



Introduction

SARAH SURFACE-EVANS, A. E. GARRISON,
and KISHA SUPERNANT

Do you believe in ghosts?

What if we told you that you don't have to believe in ghosts to feel the impact of their haunting? That strange tingling down your spine that you feel when you pass the run-down ruins of a farm or factory is your body communicating to you. Haunting is a communication of something that is difficult to articulate. Haunting is an unspoken question that settles into our thinking and guides a seeking out of answers that might never come. Ghosts are the manifestation of something missing. Something indescribable. Something unseen, lingering in the shadows of everyday experience.

When ghosts present themselves, they are messengers of complicated stories that are often difficult to understand or to contemplate. Ghosts confront us with "truths" we may not wish to hear, which may be why we fear ghosts. The popularity of "ruin porn," ghost tours, ghost-hunting television shows, and references to ghosts in popular music and film speaks to our uneasy fascination with specters. Do we run from ghosts or do we listen to their stories? We invite you to join us as we travel through timescapes and visit ghosts, not as gawkers seeking a thrill, but approaching the spectral with the curiosity to learn what they have to teach us.

Social scientists, historians, and literary critics are increasingly turning to the concept of "haunting" as a way of acknowledging and attempting to describe what cannot be known but is felt and experienced nonetheless (Beisaw 2016; Bell 1997; Blanco 2012; González-Tennant 2016, 2018; Gordon 1997; Hill 2013; Hudson 2017; Miles 2015; Starzmann and Roby 2016; Surface-Evans and Jones, forthcoming). A growing body of theory is emerging to focus inquiry on dimensions beyond what is recognized as traditionally empirical, such as the entangled and interrelated concepts of memory, materiality, nostalgia, trauma, and haunting. However, we recognize that these are loosely woven concepts, whose connections require further stitching to create a picture

of haunting. The authors in this volume demonstrate that specters do have empirical grounding and can be examined as institutions and social systems. The material remains of the past can become crossroads of memory to be activated in the present. Yet each author engages with memory or nostalgia evoked by materiality of social institutions in separate, but interrelated ways. In order for ghosts to flow and “haunt” they need to be free to move and be defined by each author and each reader. This is because the ghostly apparitions of capitalism and colonialism make themselves felt in different ways. By telling their stories we invite you step into the past.

The research presented in this volume draws on archaeological, historical, sociological, and ethnographic data. It is grounded in science and evidence. We identify the materiality of memory within objects, people, and landscapes. We tell ghost stories that invite hauntings by the specters of the past in the present (Bechtold, Chapter 10; Van Wormer, Chapter 3). We are haunted in remembering what we have not seen but dreamed or imagined (Garrison, Chapter 8). The practice of remembering and looking for ghosts seeks to undo the dehumanizing elements of social structures and, at times, our own disciplines (Burt, Chapter 5; Supernant, Chapter 6). Why do we share this research as ghost stories? Ghosts transmit knowledge in surprising and unusual ways. They are a way to return to a narrative and literary tradition that is not part of modernity and scientific writing. They are a way of reaching across the material into depths that connect us to one another through time and space.

By embracing the ghostly or spectral we can compress time and experience a fourth dimension. We can time travel in our minds and with our emotions. Such imaginings are meaningful ways for us to engage with the people of the past in the present and future. This is what we mean by *blurring timescapes*. This volume is an attempt to go beyond the casual experience of place and time and to allow ourselves to become, albeit temporarily, possessed by the past that is imprinted on places or people, in bricks or stories, through souvenirs or songs. The authors invite us to move beyond our normal sensory experience or “affect” and connect to people (real or fictional) through empathetic imagining.

Affect is how we experience feeling and emotion. We suggest that haunting is a type of affect that transcends temporality. The difficulty comes in describing these feelings and identifying their source(s) (Gordon 1997). This volume is an experiment in searching for and describing specters, exposing those hidden and unseen pasts and presents that haunt. We manifest ghosts in the telling and identifying of specters, and that requires an approach that is different from typical scientific writing. While scientists who look to the past to understand present social conditions are often “haunted,” they seldom describe the affect of such realizations in academic writing (Beisaw, Chapter 1). Archaeology, in particular, is vulnerable to feelings of haunting, as our goal is to make sense of material culture from another time. We are not encouraged to present

our work in ways that would ask the audience to explore, with us, something that is difficult to explain (Burt, Chapter 5), even if that invitation could open a window through time in a powerful way.

This collection of research critically evaluates perceptions and interpretations of the past and their impacts on the present. The act of remembering is subversion. This is what we mean by *subverting erasure*. The authors in this volume ask, what happens when the memories of a place, people, and events are systematically erased, forgotten, and covered up? And how are the stories we tell shaped by nostalgia or ghosts we imagine within the practice of social science? The authors explore hidden narratives and examine the social mechanisms operating on and organizing what is remembered and what is lost to time (Bechtold, Chapter 10; Surface-Evans, Chapter 9). Others consider the material residues of remembering, how objects and their meaning transcend time and sometimes space (Begun, Chapter 2; Lawton, Chapter 4; Van Wormer, Chapter 3).

The authors in this volume demonstrate the value of conceiving of ghosts, not just as metaphors, but for making the past more concrete (Bechtold, Chapter 10; Surface-Evans, Chapter 9). We seek to *remember ghosts*, because they are often where the stories of everyday people are found, relegated to *the margins of history*. Confronting ghosts also allows us to exorcise the negative specters of colonialism, racism, gentrification, and capitalism (Burt, Chapter 5; Garrison, Chapter 8; Lawton, Chapter 4; Supernant, Chapter 6; Surface-Evans, Chapter 9). In other words, the telling of ghost stories can prevent the erasure of the very things that create ghosts. Many of the researchers in this volume take an activist stance: as we uncover the sources of ghosts, we are able to offer solutions to problems in the present (Brislen, Chapter 7; Lawton, Chapter 4; Surface-Evans, Chapter 9). The sharing of ghost stories accesses the power of imagination and compassion.

This volume also is an experiment in vulnerability, as much as it is an empirically driven affect study. Each story shared in this volume is connected to its author in deeply personal ways. Science removes the scientist, in most cases, from the results of their work. This volume calls on the authors to speak their hauntings through their research, requiring their presence as ghosts in the tellings themselves (Garrison, Chapter 8; Supernant, Chapter 6; Surface-Evans, Chapter 9). From this perspective, haunting is a type of experience and theoretical framing that brings us closer to understanding and empathizing with people, past and present. Telling these ghostly stories also helps us problematize the atemporality of our disciplines, in that stories about haunting are nonlinear, unlike typical scientific narratives. The ability to empathize with our fellow human beings is increasingly important in a world marked by fear and violence (Johnson 1997), because it helps to open the doors of understanding and mutual respect. Empathy also helps us visualize the patterns in history and,

in some circumstances, the patterns of exploitation present within social institutions. In these ways, ghost stories help us acknowledge the forgotten from our pasts, recognize the paths others have walked, and show us ways toward a future where those silenced by power might have more space to speak their own truths.

The volume is organized into three overlapping themes: imagining timescapes, confronting lingering specters, and identifying ghosts within the capitalist landscapes of late modernity. Engaging across time, space, and discipline, the authors in these sections explore haunting from a broad perspective, bringing new understandings of haunting into the social sciences to conceptualize how the past haunts the present and the future.

Imagining Timescapes: Invoking Haunting, Memory, and Nostalgia

How easily time seems to slip away when we're in it. How quickly it seems we forget what we are supposed to remember. Or, we can just as easily remember what never was—conjuring the past from a photo in the right light and company. People experience *meaning*, some of it shared and some of it unfamiliar to them, but nonetheless we assign meaning to past events and the objects tied to those events. People sort through piles of knickknacks at a flea market or leave in their closets, basements, and attics the objects inherited from prior generations. We experience time, from day to day, in many directions, and our experiences with time are subject to a variety of different social realities. Through our equally varied cultures, we experience the past alongside and *in* our presents, existing as stories and material objects from times not our own. After all, when the stories fall silent finally, all that remains are the objects and places that mattered enough that the keepsakes remain. Memories are imperfect, and our remembrances of the past may be clouded by the seduction of nostalgia. These are tricky remembering—hazy memories filled in with what might or not be true—filled in by these same beguiling imaginings that would change our visions. The meaning of events and objects may change from person to person and over time, building in the stories of times, places, and the ghosts that would bring it all together.

The chapters in this section animate the strands of time and space that stretch between human communities, allowing the reader to see the blending together of layers that form the connections we share. We share these connections through objects of meaning that house our memories: pictures, letters, even kitchen appliances. We share these connections in the objects we keep—from a journey, an adventure, an extraordinary experience that might never happen again. Our attachment to the objects and items associated with those moments bring eternal life to memories and people.

In Chapter 1, the reader will meander across the Vassar College campus in the mysterious midnight of upstate New York, with April M. Beisaw spooking at the corners where history tells us, *Someone lingers here*. Vassar only serves as the center of the conjuring, however; as its affects and magic spread out in many directions, Beisaw delights in the spaces between what we see and what we feel on the backs of our necks. At the same time, the crossing over between these ambiguous dimensional cusps creates a bind that holds our stories of others—and therefore, stories of us—together.

Erica Begun asks us to open our visions in other ways in her chapter, “Material Memories: Interpreting Souvenirs and Heirlooms in the Archaeological Record” (Chapter 2). The sometimes intentional, sometimes accidental sharing of material objects spins gossamer strands between the Teotihuacan and Michoacán people. Begun parallels her own social and cultural experiences with family heirlooms as a strand woven into the narrative of a human experience of attachment to objects that matter, however they matter, to those of us making their meaning.

In Chapter 3, Heather M. Van Wormer asks us to linger slightly longer in the doorway, imagining what revelry, heartbreak, and threads of passionate devotion create in the emptiness that deceives. She explores the City of David, a once thriving community in southeast Michigan, home to believers whose lives would take them in unexpected directions. And yet, even as the lives of those she narrates diverge, they remain “at home” in this haunted space, their places at the table kept warm for their return. It is in this chapter that the closeness of family is revealed as a haunting, that the ways in which we *believe* our truths to manifest create dimensions for our forever and the eternities of those we love. The strands of Van Wormer’s narrative hold together the lasting connections, unseen, regardless of any one person’s faith or devotion, between those that walk the earth of material reality, and those that remain in the shadows—but remain, nonetheless.

Confronting Lingered Specters

We are haunted by our own disciplinary past—its misdeeds and colonialist foundations. We cannot hope to expose the specters of wider social systems without confronting our own skeletons in the closet. The chapters in Part II of this volume focus on the ghosts of the disciplines of archaeology and biological anthropology, including the erasure of the past in Saginaw Valley, Michigan (Lawton, Chapter 4), the lingering specters of race in museum education (Burt, Chapter 5), and how erasures of personal and professional histories can have profound impacts on understandings of Indigenous identity (Supernant, Chapter 6). In each case, erasure is resisted through haunting, where the ghosts

refuse to be forgotten and insert themselves, sometimes forcefully, into the present.

P. M. W. Lawton, in Chapter 4, invites the reader to consider haunted ruralscapes, where erasure of deep Indigenous histories is accomplished through agricultural practice and settler colonialism. The demands of farming require removal of sacred places, such as Chisin or “Big Rock” near Chesaning, where a large limestone boulder was destroyed by early settlers for its material value. Tying into themes of Part III, Lawton explores the role that an ethic of consumption plays in the Saginaw Valley today, where rural farmers, feeling deeply threatened by the ghosts of the past and the uncertainty of the future, resist the actions of a large corporation to seize part of their lands for development.

Museums are deeply haunted places, a premise on which Nicole M. Burt founds her discussion of public education in biological anthropology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Although her own training taught her about racist and sexist biases pervading early physical anthropology, the publics served by the museum are not haunted in the same way as practitioners. Museums curate and display specimens often acquired through questionable ethical practice, but museums that ignore or gloss over past ethical wrongdoings diminish their ability to haunt the visitors as productive teaching tools. Providing examples of her own interactions with various public audiences in Cleveland, Burt calls on museum practitioners to develop strong pedagogical tools to engage the public and expand their worldview, so they too can be haunted.

The final chapter in this section is a tale of personal haunting and professional practice. Beginning with a ghost story, Kisha Supernant takes the reader on a journey through her development as an archaeologist, weaving together a personal narrative of discovering her own ancestors and relatives and her move from being haunted by her own past with one of actively haunting the present and future. Using a case study of the Métis Nation in Canada, a postcontact Indigenous community of which she is a part, Supernant demonstrates how the nation-state of Canada sought to erase the Métis from the present. This attempted erasure led to misrepresentations of the Métis as merely mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Supernant uses a Métis framework to explore the Métis archaeological record, allowing a Métis past to haunt the present and the future of Canada.

Identifying Ghosts within the Capitalist Landscapes of Late Modernity

The last four chapters in this volume show us how the past, present, and future are knitted together through experiences of loss, trauma, and injustice brought about by capitalism. While all the chapters in this volume “blur timescapes,”

those in Part III demonstrate the damage caused by ignoring traumas of the past. The voices of ghosts speak to us through those who remain—whether they choose to acknowledge the ghostly presence or not. Many traumas are a result of the social structures embedded in capitalistic enterprise. The “bones” (Garrison, Chapter 8) and bricks (Bechtold, Chapter 10) of capitalism can be found exposed in shallow graves across both urban and rural spaces (Brislen, Chapter 7).

In Chapter 7, Lilian Brislen helps us feel the harmful consequences of running from ghosts: in particular, the past trauma caused by the US farm crisis of the 1980s. She describes the historical contexts of the events leading to the crisis and how the aftereffects leave specters across rural America. Through the analysis of popular music during and after the crisis, she shows how forgetting endangers farmers’ identities and future success as it perpetuates a harmful “capitalist fantasy” that is impossible to fulfill. She suggests that healing is to be found not in attempting to escape ghosts but in finding peace in living with them—and, in the process, better understanding ourselves.

A. E. Garrison conjures the ghosts of the recent, industrial past of Lansing, Michigan, in Chapter 8. Her visitation to the realm of memory, what was or may have been, is informed by documents, photos, and imagination. She envisions a past filled with the emotions and movement of everyday people and helps us visualize the web of connections linking past to present. She shows us how the whims of institutions controlled by the powerful and moneyed class continue to mold and affect society today. She points out the variability in human experience: how racism and classism determine who was included, who is remembered, and what is “preserved.” The slow deterioration of place is a form of trauma that is barely perceptible on a conscious level.

Sarah Surface-Evans is haunted by the ways gentrification has transformed her community. As an archaeologist who studies material culture, she cannot help but notice how the erasure of the material touchstones of community memory and identity through gentrification is a form of trauma. In Chapter 9, she argues that traumascapes of structural violence are created whenever memories are contested and subverted by the powerful. Justified in their actions to create “progress” and remove “blight,” city governments are complicit in the creation of urban traumascapes. Trauma lingers in places and passes through generations, causing disorientation of memory. Surface-Evans discusses how archaeologists have the tools to help communities affected by gentrification and calls for archaeological activism to heal the wounds of traumascapes.

Brigitte H. Bechtold manifests ghosts through the medium of brickwork in Chapter 10. Sharing her personal experiences with brickwork throughout her life and in many working-class communities in Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States, she shows us the connections of past and present lives built into our cityscapes. She helps us explore different experiences

of timescapes, too, distinguishing between chronological time, social time, and capitalist time. Bechtold also considers what is lost when capitalist time takes precedence and brickwork is valued by its profitability rather than by its ability to store the narratives that are part of the intellectual commons of communities. Modern forms of community social action, such as “buildering” and “yarn bombing,” have the potential to create a space for resistance to the erosion of community memory and to subvert the power of capitalist time.

An Invitation

As you read through the chapters in this volume, we invite you to be haunted, to allow yourself to notice the prickle that raises hairs at the back of your neck. Haunting is a powerful way to move through time-space, compressing human experience through the affect of specters. Haunting invites remembrance of things, places, peoples, and times that would otherwise be forgotten. Let us remember together, to bring the past into the present and into new imagined futures.

Take my hand and follow me into the dark unknown.

Dr. Sarah Surface-Evans is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Central Michigan University. Her community-based archaeological research investigates cultural landscapes in the Great Lakes region of the United States. Her recent publication “A Landscape of Assimilation and Resistance: The Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School” in the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* examines the gendered and powered components of institutional design at Federal Indian Boarding Schools. This ongoing research was recognized for a Michigan Governor’s Award for Historic Preservation in 2016. She has a forthcoming publication that utilizes “haunting” as a way conceptualize the trauma of colonial landscapes.

Dr. A. E. Garrison is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Central Michigan University. She earned her doctorate in Rural Sociology from the University of Missouri in 2011. Her work focuses on the development of graphic sociological methodology for scholarship and pedagogy. Her graphic work includes “Ghosts of Infertility: Haunted by Realities of Reproductive Death” (2016). Garrison’s research interests also include social consequences resulting from urban planning policies, impacting urban infrastructure in Rust Belt cities. Her work in this subject area includes “Boneyards of the *Sortatropolis*: Exploring a City of Industrial Secrets – Lansing, Michigan (Part 1)” (2017).

Dr. Kisha Supernant is Métis and Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Director of the Institute of Prairie and Indigenous Archaeology at the University of Alberta. She is the Director of the Exploring Métis Identity Through Archaeology (EMITA) Project and has published widely in national and international journals, including *PNAS*, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, and the *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* and is co-editing a forthcoming book entitled *Archaeologies of the Heart*. An award-winning researcher, teacher, and writer, she is actively involved in research on cultural identities, landscapes, collaborative Indigenous archaeology, Métis archaeology, and heart-centered archaeological practice.

References

- Beisaw, April. 2016. "Ghost Hunting as Archaeology: Archaeology as Ghost Hunting." In *Lost City, Found Pyramid: Understanding Alternative Archaeologies and Pseudoscientific Practices*, ed. Jeb J. Card and David S. Anderson, 185–198. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Bell, Michael Mayerfeld. 1997. "The Ghosts of Place." *Theory and Society* 26(6): 813–836.
- Blanco, Maria del Pilar. 2012. *Ghost-Watching American Modernity: Haunting, Landscape, and the Hemispheric Imagination*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- González-Tennant, Edward. 2016. "Hate Sits in Places: Folk Knowledge and the Power of Place in Rosewood, Florida." In *Excavating Memory: Material Culture Approaches to Sites of Remembering and Forgetting*, ed. Maria T. Starzmann and John R. Roby, 218–241. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- . 2018. *The Rosewood Massacre: An Archaeology and History of Intersectional Violence*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Gordon, Avery F. 1997. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hill, Lisa. 2013. "Archaeologies and Geographies of the Post-Industrial Past: Landscape Memory, and the Spectral." *Cultural Geographies* 20(3): 379–396.
- Hudson, Martyn. 2017. *Ghosts, Landscapes, and Social Memory*. New York: Routledge.
- Miles, Tiya. 2015. *Tales from the Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories of Slavery from the Civil War Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Johnson, Barbara Rose, ed. 1997. *Life and Death Matters: Human Rights and the Environment at the End of the Millennium*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Starzmann, Maria Theresia, and John H. Roby, eds. 2016. *Excavating Memory: Sites of Remembering and Forgetting*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Surface-Evans, Sarah, and Sarah J. Jones. Forthcoming. "Discourses of the Haunted: An Intersubjective Approach to Archaeology at the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School." In special issue, *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association*, ed. Tiffany Cain and Teresa Raczek.