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**Abstract****Dialectical Characteristics of Cassirer's Theory of Myths****Saito Shin**

This is an attempt to clarify the “dialectical” character of Ernst Cassirer’s theory of Myths. For Cassirer, one of the most influential philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, myth and religion have been the central issues that Cassirer tackled throughout his interdisciplinary career. In the second volume of his main work, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1923–29), Cassirer inquires into the significance of myth by means of Hegelian phenomenology. According to Cassirer, our minds and knowledge are composed of symbolic forms, such as language, myth, religion, art, and science. These symbolic forms, in origin, have one and the same origin that Cassirer calls “mythical thought”. Cassirer’s inquiry begins at this level, lower than that of Hegel’s “sensory consciousness,” for in Cassirer’s philosophy, anything surrounding human beings is fundamentally concerned with a special atmosphere, an atmosphere of joy or grief, of anguish, of excitement, of exultation or depression. Therefore, in this paper, the author intends to show how this origin developed into other, higher and more objectified symbolic forms, illustrating the stages in this development with the examples from myth and religion.