

# **The Cultural Icon of Thomasian Tradition: The Arch of the Centuries**

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## **Abstract**

*An icon uplifts the object or person identified as the exemplar of a particular generation, a stylistic epoch, and a feeling about a particular set of social experiences. The icon being identified is something which all people can recognize but it is to be seen as a construction which can be seen to work in varying ways: first, as icons invested with historical significance; second, as secular icons or materials in the real world that through time accumulate to themselves a specific exemplary cultural status. On a different note, cultural icons also reflect the profoundly held aspirations as well as the concerns of receptive communities over-time. This study aims to qualify the Arch of the Centuries as the cultural icon of Thomasian tradition. This study will lean on the critical concepts expounded by Mike Parker and Wolfgang Iser.*

*Key Terms: Cultural Icons, Symbols, Perceptive Communities, Iconization, Meaning*

## **CULTURAL ICONICITY**

"Icon" is a term used nowadays in the field of journalism and popular speech to signify a cult object or a celebrity (Tomaselli & Scott, 2009). It is used in a wide array of contexts for the notions of image, picture, or representation. It is a sign that stands for an object by signifying it either concretely or by analogy. A cultural icon can be in any form.

In a study conducted by Dennis R. Hall (2008), he explores the evolution and function of the wristwatch as a contemporary cultural icon. Because the watch oscillates between use and signal values, the watch enjoys a distinct iconic status in contemporary American culture, evoking a host of often conflicting associations: those allied to work, productivity, enterprise and success, on the one hand, and those related to self-indulgence, status luxury and excess, on the other hand. The development of cheap electronic movements ought to have spelled disaster for the watch both as a business and as a cultural icon, but beginning in the 1980s the watch aggressively fought back within the signal economy to represent a postmodern sense of the concept of time and culture. Wrist watches have a much fuller history, technical and cultural, than reported here and many more metonymic associations than those considered in this paper. Considering the wrist watch, a common