

ON GHOSTS: THE ROLE OF HAUNTOLOGY IN BIE-MODERN THEORY

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A simultaneous coexistence of different social and aesthetics forms is one of the key tenets of Bie-Modern theoretical approach. But if the idea that premodern, modern, and postmodern forms find themselves within the same social and geographic setting is easily grasped, several crucial questions nevertheless remain. One of them, which is the subject of this presentation, is the following: How do the forms, social as well as aesthetic that should remain in the past, survive and still play their important roles in contemporary societies?

As some contemporary examples have shown, the answer to this question could significantly contribute to the understanding of some important present-day problems. In 2018, Yochai Benkler, Robert Faris and Hal Roberts published *Network Propaganda*, a comprehensive study of contemporary American political communication, which covered a period from 2015 to 2018. The authors pointed out that around this time “something fundamental was happening to threaten democracy,” and that this process was not limited only to the United States but has also appeared in other parts of the world, particularly in Europe. This situation, according to the authors, can be properly described as *epistemic crisis*, a collective incapacity to tell the truth from falsehood, or in other words, a lack of a shared set of statements about reality. As such, epistemic crisis does not only pose a serious difficulty on an individual level (not knowing the truth about reality and one’s position in it), but also indicates a global crisis in politics.

However, if *epistemic crisis* is defined as a collective incapacity to make sense of the world, a lack of a shared set of statements about reality, then this situation is hardly a new one. This is exactly what Fredric Jameson was writing about under the title of “cognitive mapping” in the context of postmodernism. The individual postmodern subject, now disconnected and fragmented, needs a suitable strategy to locate itself in a contemporary globalized world. The reason for this need, however, was placed in the context of postmodernism, which was seen as new aesthetic form, closely related to a new social form (late capitalism).

In the presentation we will use *hauntology*, a strategy, developed by Jacques Derrida, and try to apply it to the issue of postmodernism. In his works, but particularly in *Specters of Marx*, Derrida approaches past ideas or authors as ghosts (or specters) that are neither dead nor alive. In 1983, the German literary scholar Hans Robert Jauss wrote similarly about postmodernism: “A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of postmodernism.” Since postmodernism, as it turns out, has the status of a ghost, we will use hauntology in order to understand its uncanny presence within Bie-Modern situation.

