

Ideality – a Missing Link Between the Philosophies of Art in Husserl and Cassirer

Abstract (keynote or paper)

Husserl and Cassirer. Perspectives on the Philosophy of Culture

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No matter to which degree Ernst Cassirer is aware of the ideality of language (ECW 24, 424) and knows Edmund Husserl's ‚ideale Bedeutungseinheit‘ (ECW 24, 423: Hua 18, 178/220) and Husserl's ‚ideierende Abstraction‘ (ECW 24, 430: Hua 18, 109/232; Möckel 1992, 1061), ‚ideality‘ does not seem to occur in Cassirer according to the word as well as to the matter. In slight contrast, an ‚ideal world‘ becomes apparent as a sphere of spirit and culture onto which are projected symbols from different sides, for instance from the side of art (ECW 23, 47/63/68/244; Kaufmann 1949, 835f.). Here, ideality is expanded successively, with departure from mathematical symbols (Cassirer 1910, 395/413), by all possible symbolic forms that open up the world with consciousness ‚als der eigentliche Proteus der Philosophie‘ (ECW 13, 53; de Warren 2015, 104-107). In other words, Kant's transcendental idealism is unfolded by means of Kant's Third Critique as a philosophy of culture. (ECW 11, ix/9/13-15; Bösch 2002, 150; Renz 2012, 114f.; Luft 2015, 167) Like Husserl who had found a transcendental idealism (Hua 3) Cassirer could not subscribe to, Cassirer adopts an interior especially for art and its formations in an idealist-classicist way, namely an interior norm which to correspond to alone provides footing (Cassirer 1927, 311f.), as is assured for instance theoretically in semiotic aesthetics (Mendelssohn 1757) and with the ‚ideal balance‘ between expression and pure meaning (Cassirer, *Form und Technik*, 1996, 209; Orth 2004a, 314; Kaufmann 1949, 818). But even in the remarks ‚Über Basisphänomene‘ (ECN 1) and in ‚Beilage. Symbolbegriff: Metaphysik des Symbolischen‘ (ECN 1) the transcendental-idealist Husserlian ‚dritte Reich‘ of ideality is present. (ECN 1, in particular 270, according to editor J. Krois 382: Cassirer 1927, 305; Bösch 2002, 161)

It has been stated often that Cassirer's use of and reference to ‚phenomenology‘

is inconsistent, fluctuating (for instance Orth 2004b, 174f.), if not shilly-shally, in any case critical toward Husserl (about the *hylē/morphē* distinction in Hua 3, 225-229 ECW 13, 226f.: Möckel 1992, 1059; Bermes 1998, 191; Martell 2015, 421/428; Orth 2004b, 168; but see Hua 17, 306-311; Kaufmann 1949, 816). Concerning ‚ideality‘, this important concept in Husserl’s philosophy seems not to have allowed docking for Cassirer as Cassirer arranges the sensual and the meaningful only in unity and without eidetic reduction. (Bermes 1998, 191)

Yet exactly this reduction would be important for a theory of culture that encompasses the arts. Here Husserl enters the game himself. Husserl seems to have touched no philosophy of the arts. But cursory remarks about the ideality of the linguistic (Hua 17, 23-25) and, in parallel, about the idealities of artworks (Husserl 1939, 318-321) contain a differentiation (Edie 1975) that may not trace out a full philosophy of art, but at least its foundations. It is recommended by Husserl involuntarily to observe this more thoroughly inasmuch he employs the notion of ideality in his work throughout at significant points, at times in the vicinity of the arts. (Hua 1, 138; Hua 6, § 9, see Scarfò 2006; Hua 3, 154-159 and other places, see Möckel 1992, 1050f.; Hua 19-1, 107/352; Hua 19-2, 779; Hua 22, 303ff.)

The lecture undertakes, firstly to explicate Cassirer’s position about ideality with regard to his philosophy of art (culture), secondly starts a philosophy of art with certain of Husserl’s differentiations about ideality. And thirdly it shows by means of an example, how the two stances of ideality can be combined.

The example is at hand with a US-American monograph in the philosophy of art whose author understands himself in the ideal language tradition of analytic philosophy and connects to Cassirer repeatedly (Goodman 1968, chpts. 1 and 2) and to a pragmatist semiotics compatible with Husserl (chpts. 3 and 4).

The speaker hopes to contribute to the research done about the philosophies of culture in Husserl and Cassirer with a moment not recognised to date. He decides not to pursue a synthesis, comparison and description of the mutual influences of the two positions, but pursue a complementarity of Husserl’s and Cassirer’s philosophies of culture to be exemplified.