

Call for Papers for Special Issue:

'Objectivity and Truth in Cassirer's Philosophy of Culture and Philosophy of Science'

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"Is there really something like an objective theoretical truth [...]? In a time in which such questions can be raised, philosophy cannot stand aside, mute and idle." (Cassirer, *Symbol, Myth, and Culture*, 61) There is no doubt that this question, which Cassirer found indicative of the European Zeitgeist of the first decades of the twentieth century, also pervades Western culture today. In times of fake news, conspiracy theories, alternative facts, and science denial, as well as the rise of political myth and the erosion of expertise and democratic institutions, doubt about the possibility of objectivity and truth is a defining characteristic of contemporary culture. Hence, if we follow Cassirer, philosophy has once again a crucial societal duty to fulfill: the duty to safeguard some notion of objectivity and of truth against epistemic and cultural relativism, skepticism, and indifference.

This collection of essays reconsiders the enduring relevance of Cassirer's own philosophy in view of this challenge. The *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* was after all an ambitious attempt to radically widen and diversify the meaning of objectivity without forfeiting its claims to universality or its firm footing in human reason. By ascribing to mythical, religious, and linguistic perceptions and expressions an objective status that modern Western philosophy had preserved for scientific thought, Cassirer's philosophy can however be taken as either enriching or weakening the ideas of objectivity, truth, and rationality. In view of the current crisis of truth, we thus ask what Cassirer's theory of culture and of science can teach us about the plurality, relativity, or universality of human understanding.

We invite papers that reflect, from a contemporary viewpoint, on Cassirer's view on objectivity and truth in relation to the plurality of the symbolic forms, their inherent tendencies towards dogmatism, the relativity of their cultural viewpoints, and their unity in the whole of human culture. Within this broad theme, we specifically welcome paper proposals that reflect on the transcendental status of science, its relation to other symbolic forms (incl. language, politics, technology, and art), and its significance for understanding (the present state or the progress of) human culture as a whole. We also welcome papers that initiate a dialogue between Cassirer and other contemporary thinkers on the issues of truth or objectivity.

The special issue will contain a first-time English translation of Cassirer's 1929 inaugural address as rector of Hamburg University: 'Formen und Formwandlungen des philosophischen Wahrheitsbegriffs' (ECW 17). We will give preference to paper submissions that in some way connect to the concept of functional truth that Cassirer suggests in this address (we can send you a pdf copy upon request).

Submissions should be no longer than 7000 words and must be written in English. Non-native English speakers may be asked to have their paper proofread by a native English speaker before it goes through the peer review process. Please follow the *Instructions for Authors* from CPR under <https://www.springer.com/journal/11007/submission-guidelines> for citations and formatting. All papers must be submitted via Editorial Manager under <https://www.editorialmanager.com/mawo/default1.aspx> with a note that it is for the special issue on Cassirer and to the Guest Editors' E-Mail-Addresses.

For further information, please contact the guest editors at t.endres@tu-braunschweig.de or simon.truwant@kuleuven.be.

The deadline for submissions is December 15, 2022.

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