

Towards a Typology of Circularities

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Abstract

The core theme of cybernetics is circularity—processes in which the outcomes of action are inputs for further action. Cybernetic circularities can take many forms: runaway, homeostasis, feedback, feedforward, recursion, reflexivity, self-organisation, and more. Differentiating between these, and what they mean in different contexts, is not always straightforward. A typology of circular processes, their similarities and differences, could help introduce and clarify cybernetics and its concepts.

What could such a typology be like? How abstract should it be? How embodied or experimental? Which examples and activities would help exemplify each type of circularity?

Cybernetics' concepts rest on patterns that are common across disparate contexts, resulting in their wide applicability but also in abstraction and ambiguity. In what ways could a typology help explore the ways that the same form of process might be thought of in different terms across multiple domains and contexts? Could this help deepen the criticality with which cybernetic concepts are applied?

Indicative bibliography

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