



Dear colleagues,

We invite participation from bachelor, master, and Ph.D. students in a call for papers for an upcoming special issue of Hortus Semioticus, the student academic journal of the Semiotics Department at the University of Tartu in Estonia. Through this special issue, we aim to present a wide academic and cultural understanding of the semiotics of media and pop culture, with the hopes of demonstrating the richness and importance of the combination of these topics and approaches. Through the assembling of this issue, we also hope to create connections between different institutions, students, and early academics from across the world, by providing them an opportunity to present their work in an open-access and international medium.

The duration of the call for papers lasts until and including March 30th.

Accepted papers can be written in either English, Estonian, or Spanish, while the instructions for submission and styling can be found on the Hortus Semioticus Website:

<https://www.hortussemioticus.ut.ee/guidelines-for-authors/>

All submissions should be sent to **hortus.semioticus@semiootika.ee**, with the title: Submission for Special Issue.

The spectrum of this issue covers topics such as:

- examinations of the meaning-making mechanisms in culture, as well as its semiotic dimensions
- analyses of cultural events, spectacles, extravaganzas, and global phenomena
- visual and multimodal analyses of any artistic text
- consumers' perception, and behavioural patterns
- cultural artefacts or practices
- cultural and aesthetical identities

- research, issues of communication, representation, and interpretation, translation and adaptation, narrative, and storytelling.

We define pop culture along the lines of Stuart Hall's (2002[1981]) work, in which the concept can designate culture as it stems from the experience of people in everyday life, as well as the commercially successful products of mass communication, etc. Moreover, in accordance with Henry Jenkin, and just as Hall and many other scholars on the subject have considered as well, we will take special interest on where these two types of pop culture, from everyday life and the mass, intersect.

The relevance of pop culture has been increasingly important with the advances in technology that have allowed for the entrance of the Internet into our everyday life, and the new facets of art in the online multi-media environment. This has in many ways, effectively globalised the world at a faster more fundamental level than was present in the 20th century. However, while once globalisation was largely seen as a process of Western media, and especially media from the United States of America, influencing the rest of the world, we can now see substantial reciprocal influence of pop cultures from all over the world being popularly received in a diverse number of regions. K-Pop musicians, like BTS dawn advertisements for McDonald's meals, audiences throughout the world watch the Icelandic crime drama Trapped (Ófærð) via Netflix, and other online platforms, and Bollywood films have made an immense impact on Nigerian, Polish, and many other international audiences.

However, large corporations and major media producers are not the only agents partaking in this process. Through online platforms, writers are able to share, create, and read fanfiction from all over the world, reinterpreting and changing narratives, extending store lines, and accounting for plot holes. Moreover, TikTok, YouTube, and similar platforms allow for commentary on everyday life, participation in memes, and act as creative outlets. Pop culture, in many ways, now transverses and originates possibly anywhere, in any country or region, any class, and from everyday individuals to heavily funded corporations, while appearing on ever-widening outlets and forms of technology.

This broadening of pop culture, no doubt has its benefits -e.g., exposing social issues and giving voice to people who would not have been heard otherwise, increasing the representation of minorities, and raising awareness of social problems and phenomena, educating people through entertainment, enabling cultural exchange, and promoting collective activism. On the other hand, the negative very much accompanies such transitions, as increasing commodification, stereotypical representation, and the continued marginalisation of communities - to mention only a few - are issues that continue, and in many cases, increasingly so, within contemporary pop culture. It is because of these issues, both positive and negative, mentioned or not, that in-depth studies and analyses of pop culture need to be conducted.

This planned special issue of Hortus Semioticus on media, transmediality, and pop culture will be one-step in gaining and presenting a deeper understanding of pop culture in contemporary times.

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References:

Hall, Stuart 2002[1981]. Notes on the deconstruction of the 'popular'. In: Duncombe, Stehpn (Eds.), *Cultural Resistance Reader*. London: Verso. Pp. 185-192.

Jenkins, Henry 2019. Popular culture as politics, politics as popular culture. *The Journal of Media Literacy*. Retrieved from: https://www.journalofmedialiteracy.org/jenkins-article-2019?fbclid=IwAR0sy6pMyiFzDdM3dszsrYj47SgTQvSTu_f49HB4aKB1rwNkB7Gjblcu0Y