repetition (mm. 32-38) of the initial statement of the text (mm. 27-32). To illustrate his ideals of a rational text/music relationship, Gottsched could scarcely have chosen more suitable musical examples than these cantatas by Hurlebusch.

Gottsched also praises specific cantatas by Georg Friedrich Händel, Carl Heinrich Graun (though here Gottsched feels compelled to point out one

word extending far too long in an aria), and Johann Friedrich Gräfe, a poet and composer who enjoyed close connections with Gottsched, Hurlebusch, and Graun.³² Of the Händel cantatas, Gottsched praises the cantata *Sarei troppo felice* as one that exemplifies his rules, while the cantata *Lucrezia* deviates somewhat from these guidelines (65). Both cantatas were composed during Händel's stay in Italy, which lasted from Autumn 1706 to early 1710.³³

By naming Hurlebusch, Händel, Graun, and Gräfe, and by citing specific cantatas written by these composers, Gottsched was able to illustrate with great clarity his ideals concerning the relationship between text and music in the cantata. Perhaps equally telling, however, is a conspicuous omission from his list of composers. Gottsched, quickly becoming the most influential literary theorist, critic, and poet of his day, completely ignores Johann Sebastian Bach, by all accounts the preeminent musician then active in Leipzig.³⁴ Christoph Wolff notes that as Cantor of the Thomaskirche and »Director Musices Lipsiensis« Bach was »the most important musician in the town; as such, he was primarily responsible for the music of the four principal Leipzig churches [...] as well as for any other aspects of the town's musical life controlled by the town council.«³⁵ Later he adds that in summer 1723 »Bach took up his additional duties as musical director to the university, a post traditionally held by the Thomaskantor.«³⁶ That Gottsched omitted all mention of his most important musical contemporary in Leipzig, one who played such a prominent role in church, civic, and university musical life, is all the more striking given the fact that during the 1720's in Leipzig he could not fail to have been aware of Bach's sacred and secular cantatas. Between 1723 and 1725 Bach was the astonishingly productive composer of two extensive cycles of German sacred cantatas for the church year.³⁷ In 1725-26, Bach worked on a third cantata cycle, which is, however, less fully developed than the first two cycles. Further, in these same years three secular cantatas by Bach were performed at the university and may well have been heard by Gottsched, who was already actively engaged in academic life by this time. Cantatas 36c (May 1725) and 205 (August 1725) were produced in honor of two professors at the university, while Cantata 207 (December 1726) was written for the installation of another professor.³⁸ Moreover, prior to the publication in 1730 of the *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst* Bach had set two cantata texts by Gottsched: Bach's music for *Auf! Süß entzückende Gewalt*, for a wedding on November 27, 1725, is, unfortunately, lost;³⁹ his setting of *Laß, Fürstin, laß noch einen Strahl*, the *Trauerode*, composed and performed in 1727, precedes the *Versuch* by only three years.⁴⁰ This circumstance raises the possibility that Gottsched was sufficiently disenchanted with Bach's setting of his ode that he not only omitted him from any praise or even positive mention in

the *Versuch* but perhaps even had aspects of the *Trauerode* in mind as he criticized the cantata of his day. That he provides specific negative criticism only for the cantata *La Dove in grembo* by Johann David Heinichen may be in keeping with Gottsched's emphasis on the Italian cantata rather than the German cantata, and may reflect as well his reluctance to insult directly the leading musician of Leipzig, preferring instead to snub Bach by complete omission from the *Versuch* (63-64). After a consideration of how Bach was commissioned to provide the music for the funeral, we will consider whether Bach's music may be in conflict not only with the poetic and musical ideals articulated by Gottsched three years later in his treatise but also with Gottsched's *Weltanschauung* as one of the leading German Enlightenment philosophers of his day.

Although, as we have seen, Gottsched himself likely initiated the idea for a public funeral ceremony, there is no evidence that Gottsched either designated or recommended Bach to provide the music for his ode. It may well be that Bach, as the leading musician in Leipzig, was simply the logical choice as Kirchbach undertook the arrangements for this ceremony.⁴¹ What is clear is that when Bach was challenged by the university organist, Johann Gottlieb Görner, for this commission at the university church, it was Kirchbach, not Gottsched, who insisted that Bach retain the commission, under threat of Kirchbach himself withdrawing from the funeral oration.⁴² Whether in the actual working out of the *Trauerode* Gottsched and Bach collaborated or interacted in any way is unknown.⁴³ Assuming that in late 1727 Gottsched held views similar to those published in 1730, it is difficult to believe that there was any collaboration between these two prominent men of Leipzig. Given his ideals in terms of the relationship between text and music, Gottsched could not have found himself sympathetic to this musical setting. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Bach found no praise in Gottsched's treatise; the *Trauerode* showed his approach to text and music to be significantly dissimilar to Gottsched's.

If we lack the sort of written evidence such as correspondence, diaries, or journal accounts that might tell us whether Gottsched and Bach conferred with one another on this commission, we do have as evidence the *Trauerode* itself, a cultural document which suggests that the two men did not collaborate. Assuming that Gottsched's ideals, as articulated in the 1730 *Versuch*, were already part of his thinking three years earlier, he would have had some serious objections to Bach's setting of his text.

Doubtless most offensive to Gottsched was the fact that Bach largely ignored the structure of his ode – nine strophes of eight lines each. As Bach formed his libretto by dividing the text among choruses, recitatives, and arias, he cut across the strophic boundaries of the ode, as, for example, using only the first four lines of strophe one for his opening chorus. Bach