

## Ghosts, Nostalgia, and Pop Culture A Hermeneutic-Hauntological Perspective on Globalization

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**Abstract:** *This research presents a unique scientific perspective on social and political phenomena in the context of globalization, based on my 2022 doctoral thesis, "Retrowave. Socio-Cultural Reiterations under the Spectrum of Postmodernity": A Hauntological and Hermeneutic Study. It employs an interdisciplinary method which combines cultural philosophy and anthropology to explore contemporary political, social, and economic structures. The study highlights the indispensability of a hermeneutic-hauntological approach in analyzing globalized socio-political dynamics. The findings indicate that contemporary tensions are not unexpected but are deeply embedded in pop culture, reflecting the structural dynamics of the current Zeitgeist and its underlying epistemic framework. Moreover, this analytical approach enables a highly precise anticipation of future developments.*

### Introduction. Key Concepts

In my recent research endeavours, I have aimed to demonstrate the significant role of a philosophical approach—specifically, a *hermeneutic<sup>2</sup>-hauntological<sup>3</sup>* one—in understanding cultural phenomena, particularly the role of pop culture in propagating these phenomena and its impact on contemporary Western society. This research, which started during my master's years (7 years ago), led me to provide important scientific arguments to confirm the manifestation of a cultural

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<sup>2</sup> *Hermeneutics*, in the sense of philosophical hermeneutics as developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer, refers to the study of understanding and interpretation, particularly in relation to historical consciousness and the role of tradition. Gadamer's seminal work, *Truth and Method (Wahrheit und Methode, 1960)*, explores the ways in which meaning is shaped by history, language, and dialogue, arguing against objective methodologies in the humanities in favour of a fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*).

<sup>3</sup> *Hauntology*, as defined by Jacques Derrida, refers to the persistence of elements from the past that continue to shape the present, despite their apparent absence. Introduced in *Specters of Marx (Spectres de Marx, 1993)*, the concept explores how unresolved historical, political, and cultural phenomena "haunt" contemporary society, disrupting linear notions of time and presence. Derrida frames *hauntology* as a challenge to metaphysical notions of being, emphasizing the spectral nature of history and the way the past lingers as an absent presence.

stagnation in the sphere of contemporary pop culture<sup>4</sup>, manifested through socio-cultural reiterations of past eras. While pop culture may seem unrelated to globalization's political, social, and economic influences, recent global dynamics (2023–2025) confirm its growing relevance. Using analytical tools from cultural philosophy, such as *hermeneutics* and *hauntology*, this study explores how pop culture shapes political and social landscapes, contributing to the rise of far-right movements in Europe and the USA. This phenomenon is tied to the reinterpretation of idealized past periods, which now hold a central place in cultural discourse. Through the lenses of philosophical *hermeneutics*, *hauntology*, and *Zeitgeist*, this research examines the role of nostalgia in shaping contemporary Western culture, demonstrating its impact on current social and political transformations.

***Philosophical hermeneutics*** explores how interpretation is influenced by historical context, individual or collective biases, and the dialogue between the interpreter and the phenomenon. In the context of globalization, philosophical hermeneutics plays a key role in interpreting the complex interactions between cultures, perspectives, *value judgements* and value systems, emphasizing the importance of openness and dialogue in the process of understanding. ***Value judgments*** are based on a specific set or system of values which are essential both in shaping cultural phenomena and in the interaction between individuals and their environment. They manifest in two central forms. Jean-Luc Marion discusses *value judgments* in *Negative Certainties (Certitudes négatives, 2010)* as judgments which do not merely describe reality but impose an interpretative framework shaped by prior assumptions and subjective perspectives. He argues that *value judgments* often obscure true understanding by substituting evaluation for direct encounter with phenomena. In this sense, they can act as obstacles to knowledge, reinforcing biases rather than fostering genuine openness to experience. The presence of Marion's *value judgments* is more relevant than ever today on a collective level and therefore, connected to pop culture. In contemporary Romanian society, for instance, the blending of mysticism, history, and religion into a political ideology—disregarding validated historical evidence and the detrimental legacy of religion in politics—reveals a *Zeitgeist* shaped by societal frustrations stemming from personal struggles, as well as global political and economic tensions. This illustrates the versatility of *value judgments*, particularly collective ones, which can take on different meanings depending on social, economic, or political contexts.

In a philosophical context, *Zeitgeist* refers to the prevailing intellectual, cultural, and ideological climate of a given historical period. Rooted in German Idealism, particularly in the works of Hegel, the term signifies the "spirit of the time"—a collective consciousness which shapes

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<sup>4</sup> *Pop culture*, or popular culture, refers to the set of ideas, practices, and artefacts that are widely disseminated and embraced within a society, often through mass media and commercial means. It encompasses music, film, television, fashion, and other forms of entertainment that reflect and shape collective mentality. As a dynamic cultural force, pop culture both influences and is influenced by societal values, historical contexts, and technological advancements, serving as a barometer of shared identity and generational shifts. Scholars such as John Storey (*Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction, 1993*) emphasize its role in constructing meaning and reinforcing or challenging dominant ideologies.

and is shaped by societal values, artistic expressions, political structures, and technological advancements. It embodies the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and aesthetic sensibilities that define an era, often manifesting through dominant narratives, cultural artefacts, and shared social experiences. Philosophically, *Zeitgeist* is closely linked to historicism, phenomenology, and hauntology, as it underscores the interplay between historical continuity, cultural memory, and the evolution of ideas. The concept of *Zeitgeist* plays a crucial role in discussions about globalization, as it provides a lens through which to analyse the ways in which cultural, political, and economic forces shape the collective consciousness of different historical periods. In the context of globalization, *Zeitgeist* is no longer confined to a specific national or regional identity but becomes a transnational phenomenon, influenced by the rapid exchange of ideas, technologies, and cultural products across borders. The homogenization versus hybridization debate, for example, questions whether globalization leads to a dominant global *Zeitgeist*—often driven by Western cultural and economic hegemony—or whether it fosters a plurality of localized cultural expressions which blend global influences with indigenous traditions.

Globalization amplifies *hauntological* concerns regarding the loss of historical continuity and the increasing prevalence of *cultural nostalgia*. *Hauntology* (a concept introduced by philosopher Jacques Derrida in his 1993 book *Specters of Marx*) explores the persistence of past ideas, forms, and ideologies as "ghosts" in the present. This concept describes how the past continues to haunt contemporary society, even after its original context or meaning has disappeared. In discussions on globalization, *hauntology* can be useful for examining how past cultural practices and ideologies continue to influence and shape global interactions. It highlights the ways in which social inequalities, economic systems, and power dynamics persist in new forms, "haunting" contemporary globalized cultures. This perspective can foster deeper discussions on cultural hybridity and the transformation of identities in a global context. Thus, *hauntology* provides a framework for understanding how the past and present intertwine in shaping the complex processes of globalization. As societies become more interconnected, there is a growing sense of dislocation and temporal dissonance, leading to the recycling of past aesthetics and ideologies in response to the uncertainties of the present. This dynamic raises questions about whether globalization erodes the distinct *Zeitgeist* of different historical moments or whether it creates a new form of temporal consciousness characterized by simultaneity, fragmentation, and the acceleration of cultural production. Ultimately, in a globalized world, the *Zeitgeist* can no longer be understood as a singular, linear progression of ideas but rather as a complex, multifaceted interplay of cultural memories, emerging trends, and technological transformations which transcend traditional historical and geographical boundaries.

## From Theory to Concrete Examples: The Impact of Key Concepts

**Value Judgments.** Globalization, along with the expansion of social networks, has shifted value judgments from a personal to a global framework, influencing both the standardization of social norms and ideological perspectives. Rapid access to new instances of globalization, such as social media, has facilitated the proliferation of value judgments without a justifiable foundation. Pop culture and digital platforms have come to play a crucial role in this process, acting as mediums through which certain *value judgments* are propagated, contested, or re-contextualized and embraced by a large number of users. Social media algorithms filter and amplify specific perspectives, potentially leading to the formation of echo chambers where opinions become self-validated, regardless of their accuracy. This mechanism carries significant political and social implications, as it fosters ideologies, drives collective mobilization, and influences political agendas—all shaped by value judgments. When these judgments become widespread, they risk being homogenized at a collective level, reinforcing dominant narratives and limiting critical engagement. As a result, subjective perspectives are being transformed into group perspectives and solidified into accepted truths, guiding public discourse and policy-making based on shared, yet often unexamined, evaluative frameworks. A clear example of this was the role of social networks in the 2024 presidential elections in Romania. Likewise, the use of religion as part of a political ideology in Romania cannot be separated from the impact of social networks, where populist or nostalgic narratives are heavily publicized and instrumentalized. Thus, globalization and digitalization have not only transformed *value judgments* into a collective "plague", but have also generated a tension between cultural homogenization and diversification, continuously redefining social and political norms through an omnipresent digital environment.

Hans-Georg Gadamer's **philosophical hermeneutics**, developed primarily in his work entitled "Truth and Method" (1960), emphasizes the interpretative nature of human understanding and the historical context which shapes it. Rejecting the idea of absolute objectivity, Gadamer argues that all understanding is mediated by tradition, language, and preconceptions, which he terms "*prejudices*" (*Vorurteile*). He introduces the concept of the fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*), where the interpreter's perspective merges with the historical and textual context, allowing for a dynamic and evolving comprehension of meaning. For Gadamer, interpretation is not about retrieving an original, fixed meaning but engaging in a dialogue with the past, shaped by the interpreter's present circumstances. His hermeneutics thus bridges the gap between historical distance and contemporary understanding, influencing fields from literary criticism to political philosophy. This philosophical perspective has proven especially relevant in today's political, social, and economic context, which, influenced by globalization, has grown more homogeneous, giving rise to a *Zeitgeist* which transcends national borders and operates on a global scale. Today's *Zeitgeist*, as predicted and demonstrated in my PhD thesis, is characterized by a *restorative nostalgia*, driven by socio-cultural reiterations of an idealized past and neutral value judgments.

Having outlined and explained these concepts in the context of globalization, I will now demonstrate their applicability within the current *Zeitgeist* marked by a *restorative nostalgia*, rooted in socio-cultural reiterations of a mythicized past and *neutral value judgments*, evidencing the key role of collective mentality in political and social issues. Furthermore, the following examples demonstrate how elements of pop culture, including social media and mass media, not only reflect the aforementioned *Zeitgeist* and express collective mentality (especially regarding political issues) but also play a pivotal role in shaping *neutral value judgments*.

**Populism, anti-elite Sentiment and oligarchic political systems.** Populist sentiments and critiques of the establishment are frequently depicted in films and television series. For example, the film *Joker* (2019) explores themes of social neglect and the rise of populist figures as a response to social inequalities. In both Europe and the U.S., TV series such as *House of Cards* and *Veep* often portray the ruthless nature of political elites, while films like *The Big Short* (2015) highlight the role of financial elites in the 2008 economic crisis. These elements of pop culture have demonstrated their relevance, particularly in the current political context, marked by the re-election of businessman Donald Trump as president of the USA and the involvement of his ally, Elon Musk, in White House affairs, influencing both domestic and international politics—often leveraging another key tool of pop culture: social media. This situation also aligns with the views of *hauntology* proponents like Yanis Varoufakis. The Greek economist and former finance minister has explored the concept of *hauntology* in relation to contemporary politics, particularly in his critique of neoliberalism and the economic systems which dominate global politics. Varoufakis has been critical of the growing influence of businessmen in politics, particularly in the context of neoliberalism and its impact on democratic processes. He argues that the rise of wealthy individuals and business magnates in political positions has led to a system where economic decisions are increasingly shaped by corporate interests, rather than the needs of the broader population. Varoufakis views this as a dangerous trend, as it erodes democratic principles and fosters a political environment where policies are primarily shaped to benefit the elite, rather than addressing the social and economic needs of the majority. As I demonstrated in my PhD thesis, this phenomenon is connected to a *restorative nostalgia*, which signals a shift towards authoritarian regimes as an alternative to democracy, emphasizing the failure of contemporary political systems to present an innovative solution beyond democracy—a theory also supported by Fukuyama in his book “The End of History and the Last Man”, where he argues that democracy represents the final form of government and the ultimate solution to political development. Varoufakis critiques the phenomenon of businessmen, like Donald Trump or Elon Musk, entering politics, claiming that their business-driven mentality is not suited for governance, as it prioritizes profit maximization over the well-being of citizens. For Varoufakis, this blurring of the lines between business and politics exacerbates inequality, consolidates power in the hands of the few, and stifles democratic accountability. There are also examples, such as Russia, where democracy is employed as a propaganda tool to create the illusion of a democratic system, while in reality, it functions as an oligarchy.

**The rise of Kitsch Culture** due to failed or unreformed educational systems and the Anti-Elite Sentiment. Kitsch culture thrives on surface-level aesthetics, sentimental appeal, and the blending of populist ideas with misleading ideological associations. It simplifies complex concepts, turning them into easily digestible symbols which evoke emotion rather than critical thought. In this process, false correlations emerge—capitalism, for instance, is often misrepresented as a political system rather than an economic one, creating an illusion that markets inherently dictate governance. Likewise, nationalism is frequently dressed in nostalgic kitsch, reducing history to a series of romanticized clichés. This fusion of distorted ideology and aestheticized mass appeal results in a culture which values spectacle over substance, reinforcing comfortable but flawed narratives which obscure deeper social and political realities. For example, the Romanian far-right supporters and their controversial candidate, Călin Georgescu, who gained international attention due to his sudden rise in popularity and his widely discussed unfunded (as he declared in mass media) and unfair TikTok campaign. After the cancellation of the second round of elections, both social and mass media revealed the candidate's discourse and the rhetoric of his supporters—clear examples of kitsch culture. In a video message from December 26, 2023, Georgescu declared: "We are the Vlachs of Valhalla, we are the sons of God, as the sacred language's scriptures say, and to ignore that we descend from the biblical Arimi tribes means to erase our own identity."<sup>5</sup> Valhalla, in Norse mythology, is the grand hall of Odin, where fallen Viking warriors are received and has nothing to do with Dacian mythology. The term "Vlachs" historically refers to Romanized populations in Central and Eastern Europe, including Romanians. Georgescu's remarks were widely criticized for blending historical and mythological elements without a scientific base. This dangerous blending of history and myth is a clear example of Kitsch Culture. At the same time, his supporters not only endorse his statements but actively promote them, both through street protests and online, where their harsh vocabulary and sometimes violent demonstrations contradict their proclaimed desire for peace. This, in essence, serves as another textbook example of *neutral value judgements* and kitsch culture.

**The Hauntological Return of Authoritarianism:** a reflection on democracy's failure. When a political system, especially a democratic one, collapses due to corruption, oligarchic influence, or ineffective governance, it creates a vacuum of frustration and disillusionment within society. This can lead to the emergence of alternative political movements, often favouring authoritarian regimes which promise quick solutions and order, despite lacking coherent ideological foundations. The spectre of past authoritarian systems can thus resurface, not as a revival of traditional ideologies, but as a hollow repetition of previous mistakes—a *hauntological* return which taps into society's fears and desire for control. This dynamic further underscores the validity of Francis Fukuyama's theories on democracy, particularly his argument that liberal democracy represents the "end of

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<sup>5</sup> G4 Media, *Delir mistic al lui Călin Georgescu: „Noi suntem vlahii din Valahala” / ”Ne tragem din triburile arimilor biblici” / ”Patria este raiul în care putem ajunge dacă ne jertfim pentru ea”* in <https://www.g4media.ro/video-delir-mistic-al-lui-calin-georgescu-noi-suntem-vlahii-din-valahala-ne-tragem-din-triburile-arimilor-biblici-patria-este-raiul-in-care-pute.html>;

history"<sup>6</sup>. Fukuyama suggests that while democracy may not be a perfect system, it has proven to be the most stable and adaptable form of governance, with its principles of individual rights, political freedoms, and rule of law. No genuinely new political ideology beyond democracy has been conceived, highlighting the limits of human potential and foreshadowing the resurgence of *hauntological specters*. Moreover, the recurring failures of alternative political systems—especially authoritarian regimes which promise security but rely on nostalgia and kitsch culture to gain support—highlight the enduring appeal and resilience of democracy, despite its flaws. Fukuyama's theory that history, in terms of ideological evolution, has reached its final stage, gains validity when we consider the lack of innovative alternatives besides democracy and the resort to authoritarianism and kitsch culture as a substitute for genuine ideological depth. These cyclical returns to authoritarianism not only emphasize the failure of such systems but also reaffirm the value of democratic principles, which continue to be relevant even when they are challenged. This phenomenon is clearly depicted in movies and TV series like *V for Vendetta* (2005) and *Black Mirror* (2011–2019). In *V for Vendetta*, set in a dystopian future where democracy has collapsed and been replaced by a totalitarian regime, the failure of the democratic system creates a vacuum which allows *hauntological specters* to resurface in the form of a fascist state. This regime promises safety and stability but at the expense of personal freedoms, highlighting the eerie return of authoritarianism in the wake of democracy's downfall. The film shows how, when the system fails, people turn to authoritarian figures who promise a return to order, even though their methods are oppressive and devoid of any true ideology. Similarly, in *Black Mirror*, the exploration of modern societal breakdowns, particularly in episodes like *Fifteen Million Merits* and *Nosedive*, reflects how frustration with the current system leads to the rise of new forms of control and manipulation. These episodes portray how a loss of genuine political ideology can result in systems of power which prioritize control, surveillance, and conformity. Moreover, the *hauntological* nature of this return is amplified by the influence of kitsch culture—superficial, commodified expressions of nostalgia which distort the past to fit present-day desires. In a society searching for meaning in the face of political failure, kitsch culture provides an easily digestible, albeit hollow, version of past ideologies, packaged for mass consumption. The rise of political leaders who appeal to nationalism or authoritarianism often integrates elements of kitsch culture, rebranding old, failed ideas in ways which are acceptable to modern audiences. This manipulation of past ideologies, devoid of their original philosophical depth, results in a distorted form of political engagement, where *nostalgia* for "better times" is used to justify contemporary authoritarianism, leading to a future which repeats the mistakes of history without truly understanding or addressing them. Thus, when democratic systems falter, the resulting frustration and disillusionment can lead to the return of authoritarianism, not as a revival of genuine political philosophy, but as a kitschy, simplified repetition of past errors. This process exemplifies the *hauntological* return of failed systems, where the past continues to shape the future in ways which are both familiar and unsettlingly hollow.

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<sup>6</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York, The Free Press, 1995, grounded in principles of individual rights, political freedoms, and the 92, p. 64.

**Technology and artificial intelligence.** The dual sentiment of fear and fascination surrounding artificial intelligence (AI) and its societal impact—particularly in relation to employment, ethics, and democracy—has become a dominant theme in popular culture. Shows like *Westworld* and *Black Mirror* critically examine automation, the erosion of human agency, and the potential consequences of AI-driven political systems, often reflecting deep anxieties about the unchecked advancement of technology. From a philosophical hermeneutic standpoint, these narratives can be seen as interpretative frameworks through which society attempts to make sense of its evolving relationship with technology. Hermeneutics, particularly in the tradition of Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, argues that understanding is always shaped by historical and cultural contexts. In this light, AI is not merely a technological phenomenon but a symbol of broader existential and ethical dilemmas concerning human agency, autonomy, and control. *Westworld*, for example, interrogates the nature of free will and consciousness, questioning whether human identity is fundamentally different from artificial beings. The series suggests that technology does not merely serve human needs but actively reshapes the way we define ourselves, blurring the boundaries between creator and creation. Similarly, *Black Mirror* functions as a critical lens through which contemporary anxieties about surveillance, corporate power, and algorithmic governance are explored. By depicting dystopian futures where AI systems dictate human behaviour, the series reflects the growing fear which technological advancement may lead to the loss of individual and collective agency. From a hermeneutic perspective, these works challenge viewers to re-examine their assumptions about technological progress. They reveal how AI is not just a neutral tool but a cultural and philosophical construct which demands continuous reinterpretation. The narratives act as a form of philosophical inquiry, compelling audiences to question whether technological innovation inherently leads to human liberation or, paradoxically, reinforces new forms of control and alienation. Another issue arises with value judgments in the digital age. While technology fuels anxiety about issues like automation and surveillance, it also serves as a validation tool. For example, in Romania, many voters supported a far-right candidate based on statements they saw on social media platforms, without knowing his background. This highlights how algorithms shape political opinions, curating content to reinforce existing beliefs rather than promote informed decision-making. From a philosophical hermeneutic perspective, this creates a problem with how people form judgments. Algorithms narrow individuals' interpretive horizons by feeding them content which aligns with their biases, limiting critical reflection. This challenges traditional democratic processes, in which informed debate should guide decisions rather than algorithm-driven validation. As technology shapes political discourse, it raises concerns about autonomy, agency, and the integrity of democratic choice.

**Migration and National Identity.** Migration, nationalism, and the concept of the "Other" are pivotal political and cultural themes in both the United States and Europe. These issues are deeply embedded in contemporary narratives, shaping public discourse and influencing the way societies perceive belonging and exclusion. The hauntological aspect of migration emerges through the persistent return of historical anxieties—echoes of colonial pasts, imperial legacies, the interaction between different cultures and cycles of displacement which continue to shape modern national

identities. Cinema plays a crucial role in reflecting and reframing these tensions. In the UK, for example, cultural responses to Brexit reveal a similar spectral presence of the past haunting the present. Productions like *Brexit: The Uncivil War* and various documentaries on the topic expose the deep-seated tensions surrounding European integration, nationalism, and migration policies. The rhetoric surrounding Brexit often invoked a lost Britain—an imagined golden age before globalization—illustrating the *hauntological* return of *nationalist nostalgia* as a political force. The campaign's slogans and media portrayals constructed a longing for an idealized past which, paradoxically, never truly existed in the way it is remembered. Films such as *The Immigrant* (2013) and *Ex Machina* (2015) explore themes of national identity, migrant rights, and the way host societies construct the figure of the outsider. *The Immigrant* channels a historical *hauntology*, where early 20th-century migration mirrors contemporary debates on assimilation and exclusion, while *Ex Machina* extends this discourse into the post-human realm, where artificial intelligence is positioned as the ultimate "Other," challenging notions of humanity, autonomy, and citizenship. The *hauntology* of migration underscores a central paradox: while borders are constructed to define and protect national identities, they also reveal their instability. The spectre of the migrant—whether as a historical labour force, a contemporary political refugee, or even a futuristic non-human entity—continues to return, unsettling rigid national boundaries and exposing the fragility of exclusionary ideologies.

**Cultural imperialism through globalization.** Globalization has long been entangled with cultural imperialism, shaping and reshaping national and regional identities through the pervasive influence of dominant powers. In both the United States and Europe, popular culture frequently reflects the impact of this global hegemony, particularly through the overwhelming presence of American cultural products. Films like *The Matrix* (1999) and *Avatar* (2009) serve as critical explorations of cultural dominance, resource exploitation, and environmental degradation—themes which resonate with broader critiques of Western hegemony. These narratives do not simply portray imperialism as a past event but rather as an ongoing, spectral force which continues to define global relations. The *hauntological* aspect of cultural imperialism lies in the way the past never truly disappears but instead lingers, returning in new forms. The global dissemination of American culture and political ideology—whether through involvement in political conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, financial support in ongoing crises like the war in Ukraine, or the influence of Hollywood, corporate brands, and digital platforms—echoes earlier forms of imperial expansion. This enduring presence of cultural imperialism reveals a paradox: while globalization promotes the ideals of diversity and interconnectedness, it often results in homogenization, in which local traditions and narratives are eclipsed by a commodified, Western-centric cultural framework.

**Pop music** serves as another battleground where pop culture is contested and reinterpreted. Protest songs by artists like Michael Jackson, Madonna, Lady Gaga, Kendrick Lamar, or Beyoncé engage with themes of cultural identity, gender roles and resistance against dominant Western narratives. Albums such as *Like a prayer*, *Born this way* or *Lemonade* function as acts of reclamation, challenging historical erasures and social inequalities perpetuated by mainstream Western culture. Through their work, these artists protest against the *hauntological* presence of historical

struggles—segregation and systemic oppression—demonstrating how these histories continue to shape contemporary identity. In this sense, globalization and cultural imperialism are not linear progressions but cyclical hauntings in which past injustices resurface in modern forms, demanding recognition and resistance. The spectres of lost cultural identities, suppressed histories, and eroded traditions remain embedded within global pop culture, shaping the ways in which individuals and societies navigate the forces of cultural hegemony.

**Anti-Establishment and Anti-Corporate Sentiments.** Pop culture often critiques corporate and political power, revealing how these structures shape economic and social realities. Films like *Fight Club* (1999), *The Matrix* (1999), and *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) deconstruct capitalism, consumer culture, and societal conformity, while satirical series like *The Simpsons* and *South Park* challenge multinational corporations and global institutions through irony. From a hermeneutic perspective, these narratives function as interpretative acts, exposing hidden power structures. Gadamer and Ricoeur emphasize how understanding is shaped by historical and cultural contexts, making anti-establishment themes in pop culture forms of ideological critique. *Fight Club* questions consumer-driven identity, *The Matrix* explores ideological manipulation, and *The Wolf of Wall Street* ridicules financial excesses. Satirical shows subvert dominant narratives, reframing corporate and political influence through humour. In continuously reinterpreting power, pop culture becomes a space for resistance and ideological deconstruction.

**Identity Politics.** Debates on identity politics in Western Europe and the U.S. focus on race, gender, sexuality, and cultural background, shaping political views and social structures. Shows like *Pose*, *Orange Is the New Black*, and *RuPaul's Drag Race*, along with films like *Call Me by Your Name* and *Queer*, bring queer identity, intersectionality, and the struggle for rights into the mainstream, challenging traditional notions of belonging. In Europe, LGBTQIA+ rights remain uneven. While many EU countries recognize same-sex partnerships, nations like Romania still lack legal protections, highlighting cultural and political divides. The fight for equality extends beyond legal reform to confronting deep-rooted societal norms. From a hermeneutic perspective, identity politics is a dynamic process of self-definition shaped by historical and social contexts. This problem is also due to collective value judgements. Thinkers like Gadamer and Ricoeur argue that identity is continuously reinterpreted, making identity politics both a demand for recognition and a means of reshaping societal values.

## Conclusion

Globalization is often discussed through economic, political, and technological lenses, but its deeper cultural and philosophical implications are just as significant. A *hermeneutic* and *hauntological* perspective offers a different necessary way to approach the discourse on globalization, highlighting how the process of global interconnectedness isn't simply a linear progression forward, but also a return to historical and cultural spectres, reshaped and reinterpreted through modern filters. From a hermeneutic standpoint, globalization is not merely about the dissemination of ideas and goods across borders; it's a process of interpretation and understanding which is deeply influenced by our

historical contexts and pre-existing assumptions. Hermeneutics, rooted in thinkers like Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, stresses that our understanding of the world is shaped by tradition, language, and social practices. In the context of globalization, these elements are both challenged and reinforced. As global networks facilitate the rapid exchange of information, people and cultures are constantly reinterpreting each other, often through the lens of dominant narratives. In this way, globalization is both an opportunity for new forms of cultural exchange and an arena where certain ideologies and power structures are perpetuated.

The *hauntological* aspect of globalization adds an additional layer of complexity. In the context of globalization, this return is often evident in the way historical imperial structures, cultural hegemony, and colonial legacies continue to shape contemporary global relations. While globalization is often portrayed as a progressive force moving toward a unified world, a *hermeneutic-hauntological* approach reveals that, particularly in contemporary times, the opposite can occur due to the recurring *hauntological specters* of a nostalgic past rooted in former mythicized glories. For example, the spread of Western consumerism and neoliberal capitalism globally can be seen as a *hauntological* return of colonial dynamics, where once-colonized nations are now subjected to new forms of cultural and economic domination. This is not a direct reproduction of colonialism, but a transformation of its structures—one which persists in the form of multinational corporations, media conglomerates, and digital platforms which shape the global consciousness, often to the detriment of local cultures and traditions. The domination of Western ideologies in the global market, driven by consumer culture, also reveals a kitsch-like commodification of culture, where deeply rooted traditions are often reduced to consumable, sanitized representations which are easily exported and re-packaged for global consumption.

Thus, a philosophical approach which incorporates both hermeneutics and *hauntology* provides essential insights into the global process, urging us to critically reflect on both the progress and the regress embedded in globalization. By emphasizing the interplay between historical continuities and cultural reinterpretations, we are better equipped to understand not just the surface-level changes globalization brings, but also the deeper, often invisible forces at play, shaping our collective future based on the ghosts of our past. Considering the available evidence, theoretical frameworks, and conceptual analyses, it appears more plausible that the future will be characterized by a resurgence of oligarchic autocratic systems and the potential outbreak of a third world war, rather than the optimistic, technologically advanced futures envisioned in works such as *The Jetsons*.

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