

Technology as Symbolic Form. On the Relevance of Ernst Cassirer's Work Today

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In his essay *Form and Technology* (1930), Ernst Cassirer, one of the foremost thinkers of the semiotic tradition in humanities, anticipated the irreversible impact of technology on culture:

"If we judge the significance of the individual areas of human culture primarily by their actual effectiveness, if we determine the value of these areas according to the impact of their direct accomplishments, there can hardly be any doubt that technology claims the first place in the construction of our contemporary culture" (p. 15).

By characterizing technology as a symbolic form, Cassirer articulated that it transcends mere instruments or tools; it serves as a medium through which humans construct their own symbolic realities. Similar to other symbolic forms, such as Language, Art, Religion, Myths, Technology embodies the human mind and acts as a catalyst for self-fulfillment, reflecting our curiosity and creativity. Furthermore, Cassirer underscores that technology possesses the potential to reshape human consciousness and perspectives by creating new symbolic worlds, thus influencing how we perceive and comprehend reality.

In today's context, as technology permeates every aspect of our social and cultural lives, we face unprecedented challenges in fully understanding its effects on the evolution of human culture and society.

This publication seeks to explore the social and cultural impacts of technological tools through the lens of semiotic theories of culture. This semiotic framework equips us with the analytical approach necessary to understand the logic of digital sign systems and the structural transformations they prompt in individual and societal communication.

Contributions that focus on Cultural Semiotic theories or directly engage with Cassirer's work are encouraged.

Please send your abstract (English and German accepted; max. 300 words) no later than 30.05.2025 to:

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Reference:

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