the empathic tendency and disinterested intuition. In his account of intuition and expression, Caso claimed to follow Benedetto Croce, but he did not do so without wavering.

See also Bergson, Henri; Croce, Benedetto; Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich; Husserl, Edmund; Kant, Immanuel; Schopenhauer, Arthur; Sympathy and Empathy.

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CASSIRER, ERNST
(1874–1945)

Ernst Cassirer, the German neo-Kantian philosopher, was born in Breslau, Silesia. He studied at the universities of Berlin, Leipzig, Heidelberg, and Marburg and taught first at Berlin. From 1919 to 1933 he was professor of philosophy at Hamburg University; and he served as rector from 1930 to 1933. Cassirer, who was Jewish, resigned his post in 1933 and left Germany. He taught at Oxford from 1933 to 1935, at Göteborg, Sweden from 1935 to 1941, and at Yale from 1941 to 1944. He died in New York City while a visiting professor at Columbia University.

Cassirer was both a prolific historian of philosophy and an original philosopher. His philosophy is in many important respects a development and modification of Immanuel Kant's critical philosophy, idealistic in outlook and transcendental in method. Like Kant, he holds that the objective world results from the application of a priori principles to a manifold that can be apprehended only as differentiated and ordered by them. His method is transcendental in the sense that he investigates not so much the objects of knowledge and belief as the manner in which these objects come to be known or are constituted in consciousness. His work has to some extent also been influenced by G. W. F. Hegel and, of his own contemporaries, by his teacher Hermann Cohen and by Edmund Husserl.

Cassirer differs from Kant mainly in holding that the principles by which the manifold of experience receives its structure are not static, but developing; and that their field of application is wider than Kant supposed. Kant, according to Cassirer, assumed that the science and mathematics of his day admitted of no philosophically relevant alternatives, and therefore he conceived the synthetic a priori principles of the understanding to be unchangeable. He could not foresee the development of non-Euclidean geometry, of the modern axiomatic method, of the theory of relativity, or of quantum mechanics. Also, in Kant's day many areas of human culture had not yet been subjected to scientific investigation: There existed in particular no developed science of language and no scientific treatment of religion and myth. The idea of the humanities or moral sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) arose only in the nineteenth century. Cassirer's professed aim was to extend Kant's static critique of reason, that is, his critique of the organizing principles of natural science and morality, into a dynamic critique of culture, that is, of the organizing principles of the human mind in all its aspects. This aim is apparent in all his works, especially in his magnum opus, *Die Philosophie der symbolischen Formen.*

THE NATURE OF SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION

A fundamental problem for the Kantian philosophy had been to understand the conceptualization of experience, in particular the relation between concepts and that to which they apply. For Cassirer, conceptualization, that is, the apprehension of the manifold of experience as instantiating general notions or as perceptual matter exhibiting a conceptual structure, is merely a special case of what he calls "symbolization," "symbolic representation," or simply "representation." Symbolic representation, according to Cassirer, is the essential function of human consciousness and is cardinal to our understanding not only of the structure of science, but also of myth and religion, of language, of art, and of history. Man is a symbolizing animal.

Symbolization creates, and exhibits within our consciousness, connections between perceptual signs and their significance or meaning. It is the nature of symbolic representation in general to constitute, or bring into being, a totality that both transcends the perceptual sign and provides a context for it. The unity of sign and signified allows for distinction in thought, but not in fact—just as color and extension are separable in thought but not in fact. The given always shows itself as a totality, one part of which functions as a representative of the rest. This basic self-differentiation of every content of consciousness is given a more enduring structure by the use of artificial signs that, as it were, articulate the stream of consciousness and impose patterns on it. The artificial signs or symbols, like the Kantian concepts and categories, do not mirror an objective world, but are constitutive of it. Scientific symbols constitute, or bring about, only one kind of objective world—the world of science. Mythical pictures constitute the reality of myths and religion; the words of ordinary language constitute the reality of common sense.

To the three symbolic systems that articulate three types of reality under different "symbolic forms" there correspond three modes of the one function of symbolic representation. The first and most primitive of these modes Cassirer calls the "expression function" (*Ausdrucksfunktion*). In the world it constitutes, the primitive world of myth, the sign and its significance merge into each other. The difference between them exists, but is not consciously noted. The thunder by which a primitive god shows his anger is not merely an external sign that the god is angry. It is the god's anger. In the same way, in ordinary perception we often not merely associate a smile with a kind intention, but also perceive a kindly smile.

The second mode of symbolic representation is "intuition function" (*Anschauungsfunktion*), which by the use of ordinary natural languages constitutes the world of common sense. The intuition function differentiates our perceptual world into spatially and temporally related material objects or substances that become the bearers of properties, the more permanent properties being apprehended as distinctive of the various kinds of substance, the less permanent being apprehended as accidental. Aristotle's philosophy represents, according to Cassirer, a prescientific stage of thinking about objects, based on the predominance of symbolic representation in the mode of the intuition function.

The third mode of symbolic representation, the "conceptual function" (*reine Bedeutungsfunktion*) constitutes the world of science, which is a system of relations as opposed to a system of substances with attributes. The particular, in this mode, is not subsumed under a universal but rather under a principle of ordering, which relates particulars to each other in ordered structures that, Cassirer seems to hold, are always serial in nature. He finds the prototype of this kind of symbolization in the works of Richard Dedekind, Giuseppe Peano, Gottlob Frege, and their successors.

The transcendental inquiry into the nature and function of symbolic representation is supported by a wealth of illustrations taken from the history of philosophy, the natural sciences, general linguistics, anthropology, and the humanities. Symbolic representation as a fundamental and logically primitive function must be seen at work in order to be understood. The philosophical analysis of symbolic representation can hardly do more than point out that in any symbolic representation two moments, the symbol and the symbolized, are united into an essential unity yet stand in polar relationship to each other. It has been objected that this analysis, by identifying a unity with an opposition of two different moments, results in a contradiction. Cassirer's answer to this objection, and to accusations that his professedly Kantian position is really Hegelian, is that his philosophy is not intended as a logic or a metaphysics, but as a phenomenology of consciousness.

PHILOSOPHY OF CULTURE

The highly general character of Cassirer's analysis of symbolic representation gives flexibility to a philosophy of culture. It does not force the variety of the ever-changing contents and structure of culture into rigid and artificial molds. But the very generality of Cassirer's conception makes it, perhaps, too easy to fit it to any situation and comparably difficult to test. It also makes it difficult to place the conclusions of Cassirer's special investigations in order of importance. The order here followed is in the main that of the summary given at the end of his *Essay on Man*, itself a synopsis of his *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*.

Cassirer holds that the polarity that he finds in the relation between symbol and significance or meaning continually expresses itself in two opposing tendencies, a tendency toward stabilization and a tendency toward the breaking up of permanent symbolic patterns. In myth and the primitive religions the conservative tendency is stronger. Mythological explanation explains patterns of the present in terms of origins in a remote past—a type of explanation still regarded in the Platonic dialogues as containing important elements of truth. The more

advanced religions exhibit the opposing evolutionary tendency at work. This is mainly the result of conceiving forces in nature as individuals and persons, and of the consequent emergence of the notion of morality as being rooted in personal responsibility.

In natural languages, through which the common-sense world of substances in public space and time is constituted, the conservative tendency shows itself in the rules to which a language must conform if communication is to be possible. The evolutionary tendency, which is equally essential, works through phonetic and semantic change. The psychology of the processes by which children acquire their language shows important similarities to the development of a language through succeeding generations in a community.

In the arts, the tendency toward new patterns, which has its source in the originality of the individual artist, predominates over the tendency to preserve a tradition. Yet traditional forms can never be entirely discarded, since this would imply the breakdown of communication, making art, which is a cultural and social phenomenon, impossible. The polarity in artistic creation is mirrored in the history of aesthetic theories. Theories of art as based on imitation and as based on inspiration have in one way or another continuously arisen in opposition to each other. Cassirer's own view of the nature of art is largely influenced by Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, in which the essence of artistic creation and aesthetic experience is held to lie in the interplay of the understanding, which imposes rules, and of the free imagination, which can never be completely subsumed under determinate concepts.

In science the stabilizing and objective tendency predominates over that toward change and subjective innovation. Cassirer's philosophy of science is recognizably Kantian, although Kant's absolute a priori is replaced in it by a relative a priori. Scientific theories contain, apart from empirical concepts and propositions, concepts that are a priori and propositions that are synthetic a priori with respect to a given theoretical system. This idea has proved both fruitful and influential and has been further developed by, among others, Arthur Pap, at one time a pupil of Cassirer. Relative a priori concepts and propositions are hardly distinguishable from the theoretical concepts and propositions admitted by logical positivist philosophers of science when it appeared that their original positions were not wholly tenable.

Cassirer regards language, art, religion, and science as aspects in a continuous development that although it is not predictable in advance, does show an organic unity.

Every aspect expresses the fundamental function of symbolic representation in human consciousness and the power of man to build an "ideal" or symbolic world of his own, which is human culture. Cassirer's work depends to a very great extent on the illustrative power of his detailed analyses. For this reason it is difficult to do it justice in a brief survey, especially since philosophical disagreement with his critical idealism is quite compatible with a deep appreciation of his informed scholarship and his sensitive judgment as to what is and what is not important in the various symbolic and conceptual systems that he has investigated.

See also Aesthetic Experience; A Priori and A Posteriori; Cohen, Hermann; Frege, Gottlob; Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich; Husserl, Edmund; History and Historiography of Philosophy; Kant, Immanuel; Neo-Kantianism; Peano, Giuseppe.

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CASTRO, ISAAC OROBIO DE

See *Orobio de Castro, Isaac*

CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) introduced the term "categorical imperative" to characterize the fundamental principle of morality as it presents itself to beings. The principle is categorical, or unconditional, because it is valid for all humans, indeed, for all rational beings, independently of any particular desires or aims they may have. It presents itself as an imperative precisely because human beings have desires and aims that can be incompatible with the unconditional demands of the principle of morality and thus those demands often present themselves as obligations and constraints. Hence the propositional content of the fundamental principle of morality is identical for all rational beings, but its coloration as an imperative is distinctively human. For Kant, since there is

a single fundamental principle of morality, there is, properly speaking, only a single categorical imperative, although more specific moral duties and obligations derivable from it are themselves unconditionally valid for any agent in the situation in which they arise. Kant contrasts the categorical imperative with "hypothetical imperatives," which express only the necessity of adopting certain means to achieve certain ends that are themselves merely conditional. Hypothetical imperatives can also present themselves to us as constraints, because we are not always sufficiently rational even to accept willingly the means to ends that we have willingly adopted, but in the case of hypothetical imperatives, we are not under any moral constraint to adopt the ends concerned.

Kant anticipated his mature distinction between categorical and hypothetical imperatives in his *Inquiry concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality* of 1764. There he wrote, "Every *ought* expresses a necessity of the action and is capable of two meanings. … Either I ought to do something (as a *means*) if I want something else (as an *end*), or I *ought immediately* to do something else (as an *end*) and make it actual." He argued that the former do not really express obligations at all; rather, they express only "recommendations to adopt a suitable procedure, if one wish[es] to attain a given end." Genuine obligations, by contrast, are "subordinated to an end which is necessary in itself." Kant's examples of ends that might be necessary in themselves were advancing the greatest total perfection and acting in accord with the will of God (Kant 1764; in Kant 1900, 2: 298; in Kant 1992, p. 272). The first of these is the ultimate end of morality according to Christian Wolff (1679–1754) and Alexander Baumgarten (1714–1762), and the latter the ultimate end of morality according to their Pietist opponent Christian August Crusius (1715–1775). In his *Anweisung, vernünftig zu leben* (Guide to living rationally; 1744/1964), Crusius himself anticipated the distinction that Kant made in the *Inquiry* by contrasting duties of prudence, which are grounded "only in certain ends already desired by us," with true obligations, which are grounded in "moral necessity" lying "in a law and in our owing fulfillment of it," and ultimately, in the case of "the obligation of virtue, or true obligation in a narrower sense," in divine law (§161). A widespread account of Kant's development of his mature conception of the categorical imperative is that he moved from the idea of an unconditional obligation grounded in a necessary end to the idea of an unconditional obligation that does not depend on any end whatever. Below, that will turn out to be misleading.