

WISDOM'S GOLDENROD, ALAN BERKOWITZ CLASS NOTES
(TYPED)
JANUARY 1, 8, & 15, 1982
EPISTEMOLOGY; CASSIRER

TOPIC: Epistemology

SUBJECT: Cassirer

SUBSUBJECTS: Knowledge, Determinism vs. Indeterminism, Kant, Productive Imagination, Symbols

BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 3 vols., esp. Vol. 1, *Language*
- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*

DIAGRAM embedded in notes from 1982 0108:

- FIGURE 1982 0108-1-AB. Sensuous Intuition and A Priori Forms.

TYPED AND REFORMATTED by IT 2022

NOTES:

- **RETYPE D HANDWRITTEN NOTES (hence V08).** From Classnotes AB 1982 0101 to 1982 0207.PDF.
- JF remembers that these classes were held Saturday mornings. So the REAL dating in that case is 1982 01/02, 01/09, 01/16 (AB's notes probably misdated). But since AB notes are all we have right now, we'll go with 1982 01/01, 01/08, 01/15.
- All capitalization and punctuation corrected, abbreviations spelled out.

1982 01/01, 08, & 15 at Wisdom's Goldenrod Epistemology; Cassirer

[Classnotes AB 1982 0101 Begin]

1/1/82 Cassirer

Argument between determinism and indeterminism in the approach to human knowledge.

Two conflicting world views:

A) Determinism: Formalism, Kant, from the subject to the object.

B) Indeterminism: Skepticism, Scholasticism, from the object to the subject.

B = R.P. saying that all our knowledge is an approximation to reality but not of it. [Note: R.P. is either Richard Platek or an author of a book.]

B -- reality conditions our understanding.

A -- our understanding constructs our experience (reality).

What is there in the nature of knowledge which prescribes a conformity between what we know and the way we come to know it? i.e., between the object and our knowledge of it.

The functioning of knowledge must be examined? How does knowledge conform or give us information about the external world. (external world is assumed) -- The World-Mind operates through the individual understanding to impose on it the belief in an external object.

For symbolic form read ideas.

[Classnotes AB 1982 0101 End]

[Classnotes AB 1982 0108 Begin]

1/8/82 Cassirer

Kant's a priori forms

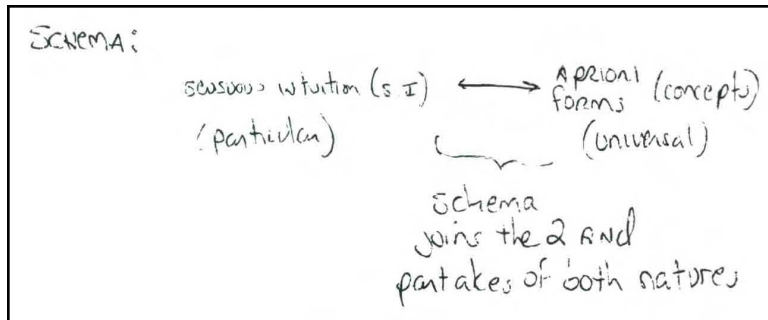
space and time = pure forms of sensuous intuition

cause and effect, substance, attribute, number...(up to 12) = pure forms of understanding

For Kant transcendental (i.e., pure forms) = non-empirical.

Original synthetic unity of apperception = ground of our experience.

The union of all the forms with the sensuous intuition is presented to us as a whole by the productive imagination.



[FIGURE 1982 0108-1-AB. Sensuous Intuition and A Priori Forms. S T = Space Time. Facsimile scan from AB class notes.]

Kant was willing to remove religion from cosmology (i.e., God as a creator) but not from ethics.

There is meaning in the sensuous. They are combined by the productive imagination. That imagination is a special mode of being. Each mode of being has its own value. The imagination can work through different modes (scientific, artistic, mythological, etc). The imagination operates by virtue of the schema.

The productive imagination's way of being is symbolical. Therefore all the other means are symbolic.

[Classnotes AB 1982 0108 End]

[Classnotes AB 1982 0115 Begin]

1/15/82 Cassirer

For consciousness read mind or psyche (p. 56). [Note from JF: This may be a comment from Anthony. The passage being referred to is in *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, Vol. 1, p. 56: "The system of forms is related to human consciousness which is in essence activity. For consciousness takes some given content as signifying a universe of meaning beyond itself and of which the content is symbolic representation. The various forms are the different structures of such meaning. Consciousness functions in accordance with these forms which are characteristic of itself. It is 'form-giving' to whatever is 'given' to it."]

The mind transforms itself into the phenomena which it investigates.

Cassirer has truncated reality and limited it to the phenomenal which is then the sole source from which the symbol(s) is derived.

[Classnotes AB 1982 0115 End]