

Kant and the Genealogy of the Romantic Notion of *Darstellung*

In the wake of Kant's *Critiques* the notion of *Darstellung* comes to the fore in German critical discourse with such force that it forms the cornerstone of all the leading theories of Idealism and early Romanticism. Fichte, for example, defines his *Doctrine of Knowledge* as "the representation of the system of human knowledge" (*die Darstellung des Systems des menschlichen Wissens*).¹ Similarly, Hegel describes the project of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as "the representation of developing knowledge" (*die Darstellung des werdenden Wissens*),² and in his *Aesthetics* he defines the goal of art as "the sensible representation of the Absolute" (*die sinnliche Darstellung des Absoluten*).³ Schelling, too, states that art is the "representation of the Absolute" (*Darstellung des Absoluten*),⁴ and he defines his philosophy of art as the "representation of the universe in artistic form" (*Darstellung des Universums in der Form der Kunst*).⁵ This Idealist notion of representation is central to the linguistic and aesthetic theories of Romanticism. Working together with Fichte in 1801, the linguist Bernhardt defines *language* as "a species and modification of representation" (*eine Gattung und Modification der Darstellung*).⁶ Bernhardt's and Fichte's connections to the Jena Romantics are noteworthy, because *Darstellung* also lies at the root of the Jena Romantic enterprise. According to Friedrich Schlegel, transcendental poesy "must represent itself in each of its representations" (*[die Transcendentalpoesie] muss in jeder ihrer Darstellungen sich selbst mit darstellen*),⁷ and Novalis

explicitly assigns this Romantic notion of representation transcendental status: "representability, or thinkability is the condition of possibility of all philosophy" (*Darstellbarkeit, oder Denkbarkeit ist das Kriterium der Möglichkeit aller Philosophie*).⁸ Thus, *Darstellung* constitutes an essential point of tangency for German Idealism and Romanticism, and the critical exposition of this Kantian notion of representation in various disciplines results in a tremendously productive interplay of philosophy, aesthetics, literature, and linguistic theory in German critical discourse around 1800.

The development of Kant's notion of *Darstellung* can be briefly sketched as follows.⁹ In Kant's critical philosophy *Darstellung* is a technical term that designates the mediation of the imagination between sensibility and understanding, the two branches of knowledge that form human cognition: "the making sensible of a concept" is its sensible presentation or representation, and this process can be effected either directly, via the schematism, or symbolically, by analogy. *Darstellung* is a crucial component of one's cognitive processes, one's self-definition, and one's psychological well-being: the displeasure and fear associated with the sublime result from the failure of the human faculty of presentation (*Darstellungsvermögen*). Kant also uses *Darstellung* in its more general sense to refer to the stylistic presentation or representation of his philosophical system. According to Kant, only mathematics is capable of pure presentation, and he expresses concern for the limitations and lack of elegance in the exposition of his *Critiques*.

Darstellung proves problematic to Kant's *Critiques* in three regards. First, Kant is unable to establish a mechanism for the "making sensible of a concept" that stays within the confines of his transcendental analysis, and he readily admits the tenuousness of his primary solution to this presentational problem, the schematism: "This schematism of our understanding with regard to phenomena and their mere form, is a hidden art in the depths of the human soul, whose true workings we will likely never divine from nature

and place unveiled before our eyes" (B 180–181).¹⁰ Hence, there is a breakdown at a crucial juncture in Kant's argument for the underlying synthetic unity of intuition and understanding in cognition. The second problem that *Darstellung* poses to Kant's analysis is related to the first. Because the synthetic unity of apperception falls beyond the limits of the transcendental *Critique*, the sensible subject cannot represent itself to itself as it really is, as a moral subject of reason. The fact that reason imposes these limits on the scope of philosophical investigation points to the third problem that Kant encounters, the problem of the rhetorical presentation or representation of his philosophical system.

These aporiae in Kant's notion of *Darstellung* determine the direction of philosophical investigation in subsequent Idealism and Romanticism. In his *Elementary Philosophy Reinhold*, Kant's acknowledged philosophical heir, addresses both the general problem of representation (*Vorstellung*) in Kant's transcendental idealism and the problem of the formal stylistic presentation (*Darstellung*) of the Kantian philosophical system; Fichte's *Doctrine of Knowledge* attempts to remedy the fact that the Kantian subject cannot represent itself as a moral subject of reason; and the Jena Romantic program is defined by the search for the "sensible-spiritual" representation lacking in Kant.¹¹ One of the ways the Romantics attempt to do this is to explore the *negative Darstellung* of the Kantian sublime by experimenting with new modes of poetic representation. In this context *Darstellung* is simultaneously a question of representation in Kant's technical sense ("the making sensible of a concept") and of rhetorical presentation or style, and the Romantics considered Kant to be the inaugurator of a new philosophical-literary discipline: Friedrich Schlegel admiringly characterizes Kant as the creator of the first philosophical art "chaos,"¹² and Novalis credits Kant's critical philosophy with transforming speculation into a "poetic instrument."¹³ Although Kant himself tries to divorce artistic considerations from his *Critiques*, he resorts to metaphorical language when he reaches the limits of transcendental representation;

and Schlegel and Novalis are quite right to discern a literary level in his philosophy.

From a biographical point of view, Kant's poetic sensibility is not particularly surprising. In his precritical *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* of 1764 Kant had explored aesthetic questions, and in the same year he was even offered a professorship in "rhetoric and poetry" at the University of Berlin.¹⁴ From a critical vantage, however, it is doubtful that Kant would have agreed with Schlegel's and Novalis's assessments of his work as philosophical art. Kant modeled his *Critiques* on a mathematical rather than a poetic paradigm, and his writing is infused with attacks on the vagaries of human language. Nonetheless, Kant himself exploits language's poetic qualities in his own philosophical presentation, and in the years between 1781 and 1790 art becomes increasingly important to his critical philosophy. Although he had explicitly excluded the possibility of a critical discourse on art from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in the *Critique of Judgment* Kant celebrates poetry (*Dichtkunst*) as the highest art, an art capable of creating an "indirect" or symbolic representation of the moral good. In other words, art is one of Kant's solutions to the problem of how to mediate between pure and practical reason, and as the early Romantics recognized, aesthetic representation proves to be both extremely important and extremely problematic to his critical enterprise.

There are actually two competing discourses on *Darstellung* that develop in the 1770s through 1790s and inform Romantic discourse: the first growing out of the debate on aesthetic imitation (*die Nachahmungsdebatte*) and epitomized in Klopstock's poetics; the second finds its inception in Kant's critical philosophy. It is my thesis that Kant's definition of *Darstellung* is the dominant force in the genealogy of the Idealist and Romantic notions of representation, and this chapter will situate Kant's definition with respect to the Klopstockian aesthetic tradition and then trace the genesis of the term in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*.

Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theories of *Darstellung*

An analysis of the rich and varied semantic history of the word *Darstellung* is essential to understanding its usage in eighteenth-century aesthetic theory. Not documented in Old and Middle High German texts, the verb form *darstellen* and the noun form *Darstellung* first appear in early modern German with spatial associations. Grimm lists several examples dating from 1439 onward in which the word refers to the setting down, presenting, or representing of an object or entity at a specific place. In other early occurrences the spatial dimension is less pronounced or completely absent, and *darstellen* then refers to the naming of a person to an office or function, as well as to the presenting of a witness or the bearing witness to a truth. By the sixteenth century the word takes on additional meanings, including the production of concrete objects and the giving form to and making visible of noncorporeal entities.¹⁵ In 1691 Kaspar Stieler's dictionary, *Genealogy and Development of the German Language*, defines *darstellen* as "to produce, offer or present (*offere*), represent (*repraesentare*), or place before the eyes (*ante oculos ponere, statuere*)," and it also lists among its examples the previously mentioned meaning of bearing witness to a truth.¹⁶ Stieler's description of *darstellen* as both to present and to represent has an important visual dimension ("to place before the eyes") that anticipates the term's usage in late eighteenth-century aesthetic theory.

In an extensive analysis of the term's semantic development from Stieler's definition to its function in eighteenth-century critical discourse, Fritz Heuer interprets the original sense of *Darstellung* as the making present in such a manner that the object or entity being presented only comes into its true being in the process of being represented. Moreover, this process of rendering present or actual requires recognition by others.¹⁷ Heuer argues that this dynamic definition does not come to fruition in aesthetic theory until the end of the eighteenth century. This is due in part to the conflation and confusion of the word *Darstellung* with its etymological correlate, the term *Vorstellung*. Although *Vorstellung*

generally corresponds to the Latin *repraesentatio* and *Darstellung* to *praesentatio* in eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, these translations are by no means absolute, as Stieler's dictionary definitions of *darstellen* as *repraesentare* and *vorstellen* as *praesentare* attest. In fact, the semantic fields of the two terms frequently overlap, and they occasionally appear as synonyms. *Vorstellen*, popularized by the wide acceptance of the philosophies and aesthetic theories of Leibniz, Wolff, Baumgarten, and Meier, is the prevailing term throughout much of the eighteenth century. Mendelssohn, for example, states that "the essence of the fine arts and sciences consists in an artistic sensibly complete representation (*Vorstellung*) or in an artistically represented (*vorgestellt*) sensible totality."¹⁸ In this Baumgartian usage *Vorstellung* refers to both the mind's activity in producing the representation and to the actual artistic representation. Moreover, *vorstellen* can also designate the physical process of making present, and in all three senses the term borders on the meaning of *Darstellung* as sensible presentation or representation. In the 1770s through 1790s rigorous distinctions between *Darstellung* and *Vorstellung* develop in Klopstockian aesthetic theory and in Kant's critical philosophy, thereby paving the way for the Idealist and Romantic inception of *Darstellung* as a term in its own right.¹⁹

Although Kant himself had tried halfheartedly to divorce his critical definition of *Darstellung* from the artistic realm, the influence of his notion of *Darstellung* on German aesthetic theory around 1800 is incontestable.²⁰ Sulzer's *General Theory of the Fine Arts* (1792) contains no systematic discussion of the term, but Schiller's *Kallias, or On the Beautiful* of 1793²¹ and Hölderlin's "On the Workings of the Poetic Spirit"²² emphasize the importance of *Darstellung* to Kantian aesthetics, and in 1798 the entire Jena Romantic program is defined in terms of *Darstellung*. By 1835 the Kantian notion has become so entrenched in general aesthetic theory that, in his *Aesthetic Lexicon* of 1835, Jetteles devotes an entire article to *Darstellung*. For Jetteles, *Darstellung* is "the particular artistic activity of bringing an object to the intuition by making it perceivable to the

senses,"²³ a description that clearly reflects the Kantian definition, "the making sensible of a concept." Thus, the critical reception of the Kantian notion of *Darstellung* in post-Kantian aesthetic theory is quite clear. The question of the extent to which there is a connection between pre-Kantian aesthetic theories and Kant's use of the term is much more complex and inconclusive.

There was, of course, a tradition of aesthetic analyses of *Darstellung* prior to Kant's introduction of the word into his critical philosophy, and the relationship between philosophy and literature is frequently at issue in these theories. In what is perhaps the earliest aesthetic treatise on *Darstellung*, August Buchner's *Poet*, published posthumously in 1665, *poetry* is defined as a subform of philosophy. Because of its subsidiary status, poetry, unlike philosophy, makes no claims to present "complete knowledge." Like the painter, the poet presents only the information necessary for an external cognition of his subject matter. The goal of this deliberately incomplete representation is pedagogical: "Thus it is the poet's duty to represent an action as it is, as it should be, or as it could be, so that he simultaneously amuses and teaches, which is precisely the goal to which he should always aspire."²⁴ The fact that the poet presents an action rather than an object and that the representation produced is deliberately incomplete distinguishes this notion of representation from the notion of mimetic representation (*Nachahmung*) soon to become popular in the eighteenth-century debate on aesthetic imitation. Whereas *Nachahmung* aims to imitate nature as closely as possible, for Buchner *Darstellung* is clearly inventive imitation.

A similar notion of representation forms the basis of Klopstock's aesthetics. Klopstock's definition of *Darstellung* is not only didactic, but socially edifying as well: it forms the foundation of his *German Academic Republic* (*Deutsche Gelehrtenrepublik*, 1774), the first major theory of *Darstellung* in the eighteenth century. Just as Buchner's definition involves a deliberately incomplete representation, Klopstock, too, insists on the illusory nature of the artistic process: "The goal of *Darstellung* is deception (*Täuschung*),"

he writes in his dialogic essay "On Representation" (*Von der Darstellung*, 1779).²⁵ Like Buchner, Klopstock compares poetry to painting, and he argues that poetic representation is superior to visual representation because poetry is more deceptive. In perceiving a painting the eye rests on its object, and the observer is aware that he or she is seeing an illusion. Poetry, on the other hand, involves the perception of an action rather than an object, and the mind has less time to figure out that it is being deceived. By presenting the unexpected, producing apparent disorder, abruptly breaking off thoughts, and arousing expectations, poetry sets the soul in motion and makes it receptive. Objects that are sublime or that incorporate a lot of action or passion are most susceptible to a successful representation. Klopstock, intent on developing a dynamic poetic theory, concludes his essay with nine practical stylistic rules.

Given his notion of deception (*Täuschung*) and his reasons for valuing dynamic poetry over static painting, it is quite clear that Klopstock's argument is derived from Lessing's *Laocoon* (*Laokoon*, 1766). In the preface to this study Lessing sets out to explain what is pleasing about the illusion that poetry and the plastic arts produce, and in the course of his analysis he ranks poetry higher than the plastic arts and in fact implies that drama, as "living painting," is at the pinnacle of this hierarchy,²⁶ for precisely the reasons Klopstock cites. Although Lessing himself uses the term *Darstellung* roughly synonymously with the words *execution* (*Ausführung*) and *expression* (*Ausdruck*),²⁷ he allots *Darstellung* no special significance in his treatise.²⁸ With the introduction of the term into the *Laocoon* argument, Klopstock thus makes an extremely important contribution toward developing a comprehensive theory of *Darstellung*: he brings *Darstellung* into mainstream eighteenth-century aesthetics, into the debate on aesthetic imitation (*die Nachahmungsdebatte*).

As Menninghaus has argued, Klopstock does not merely appropriate Lessing's argument; he radically revises it. Whereas Lessing's illusion is derived from the logic of (re)presentation, a making present of something absent,

Klopstock's *Darstellung* is completely divorced from this representational logic, indeed, from the object itself: "For Klopstock *Darstellung* does not deceive because it stands for something else, but precisely because it does *not* stand for something else."²⁹ Hence, its significance lies in the act of invention, in the process of creating a poetic representation *sui generis*. In a prescient statement anticipating Jena Romanticism, Klopstock argues that this poetic representation contains its own theory: in comparison to the treatise (*Abhandlung*), which is "only theory," Klopstock asserts, "***Darstellung*** has theory. It uses language in varying degrees of deception to make present what is absent. In both the poetic production and the impression it creates on the audience *Darstellung* involves the entire soul, the treatise only the judgment."³⁰ The poet overcomes the one-sided intellectuality ("the judgment") of the treatise by setting the entire soul in motion and creates what the Romantics will later call a sensible-intellectual representation. This notion of *Darstellung* as setting the audience's soul into motion, which has an important reception-theory component, will become a cornerstone of late eighteenth-century aesthetic theories of *Darstellung*.

Although Klopstock's argument is derived in part from Lessing's *Laocoon*, an important dimension of Lessing's discussion of aesthetic representation is absent in Klopstock's. *Laocoon*, subtitled "On the Borders of Poetry and Painting [*Malerei*, a term Lessing uses to refer to the plastic arts in general]," is an analysis of aesthetic representation and its limits, and Lessing's enterprise is distinguished from Klopstock's by the fact that it is self-reflexive. Lessing is just as concerned with establishing the limits of his own investigation as he is with determining the borders of poetry and the plastic arts, and he carefully prefaces his analysis with a discussion of his role as critic. Given this concern for the conditions of possibility and the limits of an aesthetic investigation, it is clear that *Laocoon* is a precursor of the Kantian *Critique*.

As Klopstock's tacit reference to the *Laocoon* debate indicates, Lessing's importance to the development of an

aesthetic theory of *Darstellung* should not be underestimated.³¹ It is no accident that a character from his famous drama *Emilia Galotti*, the painter Conti, who argues that Raphael would have been just as great a painter if he had been born without hands, plays a cameo role in Stolberg's "On Poetry and Representing" (*Vom Dichten und Darstellen*, 1780). In this panegyric to poetry Stolberg defines *Darstellung* as a bastardized form of poetry. Poetry refers to the almost divine spiritual condition of the artist, whereas the inferior physical process of representing a poem is its *Darstellung*. Although the poet loses his divine insight in this mundane act, compassion motivates him to "stoop to representation in order to elevate other people."³² Stolberg does concede, however, that there may be some benefits to this spiritual debasement: "Representation provides the poet with a more intimate knowledge of the apparitions of his spirit" (379). Read against the grain, then, Stolberg's essay actually contains a dynamic definition of the subject via *Darstellung*: in the process of representing the poet gains self-knowledge, and in this sense, Stolberg, like Buchner and Klopstock, propounds its educational value.

Both Stolberg's essay and Klopstock's redaction of Lessing are indications of the proximity of the eighteenth century's discourse on *Darstellung* to its debate on aesthetic imitation. These two traditions become fused in the works of Gottfried August Bürger and Herder, who both substitute the word *Darstellung* for *Nachahmung* (imitation) in the translation of the Aristotelian notion of mimesis. In "On the Popularity of Poesy," an essay roughly contemporaneous with Klopstock's and Stolberg's,³³ Bürger gives the following curt definition: "What is *Darstellung*? The word itself says it more clearly than any explanation could." Bürger then deigns to explicate this laconic statement for the linguistically inept: "*Darstellung* is the mirror and the mirror image of the original object,"³⁴ a definition that capitalizes on the visual dimensions of the word. Bürger's justification of his substitution of *Darstellung* for "the miserable word *imitation (Nachahmung)*" clarifies the visual basis of his definition: whereas imitation presents a paltry afterimage

thrown back from a dull surface, *Darstellung* produces a true image as it is embodied and animated in a shining mirror. Thus, Bürger's notion of *Darstellung* is analogous to Klopstock's "setting the soul into motion," and Bürger, like Klopstock, believes that certain immutable stylistic laws will ensure a successful poetic representation.

Bürger's argument for the animating power of *Darstellung* is very close to the attack against mimesis that Lenz launches in his "Comments on the Theater" (1774). According to Lenz, if a poet bases his work on "raw imitation" he will be a "sophomoric fool, quack, or bedwarmer" but not what he is supposed to be; namely, a "representer (*Darsteller*), poet, or creator."³⁵ Similarly, years later Goethe will define the poet's activity in terms of representation, rather than imitation. He states that the poet is dependent upon *Darstellung*, and that the epitome of poetic activity is reached when the representation rivals reality: "that is, when the mind animates poetic depictions so that they can be taken to be present for everyone."³⁶ Herder, too, advances a definition of *mimesis* as "living representation,"³⁷ and he adopts an Aristotelian argument for the philosophical value of art.

According to Herder, the dramatic form is *the* exemplary aesthetic representation of inner truth. Like Lessing and Klopstock, Herder argues that this artistic representation involves illusion, but he explains that this illusion is really the product of an interchange of ideas: *täuschen* ("to deceive") comes from *Tausch* ("exchange"), and the poet necessarily deceives the observer when the observer replaces his or her own thoughts with those of the poet. Herder also embraces Plato's definition of the beautiful as a representation of the good and the true, and he attacks Kant for his denial of the beautiful as the *Darstellung*, or sensible expression, of a totality.

I have been summarizing a small portion of the argument of *Kalligone*, Herder's diatribe against Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Herder's criticism is interesting first of all because he challenges Kant on the grounds of the notion

of *Darstellung*, while waffling in his own use of the term, at one time allotting it a key position in his analysis of the plastic arts and at another dismissing it as a "tropic word" that has no place in a definition of poetics.³⁸ But there is a much more important dimension to Herder's criticism of Kant than merely the use of the word *Darstellung*: what is at stake in Herder's challenge is nothing less than the relationship between literature and philosophy. Curiously, Herder, like the Romantics, traces the confluence of these two disciplines to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, rather than to his critique of aesthetics, the *Critique of Judgment*, as one might have expected: "The *Critique of Pure Reason* transformed philosophy into something it had never been and never should have become, phantasy, i.e., bad poesy, poetic abstraction."³⁹ By poeticizing philosophy, Herder argues, Kant kills both philosophy and criticism. Motivated in part by personal animosity,⁴⁰ Herder's bitter condemnation, written in 1800 at the height of the Jena Romantic movement, stands in stark opposition to Schlegel's and Novalis's celebration of Kant as the inaugurator of a new philosophical-literary representation.

Most of the aesthetic theories surveyed here fall within the province of inventive imitation (Buchner, Lessing, Klopstock, Bürger, Lenz, Goethe, Herder) and share two basic components: an insistence on the value of aesthetic illusion and pragmatic stylistic injunctions against a mechanical representation that would shatter this illusion. Klopstock, who adapts Lessing's *Laocoon* and coins the first explicit theory of *Darstellung* in the eighteenth century, is undoubtedly the don of this tradition of inventive representation, whereas his loyal follower Stolberg, perhaps unwittingly, problematizes the tradition from within and creates a dynamic theory of *Darstellung*.

Unlike those of his contemporaries, Stolberg's aesthetic theory is not based on inventive imitation, but on divine inspiration. "On Poetry and Representing" addresses the problem of externalizing this inner inspiration. It is a theory of communication in which the poet gains self-knowledge

via the process of representing. In this respect Stolberg clearly anticipates Romanticism. Stolberg develops this new theory of *Darstellung* at the same time that Kant imports the term into his critical philosophy, and although Kant's notion of *Darstellung* is quite different from Stolberg's, it also augurs Romanticism.

The chronology of Kant's gradual adoption and adaptation of the term is indicative of its proto-Romantic status within his oeuvre. In his precritical *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* of 1764 there is no mention whatsoever of *Darstellung*. In 1781, one year after the publication of Stolberg's essay, the term occupies an important, albeit marginal, position in the first *Critique*, the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Although not an explicit issue in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), *Darstellung* is the keystone of Kant's demonstration of the partial concretization of the idea of freedom in this second *Critique*. By 1790 *Darstellung* has become so central to the third *Critique*, the *Critique of Judgment*, that a modern-day commentator like Hans Graubner can convincingly argue that "giving a summary of Kant's conception of aesthetics means coming to terms with the Kantian notion of *Darstellung*."⁴¹ For Kant, of course, "aesthetics" deals with sensibility and not with a theory of art per se, and it is noteworthy that he is implicated three times in the history of eighteenth-century aesthetic theories of *Darstellung*. Lessing's *Laocoon* is a kind of proto-Kantian critique, while Herder attacks Kant for poeticizing philosophy. Although Kant explicitly distances himself from this tradition of aesthetic imitation and illusion, stating that *Darstellungen* are clearly distinguished from "mere characterizations," which serve as only a means for reproducing objects (CJ B 255, p. 197), his notion of *Darstellung* shares with these theories both an insistence on the value of illusion, the subreption of the Kantian sublime, and a concern for stylistic representation. Finally, Kant, at the same time as Stolberg, defines the subject in terms of *Darstellung* and hence sets the stage for the entire Jena Romantic movement.

The Role of Representation in Kant's Epistemology

Genealogically speaking, however, Kant's notion of representation is completely divorced from Klopstockian aesthetic theory. Kant derives his definition of *Darstellung* from the classical discipline of rhetoric: he uses the term synonymously with the Latin *exhibitio* and the Greek *hypotyposis*, and, as Gasché has shown, the history of this rhetorical figure is essential to Kant's critical definition.⁴² *Hypotyposis*, a composite word derived from *hypo*, under, below, or beneath, and *typosis*, a figure made by molding or sketching, originally meant a sketch, an outline, a pattern, or a book and is documented in this sense in Sextus Empiricus. Aristotle gives the word a specifically philosophical meaning: that which forms, shapes, or molds essence itself. Kant, however, does not adopt this Aristotelian usage but instead invokes the rhetorical tradition of the term with his equation of *hypotyposis* with *subjectio sub aspectum*; that is, visual presentation, throwing under the eyes, or exhibiting under its appearance or aspect. This visual dimension of *hypotyposis*, also evident in such synonyms as *enargeia*, *evidentia*, *illustratio*, and *demonstratio*, has a strong resonance in classical rhetoric. Cicero, for example, emphasizes sight in his discussion of *hypotyposis*, noting the effectiveness of "clear explanation and the almost visual presentation of events as if practically going on." Similarly, Quintilian, referring to Cicero's "*sub oculos subiectio*," defines *hypotyposis* as "an appeal to the eye rather than the ear."⁴³ "In short," Gasché summarizes, "as a rhetorical notion, *hypotyposis* means an illustration in which the vividly represented is endowed with such detail that it seems to be present, and to present *itself*, in person and completely by itself," and he stresses its ability to present subject matter as if it were to be beheld by the eye.⁴⁴ This visual dimension of *hypotyposis* is transmitted to the German philosophical tradition⁴⁵ and is also evident in Stieler's dictionary definition of the German word *darstellen* as *ante oculos ponere*, to place before the eyes. Indeed, although apparently unrelated to the classical rhetorical

tradition, the original meaning of *darstellen* documented in Stieler's dictionary, to render present or actual, corresponds to the definition of hypotyposis.

Although Kant's definition of *Darstellung* is related to both the visual rhetorical sense of hypotyposis and to its original meaning of "model," "sketch," "outline," or "pattern," its rhetorical underpinnings first become evident in the *Critique of Judgment*, when Kant explicitly equates *Darstellung* with synonyms from classical rhetoric. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* the critical definition of *Darstellung* corresponds more precisely to the everyday German usage exemplified in Stieler's dictionary, to render sensibly present or actual. In addition to assigning *Darstellung* a critical definition, however, Kant also uses the term in the first *Critique* to refer to the rhetorical presentation or style of his argument, although he does so without recourse to the classical rhetorical tradition. When Kant does import terminology from classical rhetoric into the third *Critique*, he simultaneously levels an attack on the art of rhetoric, a move that is indicative of both the increasing significance and the problematic status of *Darstellung* in his critical enterprise.

To appreciate this development more fully, we must first briefly consider the epistemological framework of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Ultimately concerned with the question of whether metaphysics as a rigorous philosophical discipline is possible, Kant sets out to examine what we as human beings can actually know. He begins by placing the subject and subjective knowledge at the center of his investigation. Objects as they really are lie outside the purview of human knowledge and are hence excluded from the realm of critical inquiry. Restated in more familiar terms, Kant argues that we cannot know things-in-themselves, but have only subjective knowledge of them. This subjective knowledge comes from two sources, sensibility and understanding, the two branches of human cognition that perhaps share a common, but to us unknown, root (B 29). Sensibility provides the mind with intuitions it receives from the senses, whereas understanding contains the concepts necessary to

process this sensory information. Both forms of knowledge are necessary for all cognition.

Now, cognition (*Erkenntnis*) is quite distinct from thought in general. Although it is possible to think (*denken*) without sensory information, our concepts remain empty and no cognition has occurred: we have only “played with representations (*Vorstellungen*)” (B 195). For cognition to occur, all thought must relate, directly or indirectly, to sensibility (B 33): our concepts must be made sensibly concrete. “If cognition is to have objective reality, that is, a connection to an object,” argues Kant, “then the object must be capable of being given in some manner” (B 194). “Being given,” Kant indicates parenthetically, is what he means by *Darstellung*: “That an object be given (if this expression be taken, not as referring to some merely mediate process, but as signifying immediate presentation [*Darstellung*] in intuition), means simply that the representation (*Vorstellung*) through which the object is thought relates to actual or possible experience” (B 195). Here, then, is Kant’s indirect definition of *Darstellung*. The representation (*Vorstellung*) through which an object is thought is its concept. The concept, however, must be presented immediately in intuition (*unmittelbar in der Anschauung darstellen*). Hence, the making sensible of a concept is its *Darstellung*, and all concepts, regardless of their kind, must undergo this process of sensibilization for cognition to occur (B 195).

Kant is addressing a problem that can be roughly illustrated in terms of the following example. When we see a table, how do we know that it is a table that we see? That is, how do we mediate between the sensible knowledge we receive from our bodies and the conceptual representation (*Vorstellung*) “table” present in our minds? According to Kant, what happens when we see a table is that the imagination takes the sensible information it receives from the body (e.g., brown, square, four legs, etc.) and uses the concept “table” that is given to the mind to create a sensible presentation or *Darstellung* of the table. Although the table itself as object is unknowable to the thinking subject and the concept “table” by itself is an empty representation

(*Vorstellung*), through *Darstellung* the concept "table" is rendered sensibly present or actual to the mind.

Hence, *Darstellung*, sensible presentation or representation, is clearly differentiated from *Vorstellung*, or representation, a general term that Kant never actually defines, but nonetheless uses "to designate the operation by which the different faculties that constitute the mind bring their respective objects before themselves."⁴⁶ Whereas *Vorstellung* represents a priori perceptions (intuitions, concepts, and ideas) already present in the mind, *Darstellung* renders a concept sensibly present or actual to the mind: it provides the mind with the objective reality necessary for cognition. Two components are necessary for a successful *Darstellung*. First, the imagination mediates between concept and intuition to create a sensible representation; the faculty of judgment then checks to see if the intuition really corresponds to the concept. This twofold process is crucial for all cognition.

Because *Darstellung* is the making sensible of a concept and all concepts must undergo this process, the nature of each *Darstellung* is determined by the kind of concept being sensibly presented to the mind. Three types of concepts are delimited in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, based on their various representational properties: categories, empirical concepts, and pure concepts of reason.⁴⁷ The categories, pure concepts of the understanding, form the a priori condition of possibility of all objective cognition, and the all-important and notoriously problematic process by which these categories are applied to appearances is called the schematism. Empirical concepts, concepts like "table," guarantee objective validity in cognition. Pure concepts of reason, or ideas, are concepts to which no empirical intuition, and hence no direct *Darstellung*, corresponds.

This nonrepresentability of ideas is of utmost concern to Kant. Although ideas lie outside the realm of human cognition and are accordingly not constitutive, they play an indispensable regulative role in the theoretical domain: the three "leading ideas" of God, freedom, and immortality are necessary for our determination of ourselves as moral subjects of reason. Ideas are absolutely essential to Kant's epis-

temology and ethics, and their nonrepresentability will form the crux of his discussion of *Darstellung* in the *Critique of Judgment*.

Kant's solution to the problematic status of the representation of ideas forms a systematic unity among the three *Critiques* that can be briefly outlined as follows.⁴⁸ Because the idea is a necessary concept of reason to which no corresponding object can be given in the senses, it cannot be presented to pure reason. However, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant sets out to demonstrate that pure reason is really practical reason. In the Preface to this second *Critique*, he argues that the idea of freedom forms the cornerstone of the whole system of pure, and even speculative, reason, and that the other transcendental ideas (God and immortality) are in fact subsumed under this one idea (A 4). Moreover, in practical reason the idea can, and indeed must, achieve partial presentation or concretization, an issue Kant addresses in a section analogous to the schematism discussion of the first *Critique*, "On the Typic of Pure Practical Judgment." The fact that this concretization is only partial is limiting to cognition, and Kant overcomes this limitation via the aesthetic idea in the *Critique of Judgment*. The aesthetic idea achieves full concretization, albeit indirect or negative, in the judgments of the beautiful and the sublime and therefore forms a bridge between pure and practical reason, a bridge between nature and freedom.

With this discussion of aesthetic ideas I have jumped far ahead of myself in my explication of Kant's notion of *Darstellung* in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Indeed, this is not the only misleading element of my analysis thus far. Up to this point I have perhaps created the mistaken impression that *Darstellung* plays a major role in the first *Critique*. The perplexing fact of the matter is this: despite its absolute centrality in Kant's epistemology, there is no section specifically devoted to *Darstellung* in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, no overt definition, little explicit discussion, and indeed, minimal mention of the term whatsoever.⁴⁹

Moreover, Kant's notion of *Darstellung* is characterized by an almost ironic inconsistency. As we have seen, Kant

uses the term in two basic senses: in its everyday meaning it refers to the rhetorical presentation of his philosophical system; its critical definition is "the making sensible of a concept." According to Kant, these two types of *Darstellung* are related to each other, but in philosophy they cannot be identical. Nonetheless, as the Romantics were well aware, Kant tends to meld together these two uses into one, thereby undermining his own transcendental rigor and conflating criticism and art. This tendency becomes increasingly apparent as he integrates the notion into his philosophy. In the course of the *Critiques*, *Darstellung* develops from a rhetorical, to a critical, and ultimately to an aesthetic figure.

The *Critique of Pure Reason*: The Limits of *Darstellung*

The groundwork for this evolution is laid out in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the Introduction to the second edition of this first *Critique* (1787), Kant uses the term *Darstellung* to refer to the style or presentation of a philosophical system. That stylistic presentation should be so important to his critical enterprise should come as no surprise. The *Critique of Pure Reason* is, after all, "a treatise on method, not a system of science itself" (B XXII), and Kant's great Copernican "revolution in the mode of thinking" is a methodological one. Kant, however, struggles with the stylistic aspects of this methodological revolution. In response to criticism about the first edition of his *Critique*, he states that he has found little to change in his philosophical strategy, yet he admits that there is still much to be done in the stylistic presentation or *Darstellung* of his method (B XXXVIII). This concession should not be taken lightly, because methodology is such an essential component of Kant's enterprise that he concludes his *Critique* with a "Transcendental Doctrine of Method."

Kant introduces his definition of a priori *Darstellung* within this "Doctrine of Method." The placement of the definition within this section, an appendix to the main body of his argument, indicates the marginal importance of *Darstellung* to the first *Critique*. Indeed, just as the previous

definition of a posteriori presentation was introduced parenthetically in a discussion of *Vorstellung* (representation), here the definition of a priori presentation is couched in an analysis of mathematical construction and is completely motivated by Kant's discussion of *Darstellung* as style. Concerned with the question whether the presentation of a philosophical system can be anything but dogmatic, Kant contrasts philosophy with the only true a priori science of reason, mathematics. Within the context of this comparison Kant then defines construction as a priori *Darstellung*: "Philosophical knowledge is the knowledge gained by reason from concepts; mathematical knowledge is the knowledge gained by reason from the construction of concepts. *To construct a concept means to present a priori the intuition which corresponds to the concept (einen Begriff konstruieren, heisst: die ihm korrespondierende Anschauung a priori darstellen)*" (B 741, emphasis mine). Kant illustrates this definition with the example of the construction of a triangle: "Thus I construct a triangle by presenting the object which corresponds to the concept, either by imagination alone, using pure intuition, or on a piece of paper, empirically, in both cases completely a priori, without having borrowed the pattern from any experience" (B 741). Because mathematics is built on this a priori presentation of concepts, it is capable of logical demonstration. This logical demonstration is in fact self-presentation: in mathematics "concepts must be presented (*dargestellt*) immediately in concreto in pure intuition" (B 739).

Therefore, mathematics is the locus of pure presentation or representation: the stylistic presentation or demonstration of a triangle, for example, is identical to its critical definition. Philosophical proofs, on the other hand, enjoy neither the same logical rigor nor the pure presentation of mathematics. They are discursive proofs, "since they are carried out using nothing but mere words" (B 763). Because philosophy is cast in language, then, its stylistic presentation cannot be identical to its critical definition, and philosophy, unlike mathematics, cannot present itself purely. Kant, it seems, is not particularly pleased with this conclu-