

their writing. While many of the nutritional claims in the book have been popularized elsewhere, even in general newsstand magazines (e.g., cranberries help prevent and treat urinary tract infections), others come across as startling and, at times, illuminating. Who knew, for example, that raisins prevent cavities or that a single stalk of broccoli has the same amount of vitamin C as two pounds of oranges, along with thirty “cancer-fighting compounds”?

Despite these trivia treats throughout the book (e.g., the pasta *vermicelli* means “little worms”), several shortcomings of the work as a whole mar one’s appreciation of its finer moments. One problem is the over-reliance on long block quotes for material that seems tangential—Cato’s detailed instructions on how to grow asparagus and two long paragraphs from Washington Irving on the watermelon arriving in Hawaii. Any serious scholar, too, must raise some eyebrows over the citation of sources. While each section ends with a “further reading” list of material, there is no in-text citation and attribution at times comes across as much too casual. Information on the health properties of chiles is obtained from a “Mexican cowboy” that McNamee knows, and the prevention of oral bacteria from honey is supported only by one University of Illinois study. The language also presents itself as too uneven—very scientific and technical in some places and almost sophomoric in others (e.g., asking if the Roman emperor “got his jollies” from eating carrots or telling readers that his favorite salsa is “Bad Girls in Heat”). Readers could find any of these negative “surprises” off-putting, but dedicated “foodies” will happily meander through the pages, delighted to learn odd food history facts like canola oil, once called rapeseed oil and renamed for marketing purposes, was derived from broccoli, and the lunacy of Henry Ford’s twelve-course banquet for businessmen that consisted of nothing but carrots!

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The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts. Owen Davies. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

While ghosts and haunting have become major keywords in contemporary cultural studies, there has for some time been a pressing

need for a general historical survey of ghosts and ghost-seeing that travels beyond the well-furrowed ground of the early modern period and yet also maintains the high degree of scholarship that characterizes the many recent social histories of witchcraft, angelology, and popular belief in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On both counts Owen Davies's *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts* admirably succeeds. Making use of an impressive range of sources from local folklore to urban court proceedings, this is a history of ghosts in England from fifteen hundred rooted in the popular representations of the spectral world.

The great antiquarian Francis Grose, who is frequently cited in Davies's study, remarked in his *A Provincial Glossary* (1787): "Dragging chains is not the fashion of English Ghosts; chains and black vestments being chiefly the accoutrements of foreign spectres, seen in arbitrary governments: dead or alive, English spirits are free." Observations like this, at once parochial and ideological, reinforce Davies's working thesis that England was, and is, a peculiarly "ghost-ridden nation" (1). Wisely adopting a thematic approach to the matter, Davies deals with a satisfyingly wide range of topics from the geography of haunting to the logic of the phantasmagoria. Yet of most interest for the student of popular culture, as much as for the scoffing sceptic, will be Davies's examinations of the obvious conundrums of the spectral world, from the question of why ghosts wore clothes to the tricky problem of how a ghost could have a voice. Such low-brow riddles have been neglected in most accounts, but were nonetheless crucial in how ghost-seers actively made sense of what they experienced. In a particularly insightful chapter entitled "Imitating the Dead" Davies shows how the figure of the ghost played a central role in the material matters of crime, domestic politics, and property disputes in everyday English life. One example of the less than spiritual motives behind ghost-seeing involved a late-seventeenth-century highwayman who, after being employed by an elderly gentleman to rid his house of a ghost, "required the old man to be blindfolded and lie down silently in a circle drawn on the floor. Meanwhile Wilmont went upstairs and made love to the man's wife who was party to the whole fraud" (180).

Despite his use of rich primary sources grounded in popular culture, Davies's decision to avoid the narratives collected by the Society for Psychical Research in the late-Victorian period is slightly problematic. Davies justifies this by noting that the narratives of middle-class ghost-

seers, “tell us little about the experiences, beliefs and legends of the rural and urban working classes, in other words the majority of the population” (9). This is no doubt true, but it does not discount the fact that the “purposeless,” or “psychical” type of ghosts that predominate in middle class accounts emerged as part of a network that streamlined the discursive thrusts of experimental psychology, psychoanalysis, and modernist ghost fiction. This network is crucial in understanding how modernity emerged as a bourgeois, spectacular, and haunted project. In this sense the psychical variety of ghost-seeing exerted a huge influence on popular culture and, given the cultural prevalence of the concept of telepathy, guided the reception and transmission of the new tele-technologies among all classes. When a great many of the most prominent psychical researchers and scientists of nineteenth-century England bypassed oral culture, folklore, and working-class claims about the supernatural in general, such a situation should be explained, or at least noted alongside any reconstruction of popular beliefs and meanings. Given Davies’s observation in the conclusion that ghost-belief seems to be strongest among the poor *and* the upper middle class, a more holistic approach to sources would have benefited a study of such authority.

Yet these are minor quibbles and will not diminish Davies’s achievement in extrapolating and synthesizing many of the cultural shifts and debates that have molded the modern encounter between the living and the dead. In an illuminating manner *The Haunted* examines the ghost-seer as much as the ghost, the haunted as much as the haunters, and will therefore encourage researchers to give the story of the ghost another turn of the screw.

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Clinging to Mammy: The Faithful Slave in Twentieth-Century America. Micki McElya. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

In a stirring deconstruction of twentieth-century racial ideology, Micki McElya problematizes the “mammy” myth, illustrating the pivotal role that black maternal iconography has played in extensions

The Haunted is not a traditional or linear history. Davies looks at trends spanning several centuries, from the Reformation to the present day. By exploring these trends, he hopes to explain how and why England has become so "haunted." Debates over ghost belief reveal much about England's social and intellectual history. Davies makes a compelling argument that being haunted by the dead is part of the human condition, at least for a significant portion of the population, as all attempts to eradicate ghost belief over the past 500 years have failed. Three Famous Historical Ghosts. One of the most frequently reported ghost sightings in England dates back to the 16th century. Anne Boleyn, the second wife of King Henry VIII and mother of Queen Elizabeth I, was executed at the Tower of London in May 1536 after being accused of witchcraft, treason, incest and adultery. The author Mark Twain is believed to haunt the stairwell of his onetime Village apartment building, while the ghost of poet Dylan Thomas is said to sometimes occupy his usual corner table at the West Village's White Horse Tavern, where he drank a fatal 18 shots of scotch in 1953. Perhaps the most famous New York ghost is that of Aaron Burr, who served as vice president under Thomas Jefferson but is best known for killing Alexander Hamilton in a duel in 1804. This book examines the social history of ghosts from the medieval period to the present. Belief in them has been manipulated for political and religious purposes, generated social panics and scandals, been a perennial source of literary inspiration and learned investigation. Underpinning Davies' approach is the awareness that for all the intellectual and scientific advances of the last five centuries the belief in ghosts continues to be vibrant and socially relevant. Understanding the history of ghosts helps explain why we continue to feel haunted by the people of the past. Categories: History...