



## 50 Shades of Popular Culture International Conference

18th-21st February 2016

For MacDonald, the distinctive or defining feature of mass art is that it is produced solely and directly for consumption by a mass audience—like “chewing gum”, he says, in order to signal his contempt. He chooses to call the phenomenon *mass culture* rather than *popular culture* because, he notes, works he regards as high art—such as the writing of Dickens—can be popular, whereas it is not mass culture, i. e. it is not produced *solely* for mass consumption. Rather, MacDonald categorises it as high art. But wasn’t Dickens’s work written for large audiences? Wasn’t it serialised in large circulation periodicals? On what grounds does MacDonald hive off Dickens’s work from other contemporary work that appeared in similar mass-market venues?

Noël Carroll, *A Philosophy of Mass Art*

Contrary to common belief popular culture is not that much coherent a phenomenon to be so easily isolated from cultural flow and defined in such splendid isolation. The persevering existence of the division between so called “high” and “low” is, as seems, fuelled primarily by a need of juxtaposing esteemed and engaging texts of culture. Today such a division is no longer intellectually acceptable since it clearly imposes a paradigmatic systematisation and introduces, once again, philosophically compromised binary oppositions. Meanwhile, in the past few decades, a new critical discourse have managed to emerge, a discourse pivoted around interdisciplinary popculture studies, and diverse at least as much as the research subject itself. One cannot use the same language while studying melodramas and speculative SF, or heavy metal and Marvel’s filmography, J. K. Rowling and first-person shooters in video games. The purpose of organising International Conference 50 Shades of Popular Culture would be, therefore, to see all the eponymous shades of this discourse and to encourage interdisciplinary reflexion on:

- genology in popular culture (blurring genre boundaries, proliferation of purely aesthetic conventions like steampunk, dieselpunk, noir, post-apo, bizarro, and so on);
- ephemeral trends and fashions in popular literature, film, TV shows, video games, comic books etc. (e. g. *Twilight* saga, retro crime fiction or young adult dystopia);
- major tendencies in the evolution of popular culture (literature, video games, movies, TV shows, music, transmedia, internet);
- artists-celebrities and new ways of promoting artistic ventures;
- fan contributions to the development of popular culture (fan fiction, cosplay, e-zins, convents, festivals, fan and aca-fan movement, self- and vanity publishing);
- dichotomy of mainstream and underground, occurring both between so called high and low culture, and within each of them (e. g. marginalising horror in fantasy & SF fandom or ennobling vanguard realist novels in mainstream fiction);
- convergence culture and franchised universes, in storytelling and world-building alike;
- philosophy of popular art and culture and new theoretical approaches in the each of them;
- development of alternative literary criticism (blogosphere, e-zins, fandom awards e. g. World Fantasy Award, MTV Fandom Awards, Bram Stoker Award etc., open access publishing, pop-culture blogs,etc.);
- global, local and “glocal” manifestations of popular culture;

Please note that all those topics only briefly outline the conference scope and authors of abstracts are strongly encouraged to develop their papers further on. We are interested in general analyses of popular culture theory, philosophy and practice as well as in specific case studies.

The conference language shall be both English and Polish. 600-words abstracts of presentations or posters featuring (1) the title of presentation, (2) a concise bio-note (up to 80 words), (3) current affiliation, and (4) all necessary contact information should be submitted **until November 30th 2015** at **50shadesofpopculture@gmail.com**. Notifications on both accepted and rejected submissions shall be sent no sooner than in two weeks from the deadline.

The conference fee will be **100€** for the full coverage of English editions of printed conference materials and all other essentials. Polish attendees will be kindly asked to transfer the equivalent of the fee in local currency (400 PLN).

Any further details regarding the venue, accommodation and transportation will be continuously updated at the website **50shadesofpopculture.wordpress.com**. Organisers are also open to answering all questions and requests at **50shadesofpopculture@gmail.com**.

The conference will be followed by a peer-reviewed monograph, published by Facta Ficta Research Centre and licenced under Creative Commons BY-SA 3.0 as an e-book stored in a globally accessible repository (CeON Center for Open Science)—or as monographic issues of peer-reviewed open access journals that decide to co-operate with the Organising Committee.

We look forward to seeing you in Kraków!