**Croce, Benedetto (1866-1952)**

Italian philosopher of aesthetics and of history Benedetto Croce cast a long shadow into the aesthetic and literary criticism of modernism. Croce’s biography includes traumatic episodes that recall the hallmark crises of modernism, including the early loss of both parents in an earthquake that he himself barely survived. While his career in philosophy started in 1893 with his reading of Giambattista Vico and G. W. F. Hegel, his work articulates his ‘philosophy of spirit’ (a term that reveals its Hegelian roots). His primary output was published in *La Critica*, a journal of cultural criticism founded by Croce in 1903, as well as in his books *What is Living and What is Dead in the Philosophy of Hegel* (1907), *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic* (1909) and other studies. As a politician, his appointment as a liberal member in the Italian Senate overlapped his 1920-1921 service in the Ministry of Public Instruction. Espousing fascist sympathies until 1924, he left his Senate position as Benito Mussolini’s fascist government came to power in 1922 and found himself marginalized and threatened when he openly criticized fascism. With his aesthetic commitment to expressionism, his philosophical roots in Kantianism and his repeated invocation of spirit at the core of his work, Croce’s philosophy of aesthetics influenced the writings of his contemporary, British philosopher R. G. Collingwood (1889-1943), who translated Croce’s works into English and inherited from Croce a strong scepticism about the ‘science of history’, which inspired Collingwoods’s own work in the philosophy of history. For British literary critic I. A. Richards, Croce’s expressivist aesthetics was a paradigm he sought to subsume in developing his concept of ‘practical criticism’, though Richards decentred Croce’s claims about artistic ‘intent’ in favour of an audience-centric understanding of aesthetic work.

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**List of works**

Croce, B. (1902-1917) *Filosofia come scienza dello spirit,* Bari : Laterza, 4 vols. (The English translations of the four volumes that comprise Croce’s major writings are listed below.)

------ (1909) *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, trans. D. Ainslie London: Macmillan and Co. (Translation of vol. 1 of *Filosofia come scienza dello spirit*.)

------ (1917) *Logic as the Science of the Pure Concept*, trans. D. Ainslie, London: Macmillan. (Translation of vol. 2 of *Filosofia come scienza dello spirit*.)

------ (1917) *Philosophy of the Practical, Economic and Ethic*, trans. D. Ainslie, London: Macmillan. (Translation of vol. 3 of *History: Its Theory and Practice.* New York: Russell.

------ (1917) *History: Its Theory and Practice*, trans. D. Ainslie, New York: Russell. (Translation of vol. 4 of *History: Its Theory and Practice.* New York: Russell.)

------ (1969) *What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*, trans. D. Ainslie, New York, Russell & Russell.

**References and further reading**

Collingwood, R. G. (1946) *The Idea of History*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Richards, I. A. (1929) *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgement,* London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.

Richards, I. A., Ogden, C. K. and Woods, J. (1925) *Foundations of Aesthetics*, New York: Lear Publishers.