

# GOTHIC NATURE



---

## GOTHIC NATURE II

**How to Cite:** Tidwell, C. (2021) The Ecohorror of Omission: Haunted Suburbs and the Forgotten Trees of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. *Gothic Nature*. 2, pp. 84-109. Available from: <https://gothicnaturejournal.com/>.

**Published:** March 2021

---

### Peer Review:

All articles that appear in the *Gothic Nature* journal have been peer reviewed through a fully anonymised process.

### Copyright:

© 2021 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

### Open Access:

*Gothic Nature* is a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

**COVER CREDIT:**

*Model IV*, 2017

Artist: D Rosen

Cast Aluminum (Original Objects: Buck Antler and Stomach (Decorative Model), Camel Mask

(Theatrical Model), Whip (Didactic Model), Stiletto (Decoy Model), Goose Neck (Decoy Model),

Nylons, Bra Underwire, Calvin Klein Dress, Facial Mask, Necklace, Wax

21 x 25 x 12 in.

Photo credit: Jordan K. Fuller

Fabrication: Chicago Crucible

**WEB DESIGNER:**

Michael Belcher

**The Ecohorror of Omission:  
Haunted Suburbs and the Forgotten Trees of *A Nightmare on Elm Street***

*Christy Tidwell*

**ABSTRACT**

Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) is not typically considered an ecohorror film, despite the title's focus on elm trees. To be fair, trees do not feature prominently in the film, much of which takes place indoors and underground. However, the title resonates with two environmental issues: Dutch elm disease (DED) and deforestation. By the 1980s, more than 77 million elms had died from DED, and Elm Street, 'one of America's most storied and archetypal places' (Campanella, 2003: p. 1), no longer featured elm trees. America's archetypal Elm Street was also built on the mass destruction of the continent's forests. This context provides a way to read the film as ecohorror. This is ecohorror grounded in human-created suburban nature and the loss of wild nature. It illustrates Bernice M. Murphy's *Suburban Gothic* (2009), addressing the social constructs of suburbia and the family, but it shows how these social constructs are entwined with a desire for control of nature. *Nightmare* is haunted not just by Freddy Krueger but by trees, raising the spectre of the American elm (itself a ghost of virgin forests) while suppressing the knowledge of this loss. Ultimately, the gap between the title of the film and the ecological reality of the time points to an expansion of ecohorror. Stephen A. Rust and Carter Soles (2014) argue that ecohorror 'assumes that environmental disruption is haunting humanity's relationship to the non-human world' (p. 510); this film goes even further, showing—in its failure to acknowledge the absence of the elms and the forests—how *silence* about environmental disruption haunts humanity's relationship to the nonhuman world and produces an ecohorror of omission.

‘Do you believe in the boogeyman?’

—Nancy, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*

‘Being haunted draws us affectively, sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition.’

—Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (1997: p. 8)

Wes Craven’s *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) is a horror classic and has had a huge impact on popular culture, both at the time of its release<sup>1</sup> and decades later. Freddy Krueger is still a recognisable slasher killer, and the movie and its premise (teenagers are being murdered in their dreams!) are referenced often.<sup>2</sup> Most mentions of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* have focused on the *nightmare* part and on Freddy Krueger as a villain and have not focused on the *Elm Street* part or on *elms* themselves. Similarly, the film has not typically been classified as ecohorror or included in discussions of the subgenre. However, when read in the context of relevant environmental history—specifically the histories of Dutch elm disease (DED) and deforestation—*A Nightmare on Elm Street* opens to an ecohorror interpretation; more broadly, this approach to a film that does not immediately declare itself to be ecohorror (and that even resists such an interpretation) points to an expansion of possibilities for ecohorror.

---

<sup>1</sup> Financial success is not the same as cultural impact, but *A Nightmare on Elm Street* did bring in a great deal of money, undoubtedly prompting the many, many sequels to come. The movie’s budget was approximately \$1.8 million, and it made 70% (\$1,271,000) of that back on opening weekend and ultimately grossed over \$25 million (Internet Movie Database, n.d.).

<sup>2</sup> It has been referenced across multiple media and forms: in music—‘A Nightmare on My Street’ by DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince (1988), ‘The Night Santa Went Crazy’ by Weird Al Yankovic (1996), and ‘Underground’ by Eminem (2009); in film—*Scream* (dir. Wes Craven, 1996), *It* (dir. Andy Muschietti, 2017), and *Ready Player One* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 2018); in television—*The Simpsons* (1989-), *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* (1990-1996), *South Park* (1997-), *Family Guy* (1999-), *Everybody Hates Chris* (2005-2009), *Robot Chicken* (2005-), and *Rick and Morty* (2013-); in video games—*Call of Duty: Black Ops* (2010), *Mortal Kombat 9* (2011), *Terrordrome: Rise of the Boogeyman* (2015), and *Dead by Daylight* (2016); and in fiction—R. L. Stine’s *A Nightmare on Clown Street* (2015) (Elm Street Wiki, n.d.). This list, though not exhaustive, illustrates the range of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*’s influence and its consistent presence in popular culture, starting in the 1980s and continuing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The tendency to read *A Nightmare on Elm Street* as something other than ecohorror is reasonable. Trees are not, after all, central to the plot of the film. Although there may be a few elms present in the film, they are not prominent and there are at least as many visible palm trees as elms (it was filmed in California even though it is set in Ohio). In fact, much of the film takes place indoors and underground, with some of the most iconic scenes occurring in bedrooms and basements. The opening scene is set in the basement boiler room where Freddy (Robert Englund) made his finger-knives; the murders all take place indoors—bedrooms, mostly, but also a jail cell and one attempt in a bathroom; and during one central nightmare Nancy (Heather Langenkamp) has at school, she stays inside the building, moving through enclosed hallways and stairwells to descend to the basement. Furthermore, the street name—Elm Street—is never mentioned during the movie, indicating clearly that Elm Street is a concept more than a place and that, therefore, the trees themselves are not actually required.

While elms are also not mentioned by name in the film, trees and plants (or parts of them) are occasionally present, and their appearances create associations between themselves and sinister or monstrous figures. These associations reflect Dawn Keetley's (2006) concept of plant horror, which she has defined as a kind of horror that 'marks humans' dread of the "wildness" of vegetal nature—its untameability, its pointless excess, its uncontrollable growth' (p. 6). In plant horror narratives, plants 'embody an inscrutable silence, an implacable strangeness, which human culture has, from the beginning, set out to tame' (p. 1); they 'lurk in our blindspot' (p. 10), 'menace with their wild, purposeless growth' (p. 13), and 'will get their revenge' (p. 19). Given this tendency to read plants as menacing and strange, the visual connections created between trees and villains in the film are significant. In *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, Nancy is surveilled by a man in a suit and sunglasses who stands under a tree (notably, it appears to be an elm tree), leaning in such a way that the man and the tree share a similar silhouette, which visually links them.<sup>3</sup> There are also moments when Freddy Krueger himself leaps out of bushes or leans out from behind a narrow tree to grab or threaten Nancy. The unlikelihood of his successfully hiding in these places aligns him

---

<sup>3</sup> When she turns again, only the tree remains, retaining some of that sense of threat even though the man is gone. It turns out that he is a spy for her father and the police. He is therefore an instrument of paternal and societal control over Nancy, standing next to a tree that is the result of human control over nature. This underscores my argument in the next section about the role of control in the film and the way it parallels the history of humans' attempted control of elm trees.

even more closely with the plants than it would otherwise, almost like he is a part of the vegetation that has emerged to attack Nancy (lurking in her blindspot and waiting for revenge, just as plants do in Keetley's analysis).<sup>4</sup> These connections between threatening human figures and plants in the film illustrate—albeit briefly—Keetley's argument that plants horrify with their uncontrollability, even if their presence here represents more of a disappearance than an invasion.<sup>5</sup>

These moments are not the primary source of the film's ecohorror, however, which is located instead in the films' resonance with two specific environmental issues: first, the twentieth-century devastation of elm populations across the U.S. by Dutch elm disease and, second, the massive deforestation of the continent that both preceded and accompanied suburbanisation. The film uses the name Elm Street because elms had been so central to the U.S.' westward expansion and the image of home many Americans held dear. As people moved from the east coast—where elm trees were native—across Ohio and the Plains and to the west coast, they brought elms with them. Thomas Campanella (2003) writes, 'The trees were set out to shade tender homesteads on the treeless plains, or simply to serve as a keepsake of a life and landscape left behind. The range of the American elm slowly expanded until it spanned the continent' (p. 1). As a result, by 1937, more than 25 million elm trees had been planted across the U.S., including as far as California (Campanella, 2003: p. 1). This version—or vision—of Elm Street did not last, however. Dutch elm disease, a fungal disease spread by three species of elm bark beetles and first identified in the U.S. in the 1930s, spread across the continent and reshaped the nation's forests and suburbs. As David Beaulieu (2018) writes, 'Once upon a time in America, great leafy high-arching cathedral of elms lined the streets of villages and cities from the Atlantic to the Rockies, casting a deep cool shade upon life's turmoil'. But by the 1980s more than 77 million elm trees had died from the disease. The trees that, according to Thomas Campanella (2003), 'defined one of America's most storied and archetypal places—Elm Street' (p. 1), were largely gone by the time *A Nightmare on Elm Street* was released. Moreover, this 'great leafy high-arching cathedral of elms' was itself built on the destruction of many, many more trees over decades of development.

---

<sup>4</sup> Plants giving villains a place to hide is not unique to *A Nightmare on Elm Street* but seems to be a feature of slashers more broadly. For instance, Michael Myers hides behind bushes in *Halloween* and Jason Voorhees hides behind trees in *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>*, in addition to killing people against them. Thanks to Laura R. Kremmel for this insight.

<sup>5</sup> See Natania Meecker and Antónia Szabari in *Radical Botany: Plants and Speculative Fiction* (2020) for an analysis of plant horror via *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

This context provides an entry point to an ecohorror interpretation of the film. Ecohorror is most obviously illustrated by Nature-strikes-back narratives like *The Birds* (1963) or *Jaws* (1975), as well as some plant horror, like *The Happening* (2008). But ecohorror extends well beyond this. Rust and Soles (2014) argue, '[a] more expansive definition of ecohorror [...] includes analyses of texts in which humans do horrific things to the natural world, or in which horrific texts and tropes are used to promote ecological awareness, represent ecological crises, or blur human/non-human distinctions more broadly' (pp. 509-10). Given this, ecohorror also includes narratives that do not spotlight attacking creatures or threatening Nature but might instead provoke sympathy for nonhuman animals and the natural world or undermine human beings' sense of separation from the natural world. Fundamentally, Rust and Soles argue, ecohorror 'assumes that environmental disruption is haunting humanity's relationship to the non-human world' (p. 510). Given the history of the elm and Dutch elm disease, as well as the longer history of deforestation, the gap between the title's emphasis on elms and the absence of attention to elm trees in the film is meaningful. Avery F. Gordon (1997) writes that '[a] haunted society is full of ghosts, and the ghost always carries the message [...] that the gap between personal and social, public and private, objective and subjective is misleading in the first place' (p. 98). The trees (elms and otherwise) of *Nightmare on Elm Street* are ghosts in this sense, challenging distinctions between past and present, safety and danger, dream and reality. They haunt the viewer through their absence, and the film's silence about environmental disruption illustrates a type of ecohorror not addressed in Rust and Soles' definition: an ecohorror of omission.

### **The History of Elm Street: Domestication and Disease**

Both the horror and the ecohorror of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* are rooted in attempts at control. Specifically, the film's nightmares and murders grow out of—and worsen as a result of—well-meaning parental control while the real-world expansion and then near-extinction of elms that shape Elm Street itself are caused by human attempts to manage and manipulate the natural world. These two types of control work together and are both ultimately challenged within the film, indicating that these human desires to control others and control the natural world are themselves (eco)horrific.

The social world of the film is about control at virtually every level: parents try to control their children, the law tries to control criminality, school tries to control students' movement, the teenagers try to control their own lives and dreams. Many of these forms of control are typically accepted as normal and acceptable. For instance, when Nancy tries to call her boyfriend Glen (Johnny Depp) to warn him about Freddy, Glen's father (Ed Call) refuses to let her speak to him, saying that Glen needs his sleep, and then takes the phone off the hook. He tells his wife, 'You just gotta be firm with these kids'. And Nancy's father (John Saxon), a police officer, helps capture and arrest Rod (Jsu Garcia, credited as Nick Corri) for Tina's murder—after all, he was the only one in the room when she died. Fathers protect their children, and police officers maintain order. These are widely accepted roles in U.S. culture, perhaps particularly in suburbia.

But the unusual (and supernatural) circumstances here call these normal assumptions into question.<sup>6</sup> Glen's father's authoritarian parenting and firmness gets Glen killed, and Rod dies in his jail cell because the police will not let Nancy and Glen in to check on him. In this context, it no longer makes sense to assert parental authority and uphold the rules, and these efforts to control simply lead to more death. Gary Heba (1995) addresses this power dynamic by observing that '[t]he greatest number of tensions occur in the *Nightmare* series because of the dominant culture's coding of parent and child in a family. The traditional family of authoritative parents and subordinate children is a microcosm of the power structures evident in all institutions of the dominant culture' (p. 113). However, this structure is challenged when '[a]lcoholism, neglect, abuse, and sexual molestation are all woven into the family tapestry of the *Nightmare* movies, such that most of the parents become "monsters" along with Freddy' (p. 113), leading the films to 'code the dominant culture itself as a source of horror' (p. 108). In other words, it is not just Freddy Krueger—nightmare murderer—that is monstrous; it is all of these normally acceptable attempts at control.

---

<sup>6</sup> This reiterates a pattern from 1950s horror: 'horror texts of the period used aliens [or monsters] as an image of difference through which they investigated, problematised and even rejected the notions of "normality" prevalent in 1950s America,' and such figures were 'used to criticize [...] conformity' (Jancovich, 1996, p. 82). Even decades later, *Nightmare* indicates that the suburbs remain invested in mid-century ideals of family and social structure.



This critique of social and parental authority emerges most fully in the events that lead to Freddy Krueger's dream-murders. As Nancy's mother Marge (Ronee Blakley) tells it, Fred Krueger was a 'filthy child murderer' who killed at least 20 kids in the neighborhood. However, his capture by the police did not solve the problem. There was an error in the paperwork, and he was set free. Because the first attempt to stop him failed (the police were not able to maintain order and protect the children), neighborhood parents took action themselves:

'A bunch of us parents tracked him down after they let him out... We took gasoline... We poured it all around the place and made a trail of it out the door, then lit the whole thing up and watched it burn. But he can't get you now. He's dead, honey, because Mommy killed him'.

This all occurs before the action of the film, however, and Freddy Krueger still haunts their children, making it clear that this parental exertion of power on behalf of the children has also failed. In fact, it has just wrought more violence. As Kendrick (2009) argues, 'Marge's violence has not solved the problem by killing the monster, but instead made it worse. She has sunk into an alcoholic stupor to blunt the pain of her transgressions, and Freddy now has more power than ever to traumatise the children of Elm Street' (p. 30).

The history of elm trees in the U.S. is also centrally about control, illustrated first through elms' spread and then through their destruction. As previously noted, elms were planted as settlers moved west across what became the United States. Campanella (2003) writes, 'The [elm] tree was a token of the native forest that yielded to domestication with grace and dignity, a fragment of wild nature planted curbside from coast to coast' (p. 1). Elms therefore transported to the West something of settlers' 'native forest' and home as well as representing civilised life. They were a very real way to control and domesticate new frontiers, to make them manageable and less foreign. As Eric Rutkow (2012) notes,

'Almost anywhere that a settler planted an American elm, the tree seemed to thrive. This was part of its charm—it was among the hardiest of species. Drought, salt, ice, mild flooding, heavy foot traffic, inconsiderate horses, none of it seemed to trouble

the unflappable trees. Elms also endured air pollution, including the particulate matter that coal-burning factories were generating in ever-rising quantities' (pp. 220-1).

This domestication was part of a larger process of nation-building and exclusion. The elm gained popularity during the 1840s, which 'owed a further debt to a new, fervent nationalism that was sweeping through Jacksonian America. Native trees were in vogue. Foreign trees, like the previously favored Lombardy poplar and Chinese ailanthus, were out' (Rutkow, 2012: p. 220) and 'mid-nineteenth-century nativists railed against foreign species of trees, labeling them "filthy" immigrants' (Friss, 2020: p. 5). Elms were planted, therefore, as a means of both creating and reinforcing a specific vision of what America looks like, one that ignored and superseded reality.<sup>7</sup>

This reshaping of reality led to urban tree management becoming more than a *desire* to control the natural world; it was soon perceived as a *need*. In a review of Sonja Dümpelmann's book *Seeing Trees: A History of Street Trees in New York City and Berlin* (2019), Evan Friss (2020) notes,

'Planted in piecemeal fashion and without careful management and care, the trees that did line the increasingly bustling streets decayed quickly and died in great numbers, prompting a wave of newly professionalized city foresters to push for trees to be "systematically and scientifically managed" as part of the "Taylorization of the American City" in the early twentieth century (39). In the age of standardization and for the sake of "beauty, comfort and the increase of property value," street trees were to be bred and planted symmetrically, "straight and sound stemmed" (39)' (p. 5).

---

<sup>7</sup> Despite the emphasis on positive associations in this history, elms carried strong negative and potentially Gothic meanings, too. Diana Wells (2010) writes, 'Perhaps appropriately elm wood was used for coffins: elms have a dangerous propensity to lose a huge branch, quite suddenly and without warning, even on a still summer day, killing anyone underneath. The elm "hateth man and waiteth," explained Rudyard Kipling' (p. 125). This imparts a darker tinge to settlers' insistence on bringing elms west with them. Perhaps the elms weren't so docile and yielding after all.

Without human control and management, trees died. However, it was also human management and intervention—though less carefully controlled—that caused these problems in the first place. The same logic applies here as in *A Nightmare on Elm Street*: attempts by authority figures (parents and police; settlers and urban planners) to manipulate the world around them generate not safety and security but death.

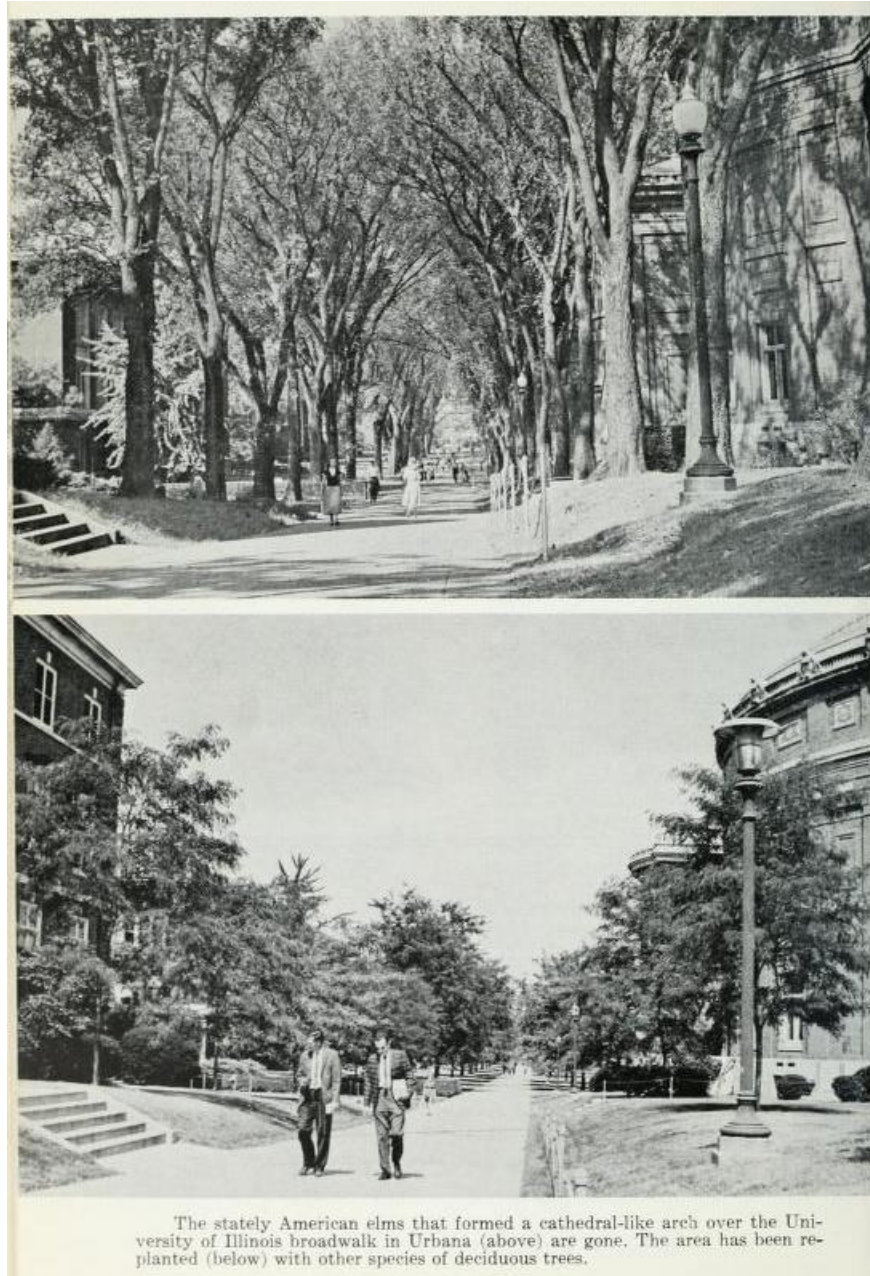


Figure 1: Carter, J. C. (1967) *Dutch Elm Disease in Illinois*. Champaign, Illinois Natural History Survey (p. 4).

The proliferation of elm trees also laid the groundwork for the spread of the disease that destroyed them, indicating the limits of short-sighted attempts at domestication and of humanity's power over the natural world (both trees and disease). The symmetrical, systematically planted, and 'scientifically managed' trees were 'living paradoxes, valued for their unnatural naturalness' (Friss, 2020: p. 6), and such paradoxes could not be sustained. The elm-lined streets (and Elm Streets) that were established across the rest of the developing nation extended this 'unnatural naturalness' further, manipulating the expanding nation (whether Ohio or California) into an unnatural new form that could not last. Campanella (2003) writes,

'The decimation of the elms in its wake altered the ecology and the environmental quality of countless city streets. It was a natural organism, set loose in an alien environment, that destroyed New England's elms. But it was human design that stacked nature's deck against the tree. Elm Street was, in spite of its natural appearance, a highly artificial creation' (p. 165).

The very 'natural unnaturalness' valued in the trees and the 'highly artificial creation' of Elm Street itself is what gave DED an advantage. In 'natural' circumstances, the elms would have had more of a chance to survive; the spread of DED would have been slower and its success would not have destroyed entire suburban and urban environments.

Human failures to control the natural world occurred with attempts to halt the disease, too. Early efforts focused on insecticides, but this did not work well—the insects spreading DED were so small and the trees so large. Spray programmes went on for decades nevertheless. Next, cities began to remove trees: 'In 1977 alone, the City of Minneapolis tagged a staggering 31,475 publicly owned diseased trees. Even if removal crews could work every day of the year, including weekends and holidays, this would require 83 trees *per day* to be removed and disposed of' (BioForest Technologies, n.d.). None of this truly worked, however, and these practices were not healthy (widespread use of pesticides) or practical (the removal of stunning numbers of trees every day).

Although the history of elms and DED is never explicitly mentioned in *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, it provides important context for the film; in addition, both history and film employ

the same logic. In *Nightmare*, Freddy Krueger—rather than DED—threatens the suburbs, and parents’ attempts to control and kill him fail. Their methods mirror the disposal methods for infected elm trees: ‘In rural areas, they may be burned. In urban areas, take them to a designated disposal site’ (Beaulieu, 2008, n.p.). Once thinking of the two—DED and *Nightmare on Elm Street*—as linked, it is hard not to see attempts to control the disease by burning trees as echoed by the attempts to control—and remove—Freddy Krueger by burning him, too. However, both attempts at control fail. Neither responses to DED nor the murder of Freddy Krueger address the underlying issues. *A Nightmare on Elm Street* reiterates, both in the history that creates Elm Street and in the plot of the film, that these levels of control are not possible. Both suburban tree-lined neighborhoods in general and Elm Street in particular are revealed to be haunted by the desire to *control* and by the losses resulting from this desire—and from its failures.

### **From Forest to Suburbs: Elm Street and Deforestation**

This history of Elm Street builds upon—and risks obscuring—an even longer history of trees and suburbs, and the story of elm trees’ spread and destruction is only part of what shapes *A Nightmare on Elm Street*’s inattention to trees. Another haunting lurks behind this one, and it is about not just the design of the suburbs but the *fact* of the suburbs. As a stereotypical suburb, Elm Street is a no-place haunted by nostalgia for an imagined past. It is both utopian—*ou-topos*, no place, and *eu-topos*, good place (at least in its ideals)—and Gothic.<sup>8</sup> Bernice Murphy (2009) outlines this relationship between the utopian and the Gothic in the suburbs: the suburban dream is ‘[a] bucolic refuge from the overcrowded and polluted cities’ that, in the Suburban Gothic, becomes a nightmarish ‘[d]estroyer of the countryside and devourer of natural resources’ and ‘claustrophobic breeding ground for dysfunctionality and abuse’ (p. 3). The elms of America’s Elm Streets present the image of ‘a bucolic refuge’, an un-polluted home, but the monoculture created by planting elms and only elms leads to destruction and, quite literally, a ‘claustrophobic breeding ground’ for the insects that carry the disease. Further, Murphy observes, ‘one of the most interesting things about the Suburban Gothic is that specific geographical location is so rarely a significant factor in such

---

<sup>8</sup> I have in mind Chris Baldick’s (1992) definition: ‘For the Gothic effect to be attained, a tale should combine a fearful sense of inheritance in time with a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an impression of sickening descent into disintegration’ (p. xix).

works. The sheer ubiquity of the suburban landscape is such that it matters little where exactly in the nation the drama is set' (pp. 10-11). Elm Street is defined less by its geographic and historical specificity, therefore, and more by the concept of suburbia—a place populated by wholesome middle American nuclear families who have white picket fences, green grass, and a car in every garage. This suburban ideal is both real and unreal, brought into being in the mid-twentieth century but never as simple as it seems. Elm Street is haunted by the history and concept of suburbia, but the environmental history of the suburbs begins before Dutch elm disease and must also include the loss of wild nature, specifically forests.

Although the geographical location of Elm Street is irrelevant to its identity as a suburb and its place in the Suburban Gothic, its location *is* critical to addressing its environmental history. The film is set in the fictitious town of Springwood, Ohio, the name of which is another gesture toward the significance of trees to this film. Ohio is fitting not only because it is a stand-in for an idea of Middle America (not the East Coast, not the West) but also because Ohio has been identified as the earliest location for Dutch elm disease in the United States.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Ohio's history of development is also a history of deforestation. According to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forests, the state was 95% forested when settlers first arrived, but '[b]y the first decade of the 1900s, forest cover had dropped to 10 percent of the state' (n.p.). Furthermore, a pamphlet from Audubon Ohio points out, 'In the rush to develop the state, nearly every tree was cut. Cities, highways, and farm fields took the place of forests in many areas' (Hissong and Schaefer, 2010: n.p.). The maps below (Figures 2-4) illustrate the widespread loss of virgin forests, not only in Ohio but across the nation, and vividly represent Stewart L. Udall's (1963) mid-century observation that '[t]he common assumption was that trees, like Indians, were an obstacle to settlement, and the woodsmen were therefore pioneers of progress' (p. 55). This destruction in the name of progress was not solely the result of suburbanisation, but it is difficult to disentangle the development of cities, industry, farming, and suburbs. And certainly urban and suburban sprawl have not been *good* for the natural environment. Suburbs, therefore, were built

---

<sup>9</sup> Despite this setting, the movie was filmed entirely in the Los Angeles area. This provides another explanation for the dearth of elms in the film because, although there are some elm trees in California, they are not as common there; in fact, the film actually includes many more palm trees than it does elms. The contrast between its setting and its filming locations, although not uncommon in Hollywood film, further underscores the loss of the trees. Not only are the elms dead or dying in real life, but they are only conceptual presences in the film. Ghosts.



on the sites of lost forests, and an ecocritical reading of a film about suburbs and missing trees must grapple with this.

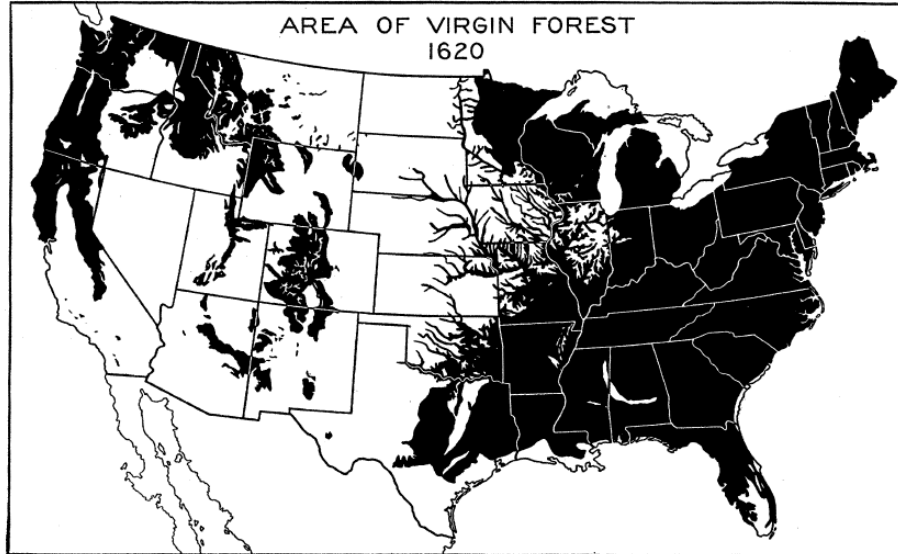


FIGURE 2.—When the early colonists settled along the Atlantic Coast nearly all the country east of the Mississippi River, and much land to the westward, notably in Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and the Pacific Northwest, was covered with a vast virgin forest,—about 820 million acres in all. (Map from U. S. Forest Service.)

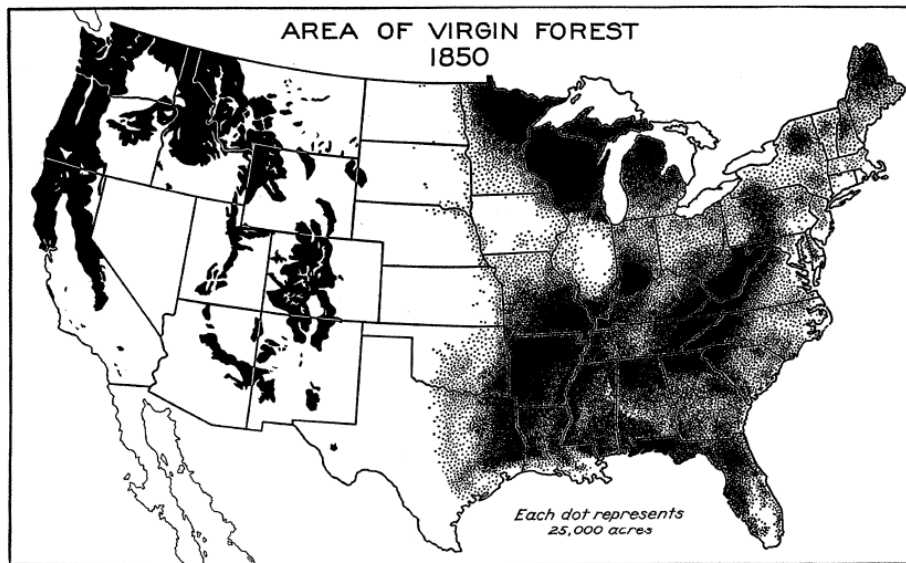


FIGURE 3.—Even in 1850 much of the forest in the eastern United States was still in a virgin condition, and the forests in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific states had scarcely been touched by man. The map was based on estimates by states and the dots are not all correctly located. Northwestern instead of south central Ohio should be densest, as the Black Swamp was almost a solid forest in 1850. Northern Indiana should likewise show a denser distribution of virgin forest, and in southern Indiana, where settlement first occurred, the dotting should be thinner. (Map from U. S. Forest Service.)

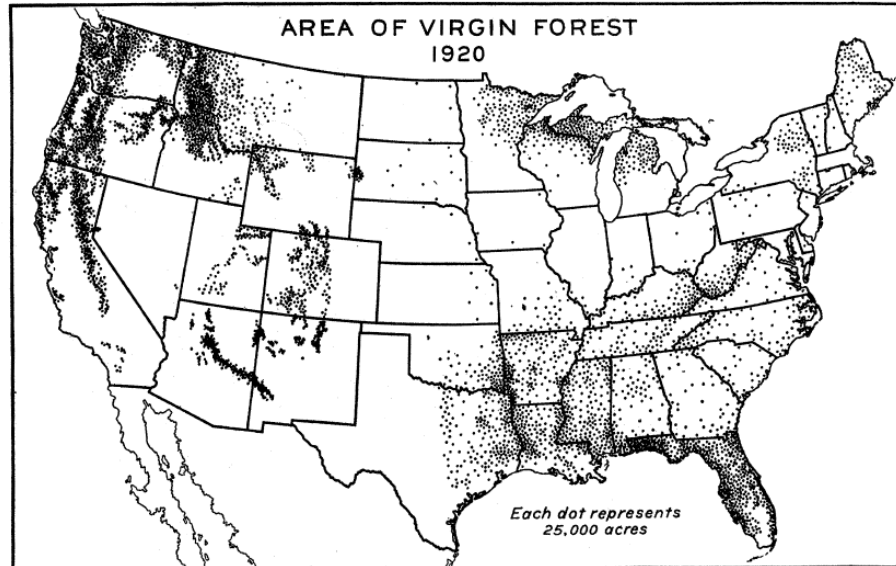


FIGURE 4.—By 1920 the area of virgin timber in the United States had been reduced to about 138 million acres, of which more than half was in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast states. Culled and second growth trees of sufficient size for lumber covered about 114 million acres more, and there were about 136 million acres of forest having small young growth or trees of cord-wood size. In the United States in 1920 the amount of virgin timber has been estimated at 1,600 billion board feet, and the culled and second growth stands at 600 billion feet, a total of 2,200 billion feet, as compared with probably 5,200 billion feet originally. Over half of this remaining saw timber is in the Pacific Coast states. (Map from U. S. Forest Service.)

*Figures 2-4:* These maps representing virgin forests in the United States in 1620, 1850, and 1920 show the dramatic deforestation that occurred as a result of 19<sup>th</sup> century expansion and industrialisation (Greeley, 1925: pp. 4-5).

However, these lost forests cannot simply be romanticised. As Robert Pogue Harrison (1992) writes, ‘The forest is at once a temple of living pillars and a scene of horror, an enchanted wood and a wood of abandon’ (p. 183). Descriptions of the Ohio forest similarly emphasise not only their beauty but also the fear they inspired:

‘Imagine a land of endless forest. Enormous old trees shade the ground. Clean rivers full of fish wind through the thick forest. Wild animals and birds are plentiful.

It may be hard to imagine today, but this is what Ohio once looked like. The first European explorers to visit the Ohio territory were amazed. They had never seen such grand forests and big trees. After many days of traveling under the thick forest, they thought they would never see the sky again. They were thankful when they finally came to an opening in the forest’ (Hissong and Schaefer, 2010, n.p.).



William Cronon (1996) articulates this fear of forests and wilderness more fully and places it in a larger historical context:

‘Go back 250 years in American and European history, and you do not find nearly so many people wandering around remote corners of the planet looking for what today we would call “the wilderness experience.” As late as the eighteenth century, the most common usage of the word “wilderness” in the English language referred to landscapes that generally carried adjectives far different from the ones they attract today. To be a wilderness then was to be “deserted,” “savage,” “desolate,” “barren”—in short, a “waste,” the word’s nearest synonym. Its connotations were anything but positive, and the emotion one was most likely to feel in its presence was “bewilderment” or terror’ (p. 8).

Although Cronon goes on to note that attitudes toward wilderness shifted dramatically in the nineteenth century as forests were removed and wild spaces domesticated, these older ideas did not disappear entirely. Elizabeth Parker (2020) indicates this in her analysis of the Gothic forest, which extends from ancient literature and fairy tales to twenty-first-century fantasy and horror. She writes, ‘The Deep Dark Forest is exactly that—deep and dark—and the exact source of its terrors is often mysterious, shadowy, and just out of sight. In Arthur Machen’s words: the forest contains some “awful secret”’ (pp. 2-3). The history of deforestation and fear insists that we consider the suburbs in relation to those lost (or defeated) forests, with the suburbs representing both civilisation as successful conqueror of the wilderness and ‘civilisation’ as destroyer of nature’s beauty.

The suburbs may not be deep and dark, but there are shadows there—and, as we see in *Nightmare*—there are definitely awful secrets. John Carpenter’s comments on suburbia as horror setting illuminate the source of fear within it:

‘A lot of horror films in the past were set in a haunted house or some dark environment to begin with, so that you’re immediately alerted to the fact that, oh, this is going to be scary. Well, the harder thing to do then is to take a horror movie

and put it into a suburban atmosphere, with a nice little row of houses and beautiful manicured lawns and some place that you can assume is very safe. Because if horror can get there, it can get anywhere . . . Suburbia is supposed to be safe. Your house is supposed to be a sanctuary. Nowadays, maybe because of conditions beyond our control, there is no sanctuary' (Qtd. in Murphy, 2009: p. 143).

The shift from 'some dark environment' (like the forest) to perceived sanctuary in his formulation indicates a contrast, but the contrast is only superficial. 'Suburbia is supposed to be safe', he says, but it is not.

What we find in *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is not, of course, the deep dark forest, and, with the loss of the forest, internal spaces take on the role it fulfills elsewhere—but these spaces still bear traces of the forest. For instance, during Nancy's dream at school, when she wanders the school hallways and descends into the basement to find Freddy, her abandonment of the safe schoolroom for dangerous, isolated hallways is marked by dead leaves floating in the hall. These leaves come from no discernible tree and make no sense in this space, except as a reminder of death and the forest. Elizabeth Parker (2020) writes, 'Though our forests may be increasingly out of sight, they are not out of mind. Far from it. As [Robert Pogue] Harrison attests, they are "everywhere in the fossil record of cultural memory". Indeed, forests loom all the larger in the popular imagination *because* they are increasingly destroyed. The woods—symbolically—are all around us' (p. 12). Carpenter's suggestion that the loss of sanctuary in suburbia might be 'because of conditions beyond our control' is belied by the environmental history addressed here; the suburbs are human-created, including their dangers and their ghosts. And, as the association between dead leaves and Nancy's nightmare of Freddy Krueger indicates, although the actual forest may no longer exist as a threat, the *idea* of the forest still triggers anxiety.

This anxiety about the forest shaped the suburbs, led to the monocultural planting of elm trees (which then hastened their destruction), and has played a role in the ongoing environmental destruction we now live with. Thomas Fahy's (2019) ecocritical reading of the film (and series) puts this in a larger context:

‘The eighties witnessed devastating heat waves, a shortage of landfills, and enough damage to the ozone layer to exacerbate fears about global warming. Like the rest of America, the Elm Street teens contributed to these problems. Not only did they eat too much junk food, but they also spent too much money on cars, clothes, exercise equipment, video games, and other material goods that taxed natural resources. [...] Whether through the development of tract housing, the car culture enabling it, or the goods filling these houses, suburbia posed a serious ecological threat in the 1980s. Such an interpretation aligns with actor Robert Englund’s reading of his character. In a 1988 interview, he explained that “Freddy is pollution. Freddy is evil. Freddy is what’s wrong with the world [. . .] racism, pollution, child molestation, child abuse, alcohol, drugs” (Fo 72). Freddy, in other words, represents the harm we do to ourselves, each other, and the planet’ (p. 5).

Fahy focuses here on the ecological threat of 1980s suburbia, but an ecocritical reading of *Nightmare* should look backward, too, and address the history of suburbia’s trees: deforestation, overmanagement, monoculture, disease.

This reading not only challenges the sense of suburbia as sanctuary but also creates a space for acknowledging its haunted environmental history. Suburban elm trees *are* the deep, dark forest tamed and rearranged along suburban streets.<sup>10</sup> By selecting only particular trees to line suburban streets (creating a monoculture and domesticating wild nature) and simultaneously removing pre-existing forests, settlers and urban planners created a sanctuary full of ghosts, a double haunting. Although the suburban elms are meant to be tamer, safer versions of nature, they still exceed human control and stand in our neighborhoods, outside our homes, as the ghostly fragments of the deep dark forest, as reminders of what has been lost. By the 1980s—and *A Nightmare on Elm*

---

<sup>10</sup> Historically, this process occurred across the United States, on the prairies as well as the forests. Dara Downey (2014) observes ‘the irreducibly paradoxical attitude toward the great outdoors in the United States – the longing for open, uninhabited spaces, and the fear of actually occupying them’ (p. 137). As settlers moved West, they found these open, uninhabited spaces and tamed them—in response to this fear—by transforming them into domesticated versions of home back East, elm trees and all.

*Street*—the elms have gone, and what remains are the ghosts of ghosts. What remains are the empty spaces where fragments of the forest once stood.<sup>11</sup>

### **‘Just a Dream’: Silence, Denial, and Reckoning with Ghosts**

*A Nightmare on Elm Street* is haunted, therefore, not just by Freddy Krueger but by elm trees and lost forests, raising the spectre of the American elm and the American forest while also suppressing the knowledge of the trees’ loss. The film’s silence about Dutch elm disease and deforestation connects past, present, and future; it draws a history of environmental loss and destruction into the present, and it gestures toward a future of even further loss in the face of climate change and denial of environmental damage (both historical and ongoing).

*A Nightmare on Elm Street* thus illustrates what I call an ecohorror of omission. Adding to Rust and Soles’ argument that ecohorror includes ‘texts in which humans do horrific things to the natural world’ and ‘horrific texts and tropes are used to promote ecological awareness’ (p. 510), *Nightmare* points to a form of ecohorror that does not actively represent such harm or promote ecological awareness. Further, where Rust and Soles argue that in ecohorror ‘environmental disruption is haunting humanity’s relationship to the non-human world’ (p. 510), *Nightmare* demonstrates that humanity’s relationship to the nonhuman world is also haunted by *silence* about environmental disruption and provides another vision of what environmental disruption might look like—invisible, marked by absence, overlooked in the text. This approach to ecohorror builds on Avery F. Gordon’s (1997) discussion of ghosts and offers a way to start our analyses ‘with the marginal, with what we normally exclude or banish, or, more commonly, with what we never even notice’ (pp. 24-25). The ecohorror of omission requires paying attention to the environmental disruptions that are overlooked and the environmental histories that are taken for granted.

---

<sup>11</sup> It must be acknowledged that it is not just the forests that were forcibly removed. As Renée Bergland writes, every suburban home must be haunted because of America’s ‘history of murders, looted graves, illegal land transfers and disruptions of sovereignty’ (p. 8); therefore, ‘the land is haunted because it is stolen’ (p. 9). In fact, she writes, ‘In another context, setting out to build a haunted house would be absurd. However, in America, where every white house displaces an Indian one [...], it may be inevitable’ (60).

*A Nightmare on Elm Street*'s ecohorror of omission shares a concern with blindness and amnesia (or forgetting) that recurs in many discussions of plants, landscapes, and our relationship to them. This follows Ingrid M. Parker's argument that 'to understand the relationship of humans to our landscape today, we have to come to terms with two challenges, which I will call amnesia and blindness' (2017, p. M160). For instance, Monica Gagliano (2016) argues that 'our modern Western societies are afflicted by *plant blindness*, a pervasive condition inherited from our forefather Aristotle and accountable for the current state of vegetal disregard and hence environmental catastrophe' (p. 19). *A Nightmare on Elm Street* illustrates that we are too often blind not just to the plants themselves but to the *loss* of them as well. And Dara Downey (2014) turns to the relationship between memory and landscape, arguing that 'memory is what makes a landscape a fit place in which both to live and work [...] A landscape that calls to mind past horrors is haunted by the ghosts of those who endured them, while situating those horrors firmly *in* the past' (p. 151). When those ghosts and horrors go unnamed, however, a new danger arises. As Downey writes, 'The nineteenth-century (fictional) American West was a scarred landscape precisely because it refused to show its scars' (p. 151). Although *Nightmare* addresses a different historical context than the nineteenth-century women's ghost stories that Downey analyses, this logic illuminates a central issue: there is a haunting presence on Elm Street (Freddy Krueger and the missing trees), but this haunting presence is made more dangerous by the lack of memory and by the suburb's unwillingness to 'show its scars'. Finally, Elaine Gan et al. (2017) address the environmental amnesia that accretes over time:

'As humans reshape the landscape, we forget what was there before. Ecologists call this forgetting the "shifting baseline syndrome." Our newly shaped and ruined landscapes become the new reality. Admiring one landscape and its biological entanglements often entails forgetting many others. Forgetting, in itself, remakes landscapes, as we privilege some assemblages over others' (p. G6).

This tendency to forget what came before is exemplified by the way *Elm Street*'s histories of environmental disruption must be excavated layer by layer. The suburban trees we know now seem normal, but they are only traces of the elm-lined streets planted decades before, which are themselves only traces of the forests that stood before settlers removed them.

The omissions that produce such hauntings can be unintentional; however, the ecohorror of omission is founded not only on ‘what we never even notice’ (Gordon, 1997: p. 25) but on what we *choose* not to notice. Here, omissions reinforce ongoing apathy about environmental disruption and, more specifically, climate change. Kim Stanley Robinson’s (2012) description of the period we live in now as the Dithering (2005-2060) identifies the problem—not ignorance but inaction. Robinson also predicts the resentment that future generations will feel: ‘How they despised the generations of the Dithering, who had heedlessly pushed the climate into a change with an unstoppable momentum to it, continuing not only into the present but for centuries more to come’ (p. 316). This goes beyond ignorance to denial.

This denial and refusal to understand is a significant element of *Nightmare on Elm Street*, too, and is directly linked to the generational divide within the film. It is clear that the teenagers of the film are suffering the consequences of their parents’ past actions—and their current *inaction*. As Murphy (2009) writes, ‘The parents of Elm Street may have aroused Krueger’s wrath, but it is ultimately up to Nancy to face him alone’ (p. 153). Tony Williams (1996) similarly argues that ‘*Nightmare on Elm Street* emphasises the dangerous nature of parental silence. On many occasions it indirectly aids Freddy’ (p. 228). Parents are not simply silent, though, but actively in denial. Because they ‘do not believe what their children are telling them’ (Heba, 1995: p. 110), they are therefore ‘as dangerous to the young people as Freddy Krueger, the “monster”’ (ibid.: pp. 108-9). This scene between Nancy and her mother, Marge, demonstrates the centrality of parental denial. Nancy demands information from her mother—‘Do you know who that is, Mother? Because if you do you better tell me because he’s after *me* now!’—and accuses her of avoiding responsibility by ‘getting good and loaded’. Her mother repeatedly insists that Nancy will feel better after some sleep, denying her own knowledge and refusing to take responsibility, leading to this exchange:

Nancy: ‘Screw sleep!’

Marge: ‘It’s just a nightmare!’

Nancy: ‘That’s enough.’

What Nancy knows and Marge denies is that although Freddy Krueger's murders are a nightmare, they are not *just* a nightmare. Nightmares are powerful, and so is parental denial, but neither must be accepted without a fight. The Dithering demands the same logic. Climate change is a terrifying threat—a nightmare—but it is not something that we can ignore out of existence.

The ecohorror of omission is—necessarily—a wake-up call for its audience. As Gan et al. (2017) observe, forgetting is powerful, '[y]et ghosts remind us. Ghosts point to our forgetting, showing us how living landscapes are imbued with earlier tracks and traces' (p. G6). Ghosts and hauntings are not simply negative; they are valuable reminders and can prompt action. As Gordon (1997) writes, 'If you let it, the ghost can lead you toward what has been missing, which is sometimes everything' (pp. 57-58). Thus, once omissions, silences, and denials are made visible, we have a choice to make: Do we continue to pretend there is no problem? Or do we take action? One tagline for *A Nightmare on Elm Street* says, 'If Nancy doesn't wake up screaming she won't wake up at all'. The same is true for us. We must wake up screaming or we will have no future to wake up to.

The ending of the film enacts the latter possibility. In the final dream, Nancy sees the truth of Freddy and addresses him directly, but her resistance is still fundamentally a denial: 'I know the secret now. This is just a dream. You're not alive. This whole thing is just a dream'. She turns to face him and says, in what should be a vanquishing move, 'I want my mother and friends again. I take back every bit of energy I gave you. You're nothing. You're shit'. This seems to work, since Freddy reaches for her and fails to grab her, then he disappears. However, the concluding scene of the film immediately negates this success. In this scene, Nancy and her once-again-living friends get into a car decorated with Freddy's distinctive stripes and are driven away while screaming for help; in the meantime, Nancy's mother smiles in the sunshine (still in denial) before being dragged back into the house by Freddy. Nancy denies Freddy's reality, following in her mother's footsteps, and fails to vanquish him. Neither Nancy's attempt to kill Freddy (again), repeating the parents' attempts at vigilante justice and control, nor her denial of his reality effectively deal with Freddy and what he represents.

An ecohorror of omission acknowledges and does not deny ‘hauntings, ghosts and gaps, seething absences, and muted presences’ (Gordon, 1997: p. 21) and thereby opens the possibility of healing. In *Nightmare*, awareness of the trees’ ghostly presence provides the potential for audiences to overcome our plant blindness, our amnesia, and our denial. One of the central features of haunting, Gordon explains, is that the ghost is ‘pregnant with unfulfilled possibility, with the something to be done that the wavering present is demanding. This something to be done is not a return to the past but a reckoning with its repression in the present, a reckoning with that which we have lost, but never had’ (p. 183). This movement between past and present—and toward the future—evokes Ryan Hediger’s (2019) concept of homesickness. Hediger writes that homesickness allows us to ‘embrace a nonlinear movement in time, returning to older texts with new concerns in order to revisit them and reframe the present’ (p. 9). Further, he argues, ‘Such homesick modes of recursive interpretation loosen the firmness of the present and facilitate rethinking possibilities of the future. [...] The past is present and helps dictate the future’ (p. 9). *A Nightmare on Elm Street* invites this kind of homesickness and uses ‘the more-than-rational power of images, dreams, and feelings to jar us out of the small cabins of our selfhood’ (Hediger, 2019: p. 284). The more-than-rational here also primes us to look for ghosts and, hopefully, to see them. ‘Do you believe in the boogeyman?’, Nancy asks. Within *Nightmare*’s ecohorror of omission, we must say yes in order to experience the ‘transformative recognition’ (Gordon, 1997: p. 8) required to reckon with the ghosts of environmental history and to shape a new future.

## BIOGRAPHY

**Christy Tidwell** is Associate Professor of English and Humanities at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. She is Digital Strategies Coordinator for the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE), co-leader of ASLE’s Ecomedia interest group, and co-organiser of *A Clockwork Green: Ecomedia in the Anthropocene* (2018). She has written about ecohorror for Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova’s *Posthuman Glossary* (2018), contributed an article on Mira Grant’s *Parasite* to the ecohorror cluster in *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* (2014), and published a chapter on *Jurassic Park*, *Jurassic World*, and de-extinction anxiety in *Fiction and the Sixth Mass Extinction: Narrative in an Era of Loss*



(2020). She is co-editor of *Gender and Environment in Science Fiction* with Bridgitte Barclay (Lexington Books, 2018) and *Fear and Nature: Ecohorror Studies in the Anthropocene* with Carter Soles (Penn State University Press, forthcoming).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baldick, C. (1992) Introduction. In: Baldick, C. (ed.) *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*. Oxford University Press, pp. xi-xxiii.

Beaulieu, D. (2018) *Dutch Elm Disease on American Elm Trees*. Available from:  
<https://www.thespruce.com/dutch-elm-disease-on-american-elm-trees-2131195>.  
[Accessed 8th October 2018].

Bergland, R. L. (2000) *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects*. Hanover, University Press of New England.

BioForest Technologies Inc. (n.d.) *Dutch Elm Disease History*. Available from:  
<http://www.dutchelmdisease.ca/history/>. [Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> October 2018].

Campanella, T. J. (2003) *Republic of Shade: New England and the American Elm*. New Haven, Yale University Press.

Carter, J. C. (1967) *Dutch elm disease in Illinois*. Champaign, Illinois Natural History Survey.

Cronon, W. (1996) The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature. *Environmental History*. 1 (1), pp. 7-28.

Downey, D. (2014) *American Women's Ghost Stories in the Gilded Age*. London, Palgrave Macmillan.

- Elm Street Wiki. (n.d.) *References in Other Media*. Available from:  
[https://nightmareonelmstreet.fandom.com/wiki/References\\_in\\_Other\\_Media](https://nightmareonelmstreet.fandom.com/wiki/References_in_Other_Media) [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020].
- Fahy, T. (2019) *Dining with Madmen: Fat, Food, and the Environment in 1980s Horror*. Jackson, The University Press of Mississippi.
- Friss, E. (2020). Comments on Sonja Dümpelmann's *Seeing Trees: A History of Street Trees in New York City and Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019). *H-Environment Roundtable Reviews*. 10 (2), 4-8. Available from: <https://networks.h-net.org/system/files/contributed-files/env-roundtable-10-2.pdf>. [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020].
- Gagliano, M. (2016) Seeing Green: The Re-discovery of Plants and Nature's Wisdom. In: Vieira, P., Gagliano, M. and Ryan, J. (eds.) *The Green Thread: Dialogues with the Vegetal World*. Lanham, Lexington Books, pp. 19-35.
- Gan, E., et al. (2017) Introduction: Haunted Landscapes of the Anthropocene. In: Tsing, A., Swanson, H., Gan, E., and Bubandt, N. (eds.) *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, pp. G1-G14.
- Gordon, A. F. (1997) *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Reprint, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Greeley, W. B. (1925) The Relation of Geography to Timber Supply. *Economic Geography*. 1 (1), pp. 1-14.
- Harrison, R. P. (1992) *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

- Heba, G. (1995) Everyday Nightmares: The Rhetoric of Social Horror in *The Nightmare on Elm Street* Series. *Journal of Popular Film & Television*. 23 (3), pp. 106-116.
- Hediger, R. (2019) *Homesickness: Of Trauma and the Longing for Place in a Changing Environment*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Hissong, T. and Schaefer, T. (2010). *Audubon Adventures: Ohio Series*. Columbus, Audubon Ohio. Available from:  
<https://www.epa.state.oh.us/Portals/42/documents/EE%20Resources/AA%20forests%20%20fixed.pdf>. [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020].
- Internet Movie Database. (n.d.) *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Available from:  
[https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0087800/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_srg\\_0](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0087800/?ref_=nv_sr_srg_0). [Accessed 13th March 2020].
- Jancovich, M. (1996) *Rational Fears: American Horror in the 1950s*. New York, Manchester University Press.
- Keetley, D. (2016) Introduction: Six Theses on Plant Horror; or, Why Are Plants Horrifying? In:  
Keetley, D. and Tenga, A. (eds.) *Plant Horror: Approaches to the Monstrous Vegetal in Fiction and Film*. London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-30.
- Kendrick, J. (2009) Razors in the Dreamscape: Revisiting *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and the Slasher Film. *Film Criticism*. 33 (3), pp. 17-33.
- Meeker, N. and Szabari, A. (2020) *Radical Botany: Plants and Speculative Fiction*. New York, Fordham University Press.
- Murphy, B. (2009) *The Suburban Gothic in American Popular Culture*. London, Palgrave Macmillan.

*Nightmare on Elm Street*. (1984) [Film] Craven, W. dir. USA: New Line Cinema.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry. (n.d.) *History of Ohio's State Forests*. Available from: <http://forestry.ohiodnr.gov/history>. [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020].

Parker, E. (2020) *The Forest and the EcoGothic: The Deep Dark Woods in the Popular Imagination*. London, Palgrave Macmillan.

Parker, I. M. (2017) Remember in our Amnesia, Seeing in Our Blindness. In: Tsing, A., Swanson, H., Gan, E., and Bubandt, N. (eds.) *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, pp. M155-M167.

Robinson, K. S. (2012) *2312*. New York, Orbit.

Rust, S. A. and Soles, C. (2014) Ecohorror Special Cluster: 'Living in Fear, Living in Dread, Pretty Soon We'll All Be Dead'. *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*. 21 (3), pp. 509-12.

Rutkow, E. (2012) *American Canopy: Trees, Forests, and the Making of a Nation*. New York, Scribner.

Udall, S. L. (1963) *The Quiet Crisis*. New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Wells, D. (2010) *Lives of the Trees: An Uncommon History*. Chapel Hill, Algonquin Books.

Williams, T. (1996) *Hearths of Darkness: The Family in the American Horror Film*. Madison, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.