

QUANTITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE GENERAL WAYNE INN

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ABSTRACT: Apparitions and poltergeist-like disturbances were reported by the owner and employees of a wayside inn in Merion, Pennsylvania. The legend that a “ghost” haunted the premises had persisted for more than 2 centuries. Quantitative measures tested 3 sensitives and 3 controls. Participants marked on floor plans locations where they sensed a ghost (sensitives) or where they believed a credulous person might report a ghost (controls). Participants also responded to a checklist containing brief descriptions of the reported phenomena that were randomly interposed with descriptions of plausible disturbances that no one had reported. One sensitive’s floor-plan responses significantly resembled the locations of disturbances reported by witnesses ($p = .026$), and her checklist impressions suggested the ghostly characteristics witnesses had described ($p = .059$). The combined floor-plan responses of sensitives bore a suggestive correspondence to the witnesses’ reports ($p = .084$). Control participants, neither individually nor as a group, produced test responses that resembled the witnesses’ accounts. No significant differences in the magnitudes of magnetic fields at target and control sites were found for peak magnitudes, mean magnitudes, or all measured magnitudes. These findings imply that the aberrant cognitive phenomena reported by witnesses cannot be attributed to variations in the magnitudes of ambient magnetic fields.

The German word *poltergeist* was presumably coined to distinguish a noisy ghost from a less obtrusive one, and it continues to denote a mischievous spirit or “ghost” in German. By 1848, the word had become part of the written English language (see Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 1995). More than one psychical researcher in the late 19th century observed that boisterous ghosts tended to frequent houses in which children were living. This is hardly surprising since households in those days were generally comprised of large families, and children were not uncommonly family members. Indeed, youngsters with their irrepressible energy and mischievous tendencies were generally the first to be fingered as the culprits when rowdy, unfathomable disturbances took place. Alternatively, hysterical young female servants drew reprobation as the supposed hosts of the bewildering events.

With the advent of psychoanalytic theory and its seminal constructs of unconscious motivation and covert sexual drives, a prepubescent, person-centered theory of poltergeists was formulated. The new theory of ghosts was in step with the zeitgeist; the afterlife was out of favor but neurosis was very much in vogue. Evidence in support of the theory was marshaled and it was soon widely adopted—bolstered by convergent theories and legitimized by scientific-sounding terms like focal person, attenuation, and RSPK. Yet doubts about the validity of the ghost vs. poltergeist distinction persisted, and theoretical discrepancies accumulated in the empirical database.

Stevenson (1972) took issue with the person-centered theory in an article charmingly titled, “Are poltergeists living or are they dead?” Maher (1991) ventured that poltergeists could in principle be both living *and* dead because discarnate entities might be interacting with the energy

of living persons to effect physical manifestations. Gauld and Cornell (1979) attempted to sort out 500 haunting and poltergeist cases on the basis of their characteristics, but cluster analyses failed to eliminate apparitions from the poltergeist category or poltergeist features from the haunt category. Roll (1977) conceded that haunted houses could host RSPK outbreaks and volunteered that “To an extent hauntings, too, may be person oriented” (p. 400). Alvarado and Zingrone (1995) found no more signs of intelligence in the characteristics of hauntings with apparitions than in those without them, whereas signs of intelligent guidance were reflected in certain poltergeist object flights (Roll, 1977). Stokes (1997) noted that the beginnings of RSPK object levitations were rarely observed, reflecting Sidgwick’s (1885) observation that ghosts do not tend to materialize in places at which percipients have already been looking.

Gerding, Wezelman, and Bierman (1997) have speculated: “Given that the nature of psi is in principle anomalous—modeling, experimentation, and categorization of psi can take on any of an infinite number of metaphorically based forms” (p. 156-157). Recurrent psi effects that have been identified suggest that it is not futile to look for order and meaning in parapsychological occurrences. However, after more than a century of scientific scrutiny, it appears that the classification of a case, and whether or not to describe disturbances as “ghostly,” is left to the whimsy and personal preference of the investigator.

THE CASE

In early August 1988, the author (henceforth M.C.M.) was contacted by representatives of a TV production company with a request that she investigate reported haunting occurrences at the General Wayne Inn in Philadelphia for the NBC-TV series *Unsolved Mysteries*. M.C.M. agreed to visit the inn during the last week of August to conduct tests on the premises. Meanwhile, a full-time researcher was employed by the company to gather background information and documents pertaining to the ghostly reports. M.C.M. engaged in lengthy discussions with the show’s segment director, whose contract required that he conduct interviews with witnesses of the disturbances for on-air presentation. M.C.M. advised him of techniques for eliciting candid testimony, and provided him with pertinent follow-up questions to ask when documenting witnesses’ accounts of the phenomena. The purpose of the following narrative is to acquaint readers with the history of the General Wayne Inn and the reports of those who believe they have experienced ghostly activity on the premises.

Built in the Quaker village of Merioneth, Pennsylvania, just outside Philadelphia, The General Wayne Inn dates back to 1704. Robert Jones purchased the land on which it stands from Edward Rees for 20 shillings; Rees had bought the one-acre plot from William Penn. Originally dubbed The Wayside Inn, it is now listed on The National Register, an official compilation of historic American sites.

When Jones died in 1747, the inn was rented to Anthony Tunis, who ran a prosperous tavern for the next 30 years. The Tunis Ordinary was a popular rest stop for stagecoaches and wagons heading westward. It served a prix fixe meal that included pork pies and grog (a drink of rum and water in equal parts). Meals and lodging could be had for a quarter apiece; horses were fed and stabled for an additional fifty cents. The tavern also held a general store and post office. Benjamin Franklin, appointed by England’s King George III as Postmaster of the colonies, supervised mail at the inn in 1763—a time when postage was paid by the recipient and charges were based on how far a letter had traveled.

Abraham Streeper acquired the inn in May of 1776, just prior to the onset of the American Revolution. Streeper was quick to answer the call for army recruits nailed to a post in front of his tavern. Leaving Streeper's Inn in the custody of his wife, he joined the 4th Pennsylvania Regiment and rose to the rank of lieutenant. While he was away, "Mad Anthony" Wayne—on advance patrol for George Washington after the devastating defeat of American soldiers at the Brandywine—stayed overnight at the inn on September 13, 1777, with what remained of his troops bivouacked in the field outside. George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette slept the following night at the inn, and ate a well-documented breakfast the next morning. Two days after they departed, a stagecoach arrived with six members of the Continental Congress, fleeing Philadelphia for the safer climate of York. Philadelphia was soon to be taken by the British, and it wasn't long before red-coats occupied the surrounding territory, and Streeper's Inn as well.

Both the Continental Army and the British sought to control Streeper's Inn because it was a centrally located hub of espionage that could serve as a strategic command post. Feisty Captain Allan McLane recaptured the tavern during the bitter winter of 1777-1778. A colorful character whose exploits made him the bane of the British, McLane used white sheets to camouflage his Iroquois allies so they could creep surreptitiously across the snow to attack the inn from advantageous firing positions. The ruse was successful, but Hessian soldiers (German mercenaries employed by the British) soon regained control.

Legend has it that unbeknownst to the Hessians, a secret tunnel had been built by the revolutionaries that led from the inn's cellar to an unobtrusive part of the neighboring field. Although accounts differ, one version holds that when a young Hessian soldier was sent to the cellar to procure wine for the victory celebration, he was ambushed and killed by revolutionaries hiding there. They promptly buried his body in the tunnel so that it would not give them away. Locals residing in what is now Lower Merion township believe that the ghost of the Hessian soldier still haunts the inn.

It was not until 1795, when General Wayne returned for a 3-day fête celebrating his successful Indian campaign, that the inn's name was changed to honor him. The tavern had other distinguished visitors in the following century. Edgar Allen Poe patronized the inn from 1839-43, and he is said to have revised "The Raven" while sitting by the fire in the Post Office Dining Room. He reportedly scratched his initials into a windowpane with a diamond ring borrowed from his affluent friend and biographer, Henry Beck Hirst. (The antique glass was discarded in the 1970s, when the windowpane was shattered by vibrations from a jackhammer drilling up the street in front of the inn.)

For more than 50 years, the inn served as a polling site for the Lower Merion Township, and the first recorded sighting of a ghost dates back to the election of 1848. A woman who had gone to the cellar to retrieve a box of fresh ballots reported to her supervisor when she returned that she had encountered a soldier in a green coat down there. (Hessians wore green uniforms with yellow lapels.) The basement sighting of the soldier was included in the supervisor's official report to the Board of Elections.

More recent history includes a variety of ghostly phenomena reported by the inn's past and current employees, and by its present owner. Despite the ghost legend, the tavern, which currently operates as a bar and restaurant, is regarded as a sociable work environment and employees tend to remain at their jobs for extensive periods. A former hostess, who was first employed as a waitress in 1960, recounted a peculiar experience. She maintained that she did not hear about the legend of the ghost until after her experience had occurred.

It was around . . . three-thirty in the afternoon, and I was setting up for dinner. And I heard someone calling me—just my name . . . I heard this three or four times. But I was so engrossed in setting up the table . . . I turned to say—I was getting a little angry too—and I turned to say, “What do you want?” . . . I saw this man. . . . He was a man standing on the stairs, and he had this uniform on . . . a Revolutionary War soldier, only to me he was like a general. . . . And he looked so startled when I said, “What is it?” And, just like that, he disappeared.

Asked to provide more detail about the characteristics of the apparition, the hostess continued:

I would say it was three-dimensional . . . The figure that I saw on the stairs was not transparent. I couldn't see through the figure, and that's what startled me so . . . The bartender . . . looked at me and he said, “What's the matter? You look like you saw a ghost.” And I said, “Well, I think I did.”

When asked about the duration of her experience, the hostess recalled:

I would say five seconds? It wasn't—didn't seem like a very long time. Just long enough. . . . He had his hand on the railing and he sort of looked around and he looked startled, like he didn't know where he was. . . . And then as I was looking at him, he disappeared.

The hostess was asked to provide her own interpretation of the experience, and to comment on the significance it held for her.

I thought he was calling me. . . . He called me three or four times . . . like he wanted . . . some help or something. . . . I never thought for a minute that it was a hallucination or the light or anything. . . . There was no shadows or the sun didn't hit the stairs . . . I have no explanation for it whatsoever . . . I just know it happened.

A waiter who had worked at the inn for more than 30 years reported several odd occurrences. He was told about the ghost by one of the inn's porters soon after he became employed. Subsequently, he repeatedly witnessed a puzzling occurrence in the bar. Suspended above the aisle of the horseshoe-shaped bar, and running along its length, is a cabinet mounted from the ceiling to store liquor glasses and other bar accoutrement. The waiter recalled:

In the afternoon I would sit there at the bar, and all of a sudden all the glasses would start shaking on both sides of the bar. One day, I got up and ran outside to see if there was a truck, and there was nothing around. It was just a quiet afternoon. . . . We would sit down after lunch, and all of a sudden the glasses would just shake. . . . Sometimes it happened two or three times a week and sometimes it'd happen maybe once a week. But it happened lots of times. . . . And the bartender and I would look up and say . . . “the ghost is shaking the glasses.” . . . There was definitely nobody around, and no one upstairs or no one moving any furniture or anything. They just shook.

The same waiter recalled an episode that occurred years earlier, which had greatly baffled him at the time. He related:

On a Friday night, we were all sitting around the bar . . . Saturday morning we had a big wedding coming in, and we decided we would set the dining room up for the wedding. That way we can come in a little later and . . . take it easy. So, Friday we set the whole room up—put all the napkins, tables—set everything up. But then we decided to go back to the bar and sit and talk. And we talked . . . 'til three or four in the morning. Then we decided we'd better get home, so we went home. . . . I came in at . . . around nine-thirty. I walked right into the dining room, and there is all of these napkins laying all over the floor. And I just couldn't believe it. I said, "What the heck happened?" . . . I figured it wasn't vandalism, because they would have took chairs and pushed 'em all over the place. . . . Just the napkins were on the floor. . . . The silverware was all placed on the tables. The flowers were on the tables. Everything was ready, but the napkins were on the floor. . . . Nobody was around. . . . The front doors are always locked. . . . We go through the side—we have a lock there, and that locks, and our back doors are all locked. The place was completely locked. You know, from five [a.m.] to nine—who would be here from five to nine? . . . The wedding was around a hundred and some people, so there was around a hundred and some napkins on the floor. . . . I just went to work and put 'em back up and I had no answer.

A former maître d' who had worked at the restaurant from 1974 to 1980 reported a number of unusual occurrences. He had been hired as a teenager, and he gradually worked his way up—bussing tables, parking cars, waiting on tables—until he was promoted to maître d'. He recalled:

Oh, you always heard banging on the walls, like creaking in the walls, lights flickering, the glasses shaking, wind—cold gusts of wind going past you real fast. It happened so often that we just—we eventually took it for granted. We just shrugged it off.

Late one evening, he experienced an auditory phenomenon that impressed him a great deal. According to his account, customers lingering at the bar also heard the sounds and discussed them with him afterwards. (He was, however, unable to recall the customers' names or provide any information that would permit M.C.M. to interview them.) The maître d' reported:

I heard footsteps, just as if somebody was walking down the entire length of the bar, all the way down. And the people sitting in the bar stools felt the boards moving. And I was facing the direction that . . . the footsteps were going down. And I did not see anybody. All I heard were the footsteps. I heard them loud and clear. And they went the entire length of the bar and when they got to the end of the bar they stopped.

Toward the end of his tenure, the maître d' had an experience that disturbed him profoundly. Yet he did not, according to his testimony, seek professional counseling or guidance after it occurred. He remembered:

At one time I did see—something appeared to me in the kitchen area. I was maître d' at the time. . . . We were closing the restaurant up for the night, and I was doing my usual

walk through the kitchen to make sure everything was closed up and turned off. . . . And as I was coming through to come out one of the exit doors . . . I . . . looked up and sitting on a chest of drawers that we have to . . . keep the bread warm, I saw—just for a split second . . . a head, just sitting there right on top of the [bread warmer]. And it was a very smoky color, as if it was a projection onto a screen or something. . . . I only saw it for a second, but I . . . I’ll never forget it. It . . . had a very painful expression . . . thin, black, slicked-back hair. His ears stuck out a little bit. He had pencil thin eyebrows and pencil thin mustache. And no neck or anything, just—just a head. That’s all I saw. . . . He was just sitting there, looking at me.

Despite the vividness of his recollection, the maître d’ had, at the time, apparently processed the image preattentively. He recalled:

It didn’t register right away when I saw it. . . . I went past it . . . past where I had seen it, and I went out and into the bar area. And the minute I stepped into the bar area, it’s like . . . hitting a brick wall. I just stopped in my tracks and . . . they told me I started screaming, saying . . . “I saw a head, I saw it!” . . . The other employees that were there with me in the bar area, they all said, “Uh oh, he saw something. Let’s get out of here.” And we all packed up and we left. . . . I only saw it for a split second, but I’ll never forget it. . . . He seemed like he may have been . . . late forties, early fifties. . . . I know I saw it and I walked past it. . . . And I really don’t remember too much between leaving the kitchen and getting into my car. . . . Next thing I remembered was that I was in my car and I was still very, very upset. . . . It was like shock almost . . . I panicked sort of or spaced out. . . . It was a different experience, believe me. . . . But it’s just like it happened yesterday. I’ll never forget the details in that face. . . . It was not moving at all. It just sat there, as if somebody had placed it there. . . . I don’t think it was a figment of my imagination. I don’t think it was a mirage. I saw something. I know I did.

The General Wayne Inn’s proprietor had several ghostly incidents to report. He had purchased the property in 1970, when he became the sixteenth owner of the inn. Raised in Merion township, he had memories of dining at the inn with his parents in 1937, and, when he came of age, having his first alcoholic beverage at the inn’s horseshoe bar. An amateur historian, the owner relished the details of the inn’s notable history. He was active in the Lower Merion Historical Society and had been its first vice-president for many years. His attitude toward the disturbances is best summed up by what he referred to as his standard line: “I don’t believe in ghosts. I just know they’re here.”

Although a number of incidents had been reported to him over the years, he dismissed the majority of them as inconsequential. Not so a perplexing occurrence that had happened on a quiet afternoon several years before. While he was in the British Barrack’s Dining Room, he and a waiter suddenly heard loud, disruptive sounds issuing from the floor above. When they rushed up the stairs to see what was the matter, they found chairs and tables overturned in the locker room outside the third-floor office. There was no one in the room, and a search of the other third-floor rooms, as well as the office which had been locked, revealed them to be empty. No rational basis for the overturned furniture was discovered in subsequent conversations with staff members.

The owner had also been impressed when a customer told him that while she was relating the history of the inn to her dinner companions in the Post Office Dining Room, a dinner roll flew from her hand for no apparent reason and bounced forcefully against the wall. The roll came to rest on the floor in the center of the dining room, and the woman felt certain that what had just occurred could not have happened normally. Regarding some of his employees, the owner was inclined to dismiss ghostly reports as the products of hyperactive imaginations. He gave credence, however, to the report of a bartender who had told him, years before, that he saw the Hessian's ghost in the room at the foot of the cellar steps. The bartender refused to go down to the cellar afterwards, and he asked one of the waiters to fetch liquor supplies when they were needed. (The waiter verified that he had routinely performed this task, but the bartender, who had retired, declined to come forward to be interviewed.)

The ghostly occurrences, according to the owner, were generally innocuous and had no malicious bent. He related:

Hundreds of occurrences have happened—some very minor, some more dramatic. Either I've experienced them or somebody's come over and told me about them. . . . You take all these little ones like the light bulbs burning out and the front door positively locked . . . at night, and it's unlocked in the morning. That's happened three dozen times. . . . Between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, all of these glasses behind me shake for no reason. They have never fallen off or anything like that, but you can hear them and see them moving. And that's went on for months, and then it stopped, and then it went on again. . . . It wasn't caused by anything. . . . There is no upstairs here. This is a one-story building right here. . . . They jiggle and they also tingle when they hit each other. . . . The chandelier upstairs in the hall is an antique crystal chandelier, and there are twenty-five long, heavy crystals in a circle. And one crystal almost any time of the day or night would swing back and forth. The other twenty-four did not move. There was no draft. There was no air conditioner hitting it. . . . Our customers and help . . . they would stand at the bottom of the steps and watch it because it happened all the time.

During the winter of 1978, the owner was contacted by a professional medium. She told him she wanted to visit the inn because she had heard there was "a lot of energy" on the premises. Although she claimed to charge substantial sums for psychic readings, she did not ask the owner to compensate her for investigating the inn. When she arrived with three companions, she requested to see the basement, and the owner escorted her down the rickety cellar steps. She began running her hands over the decrepit walls, and when he asked what she was doing, she told him that she was looking for "cool" spots. The owner left the basement to attend to his duties on the main floor. After about 3 hours, the medium emerged from the cellar and announced that the inn had more than one ghost. "In fact," she told him, "it has quite a few." On February 13, 1978, she returned with several other psychics to conduct a séance in the George Washington Bedchamber Dining Room, which was located on the second floor. The owner recalls closing each of the two doors to the room before the séance started. He related:

There were five psychics or six, I don't remember. And four of my family—my wife and two of my sons. . . . And when they were ready to start, the leader asked the entities who would like to speak to us, to now enter. There was no one in the building. . . .

Doors were locked. We were closed. And there were two doors and both of them opened by themselves. We were all seated. There was no one in the building. That was very dramatic. . . . That was the first time I really experienced watching something move. And it definitely moved.

The owner's eldest son, a lawyer who worked for a prestigious law firm in Philadelphia, attended the 1978 séance. Although he had not previously believed in ghosts, he recalled that the séance room abruptly chilled for no apparent reason. He also believed that he saw more than one apparitional face appear over the medium's face. He volunteered that a partner in his law firm had recently confided an experience that occurred at the inn about 10 years earlier. His colleague told him that when he went to the coat-check room to retrieve his coat, he was accosted suddenly by a "black apparition" that grabbed hold of his hand and tried to pull him to the ground. He said he struggled with the apparition in an attempt to get his hand free, and that he had genuinely believed that if he were pulled to the ground, he would have been killed. (Because the colleague's disclosure had been related in confidence, and because he told the owner's son that in the intervening decade he had told no one but his wife about the experience, his privacy was respected and he was not sought for an interview.)

The proprietor's younger son, who served as the inn's general manager, did not remember witnessing anything remarkable at the séance. Although acquainted with the inn's ghostly lore, he reported that he had not personally experienced anything unusual on the premises. The proprietor's wife was reticent on the subject of the séance. However, she volunteered that on afternoons when she helped out with accounting in the third-floor office, she sometimes found that the adding machine would repeatedly be off by fifty or a hundred dollars when she added the day's receipts. She would check the machine by quickly adding "two plus two." If the device summed the numbers to "five," she would scold the ghosts (whom she referred to as "the guys") and order them out of the room, telling them that she had work to do. Afterwards, she said, the adding machine would resume working normally.

A parade of entities was reportedly observed by the medium at the 1978 séance, and she deduced that there were 17 ghosts occupying the inn. The owner—impressed by what he believed to be an unaccountable opening of the north and west doors of the séance room—accepted the medium's count apparently without any reservations. Afterward, he adopted the guise of a benevolent observer of the ghostly occurrences, an attitude he has maintained ever since. He commented:

You never know what they're going to do, and you never know how long they're going to do it. Like the glasses . . . the glasses are still going on. The chandelier is still going on. It hasn't done it lately, but over the years it . . . did it very regularly for a long period of time, like every day. But now you'll only see it maybe once every three or four or six months. . . . I enjoy these ghosts. I mean, they don't bother me at all. . . . I think they come up with some real clever little things.

When asked to describe additional ghostly experiences, especially those in which he was personally involved, the owner recalled:

A lot of things . . . happen around here . . . when there's snow on the ground. . . . This particular day it was snowing hard, and we only sold three lunches which, in a four-

hundred-seat restaurant, is not very profitable . . . and I said to the chef, “What are you doing?” And he said, “I have this stainless steel cleaner and I’m cleaning the kitchen” . . . And I said, “I think we should close right now.” I think it’s the only time I closed because of weather. And he had a whole stack of Turkish towels—hand towel size—on the butcher block. . . . He had used some of them, but there were probably twenty of them left that he hadn’t used yet. And I said, “Well look, the kitchen’s clean. Let’s all go home while we can still go home.” And he put on his hat and coat, and we all walked out the door at two o’clock in the afternoon. We are closed for dinner. We came back at approximately the same time the next day—ten o’clock or so. And those towels have been distributed—thrown all over the kitchen.

The owner’s account—reminiscent of the waiter’s report of wedding napkins that had been strewn about the dining room—suggested to M.C.M. the possibility that a habitual miscreant might have access to the inn at times when the owner and others were away from the premises. Another incident reinforced the suggestion of an intruder. One evening, the medium amused the owner by suggesting that he leave a tape recorder running on the bar’s fireplace mantel when he locked up for the night. He adopted her suggestion, and when he reviewed the tape on the following morning, the first half an hour passed uneventfully, as he had anticipated. However, he was suddenly startled to hear sounds on the tape that were familiar. He heard bar chairs scraping as if being pulled up to the bar and the sound of water being turned on and splashing into one of the bar’s two sinks (he could tell which one because of its distinctive sound). Finally, he heard the sounds of liquid being poured into a glass. After the “glug, glug, glug” of the liquid, there were no more sounds on the tape. He could not remember whether the tape had come to an end and the tape recorder had simply shut itself off or whether, instead, the tape had continued to run for awhile without recording any sounds. (When M.C.M. asked to hear the tape, the owner said he had no idea what had become of it and didn’t believe it was in his possession anymore.)

The hypothesis of a nocturnal ne’er-do-well, who surreptitiously let himself into the bar after it had been locked up for the night, was also implied by a bizarre occurrence that was discovered on the morning after an election day, when the bar had been officially closed. The owner recalled:

I came in here as usual about eleven o’clock, and I looked—happened to glance at the cash register behind the bar . . . the drawers were open, and when I glanced at it, it looked like the cash drawer was filled with a whole lot of little mirrors where the nickels and dimes and what have you [go]. . . . And I thought that was very strange. So I went around and opened the cash register drawer. Well, it never occurred to me that . . . the cash register was filled with water. It was filled right to the brim with water. And when I yanked the thing open, the water went all down my trousers and I became very wet.

So I’m trying to figure out what happened. This is—this part of the building is a one-story building. And I thought, maybe the roof leaked. But I knew it had not rained the night before. It was as dry as could be. Now, what caused it? I don’t know what caused it. But I tried the register and it would not work. So I called the cash register company and they came around and said it was shorted out and has to go back to the shop. So

they took the register away and they told me it was going to be five-hundred dollars to fix it.

So I called my insurance company. And they sent an adjuster around. He said, “What happened?” And I said, “I don’t know what happened.” And he said, “How did the water get in the drawer?” He said, “You probably had a leak in the roof.” I said, “I don’t think so, but maybe.” He said, “Do you mind if I look at the roof?” I said, “Not at all.” And he goes up. And he comes down and he says, “I don’t think your roof leaked.” I said, “I don’t think so either.” He said, “How did the water get in the drawer?” “I don’t know.” And he said, “I am going to recommend to the—my company that you—that they not pay you.” So I said, “Well, look. I pay an awful lot of insurance around here, and I think you should pay the bill.” I think there was some kind of an arrangement there—maybe paid half or whatever it was.

But what I didn’t tell him, because he really wouldn’t have believed me . . . was that in addition to the water being in the drawer of the cash register right to the brim, that across the other side of the bar there were thirty wine carafes . . . half carafes and full carafes and every one of them were filled to the brim with water. . . . I also did not tell the adjuster that . . . I noticed on the shelves right above the register, there were thirty, forty glasses up there also filled to the brim with water. I also noticed that the speed rack [a rack holding frequently used bottles of alcohol] which has got to be twelve feet long and . . . four inches wide, was also filled with water.

Despite his out-of-pocket expenses, the proprietor appeared more amused than chagrined by the episode. The insurance adjuster “never did put the cause down because no one knew what it was,” he concluded cheerfully. The owner did not regard vandalism as a credible hypothesis because no past or present employee, or neighbor, was ever identified as a plausible perpetrator; nor was a miscreant ever detected or caught red-handed by himself or members of his staff. He maintained that many of the ghostly occurrences, such as the glasses rattling and the chandelier crystal swinging, could not have been caused by human agency. Moreover, he reasoned, “Who would take—even a prankster wouldn’t take the time to fill up all those carafes with water.”

When asked to disclose his own theory regarding the ghostly occurrences, the proprietor volunteered, “Well, I certainly believe that there’s something going on. It’s just very interesting and I know other people don’t have these things.” Although he did not advertise the ghosts and said he did not discuss them much with customers, he clearly derived vicarious pleasure from observing what he regarded as amusing ghostly antics. He recalls:

Another interesting episode that lasted for quite a while—quite a few months—was that when we get busy at the bar . . . the girls would end up on all the bar stools . . . and that would be thirteen, fourteen, fifteen girls sitting there. . . . And because of the lack of additional seating, the guys all stand right behind their wife, girlfriend, whatever. And at ten, eleven o’clock at night one of our entities . . . will go down and . . . blow on the back of [a girl’s] neck. And the girl will turn around and say to her boyfriend . . . “What did you do that for?” And the next minute, you’d see him [blow] down the next one, and the . . . next girl would do the same thing. All the way down the bar. . . . And the poor guys—they really were doing nothing except listening to the music and maybe

drinking their beer or whatever they were drinking. And it was very interesting. And the first time I saw it I couldn't believe it. . . . It would take him a half an hour to go from one end of the bar to the other end. . . . And I would purposely position myself so I could see if it was going to happen again—this blowing on the back of the girls' necks scene. Because it's a funny scene. . . . I knew when the first one started that it would continue all the way down to the end of the bar. It always did.

One incident was reportedly witnessed en masse by numerous patrons and it impressed the owner perhaps more than any other single event. (However, he was not able to recall the names or identities of specific customers that had been present that evening, and M.C.M. was consequently unable to corroborate his account in follow-up interviews.) He remembers:

A local television station, just before Halloween, sent a crew over here . . . because they had heard about our ghosts. . . . And they were here the entire day. . . . We were rather crowded [when the show aired] and we made an announcement over our PA system . . . saying that our portion of this TV show is going to be on, and if anybody would like to look at it they could. And the television was in the bar. And the television worked perfectly . . . both before and after this incident. . . . When the announcer said that we were going to the General Wayne Inn in Merion, PA . . . as soon as he showed the first scene of the inside of this building . . . the whole picture started to go very, very slowly clockwise, all the way around. And all fifty people in the bar were looking at this and wondering what was going on. . . . And the whole thing just kept going around completely, and came back up to straight again, and kept right on going again until our portion was over. . . . And everybody's looking at each other. What happened? Now, I inquired that night to see if anybody else saw the show . . . [at] home or somewhere. . . . We were the only one that got this action. . . . And it never did that before, and it never did it afterwards, and no one else in the whole neighborhood had it that way.

A male medium contacted the owner in 1985 and disclosed that the dead Hessian soldier had visited him in a dream. The soldier, he said, was not at peace. He was tormented because he had not received a proper burial, and he wanted the medium to locate his remains so that he could be buried in a dignified manner. Accordingly, the medium asked the owner if he could dig in an area of the cellar where the Hessian had indicated he was buried. Because the medium claimed that he customarily worked as a building contractor, and since he was willing to provide his own equipment and expenses, the owner allowed him to begin excavating along the cellar's southernmost wall. Work proceeded for several months but although a couple of unidentified bones were encountered, and an old root cellar was unearthed, no recognizable human skeleton was found. Nor was a secret passageway discovered. The enterprise was halted when it was brought to the owner's attention that the excavation—which had proceeded south through the cellar wall and for a good distance beyond—threatened to collapse a substantial portion of the parking lot.

METHOD

Participants

Experimental Assistant. T.C. was a writer interested in the experimental investigation of haunted locations. She agreed to conduct sensitives and controls on a tour of the reportedly haunted premises while “blind” to what had been described by witnesses.

Sensitives. Three women who believed themselves capable of sensing ghosts, if any were present, agreed to participate in an experiment at an ostensibly haunted site. P.R. earned her living as a professional psychic. L.S. was an artist whose prior account of witnessing an apparition had prompted an earlier investigation. M.K. was a photographer whose anecdotal reports of unusual psychic experiences had led M.C.M. to suspect that she may possess greater than average psychic sensitivity.

Controls. Three men who were skeptically disposed toward the possibility of sensing ghosts agreed to participate in the experiment. J.M. and A.C. were members of an international magical society devoted to the pursuit of arcane truths through magical rituals. T.D. owned his own computer company and was skeptical of all paranormal claims.

Photographers. L.S. and M.K. were accomplished photographers. Both agreed to take photographs with infrared film at the ostensibly haunted location.

Psychologist. G.R.S. was a psychologist with expertise in both parapsychology and personality. She agreed to evaluate percipients’ projective psychological tests while she was “blind” to what they had reported.

Test Materials

Floor Plan Test. Each floor-plan set contained five pages that depicted the cellar, main floor, second floor, third floor, and fourth floor of the General Wayne Inn in Merion, Pennsylvania. The floor-plan set had a cover sheet with instructions. Sensitives were asked to make a tour of the premises and mark with an “X” on the floor plan any location where they felt the presence of a ghost. Controls were asked to mark an “X” at locations where they believed someone credulous might report a ghost.

Checklist Test. A four-page checklist contained 100 brief descriptions of ghostly characteristics: 35 items that described features of the reported disturbances, and 63 items did not resemble the ghostly phenomena reported by witnesses. (The owner was unable to label two ambiguous items as either true or false. Because responses to the items could not be scored, they were not included in the analyses.) The order of items on the checklist was randomly determined. Each description checklist had a cover sheet with instructions. Sensitives were asked to circle items they believed to be true for the ghost (or ghosts) and to cross out items they believed were not true. If they were uncertain about an item, they were instructed not to respond to it. Controls were asked to circle items they thought a credulous person might report, and to cross out items they did not think anyone would have reported. If controls were uncertain about how to mark an item, they were instructed not to respond to it.

House-Tree-Person/Person Test. The reader is referred to Maher and Hansen (1995, p. 36) for a description of the projective psychological drawing test that was administered to three witnesses in the present investigation. The test has been used in several investigations of ostensibly haunted locations (Maher & Hansen, 1992; 1995; Maher & Schmeidler, 1975; Rogo, 1982).

Test Equipment

Magnetic-field Tests. Evidence indicates that electromagnetic fields can have physiological effects on living organisms. Ambient magnetic fields penetrating the body produce alternating electric current within the body that may significantly affect the body's biochemistry (Decker, 1990; Shulman, 1990; Zipse, 1993). The current produced by a magnetic field is proportional to the strength times frequency of the field. A static magnetic field exists in nature but it has a frequency of zero, and thus produces no current in the body.

Magnetic fields of varying magnitudes are produced by common human artifacts. Sources of exposure to electromagnetism in the home or office include fluorescent lights, electronic devices, light dimmers, electric blankets, transformers inside consumer devices, computers, television sets, and plumbing-related installations. Magnetic fields are difficult to shield, and their magnitudes at different locations within a home or office may vary considerably. It has been suggested that power-frequency magnetic fields, or sudden changes in the magnitudes of such fields (such as may occur when moving from one interior area to another), may be related to percipients' reports of ghosts and apparitions—although evidence for such an effect has been inconsistent (Maher & Hansen, 1997; Persinger, 1985; Persinger, Tiller, & Koren, 2000; Roll, Maher, & Brown, 1992; Roll & Nichols, 2000).

In the present investigation, M.C.M. used a TriField Alphalab Electromagnetic Pollution Meter to gather magnetic-field data at 38 experimental sites. She noted the meter readings in milligauss (calibrated at 60 Hz) at the relevant sites depicted on a copy of the floor plan. The TriField meter is frequency weighted (i.e., reads the product of magnetic-field strength times frequency) to display the "true magnitude" of fields affecting the body. (For example, a 3-milligauss field-strength at 60 Hz will read "3" on the meter, while a three milligauss field-strength at 120 Hz will read "6" on the meter.) Magnetic fields are vector quantities, and their specifications include both magnitude and direction. The TriField meter uses three field-detecting coils oriented in three directions. A circuit amplifies the signals to give them the proper frequency weighting, and the network combines the outputs nonlinearly to approximate the true magnitude of ambient magnetic fields impacting the body.

Photography Tests. L.S. used a Kodak Wratten Filter No. 89B and Kodak High Speed B&W Infrared Film (HIE 135-36 #2481) with a Nikon camera (50-mm lens) and tripod to make eight photographs of sites at the inn. M.K. used a different Nikon camera with the same type of lens, film, and filter to make 24 photographs of the premises. The photographers developed the infrared film and made prints from the negatives in their respective darkrooms. M.C.M. used a Polaroid SX-70 Land Camera with Polaroid film and flashbulb attachment to make 68 Polaroid tests at experimental sites.

Video Tests. Video tests were made by M.C.M. at 12 sites with a Sony AV-3400 Videocorder equipped with a Sony AC-3400 Power Adaptor and Sony AVC-3450 portable video camera. The camera was fitted with a Neuvocon tube for recording in low light levels. Sony ½ inch, B&W, reel-to-reel, ½ hour videotapes were used. The camera was usually mounted on a Sony VCT 20A Elevator Tripod, but the Videocorder was also equipped with a 3-hr battery pack for mobility in handheld recording.

Audio Tests. Tests were made by M.C.M. at three locations with a Sony Electro-Voice 635 omnidirectional microphone and Sony cassette tape recorder using a 90-minute TDK High Bias audiocassette tape.

Procedure

Planning and preparation for the investigation took place in New York City. M.C.M. gathered equipment and materials, and recruited participants for an experiment with sensitives and controls. She advised recruits that when the experimental tests were over, a TV crew documenting the investigation would likely ask them to reenact their roles in the investigation. If they consented, they would be required to sign a consent form or “release” so that the material could be aired on TV. Beyond that, participants were told only that on the evening of August 25th they would be escorted to a location outside New York City, where they would remain overnight. They were asked to be ready to leave their homes by 7:30 p.m. and were told that they would receive a telephone call about that time that would provide them with further instructions. All participants graciously agreed to the stipulations required for their participation.

The experiment with sensitives and controls took place on August 25th at the General Wayne Inn in Merion, Pennsylvania. During the evening, M.C.M. (who had arrived in Philadelphia that afternoon) telephoned the experimental assistant, T.C., in New York City and asked her to contact the 2 sensitives who lived in Manhattan and arrange to meet them at Penn Station. T.C. was asked to purchase tickets and escort them to Philadelphia on the 8:20 p.m. train. The 3rd sensitive, who lived outside New York City, preferred to drive to the experimental location, and she was instructed to meet the experimental entourage at 9:30 p.m. at the Philadelphia General Station. The control participants were also contacted, but they were instructed to take a later train to Philadelphia. The staggering of arrival times for sensitives and controls was intended to keep the two groups separated, and to preclude an idle interval of waiting, for the controls, before they could begin their tests.

M.C.M. met the participants at the Philadelphia General station at the appointed hour and accompanied them, in the sensitive’s car, to a nearby restaurant for refreshments and a brief period of relaxation before the tests began. Because the inn operated as a bar and restaurant, it was not possible to begin the tests until the establishment closed for the night, and employees had vacated the premises. When they arrived at the inn, M.C.M. remained with the participants outside on the grounds until the building was empty of occupants and the owner and his employees had all driven away.

M.C.M. then entered the inn and made a tour to insure that everything was in order and that lights in the rooms were turned on. Subsequently, T.C. made a tour of the premises to acquaint herself with the rooms as they related to the floor-plan set. M.C.M. invited the sensitives to decide among themselves what their order of participation would be. The 1st sensitive entered the inn while the other 2 participants remained outside the inn with M.C.M.

T.C. provided the sensitive with a floor-plan set attached to a clipboard and a copy of the written instructions. T.C.’s duties included accompanying participants to insure that each visited all of the rooms and other areas depicted on the floor plans. She was instructed to offer assistance if confusion with respect to the floor plans arose, or if an unforeseen accident or emergency occurred. Otherwise, she was asked to remain unobtrusively behind participants so as not to disturb their deliberations. When the 1st sensitive had completed her responses to the floor plan, T.C. escorted her to an enclosed porch on the main floor. No disturbances had been reported at this site, and it had been designated as an experimenter’s area and was not included in the floor-plan test. The sensitive gave her floor-plan set to T.C. who provided her with the forms and written instructions for the checklist test. While the 1st sensitive completed the checklist test, the 2nd sensitive began her tour of the premises. When the 2nd sensitive reached the upper floors of the inn, the assistant came downstairs to start the 3rd sensitive on a tour of the inn. After each

sensitive completed the checklist, she was invited to provide her anecdotal impressions of the haunting, which were recorded by M.C.M. on audiotape.

Because of the lateness of the hour, the control participants, who were met at the train station by the TV segment producer and escorted to the inn, were asked to each choose a different floor on which to begin touring the premises so that they might do so concurrently. M.C.M., the producer, and the sensitives remained outside on the grounds. One of the control participants, after inspecting the premises, declared that there was no ghost, and he declined to complete the floor-plan and checklist tests. After the 2 other controls completed their tests, T.C. gave all of the test materials to M.C.M., who locked them in her briefcase. The producer subsequently drove T.C., the control participants, and 1 sensitive to a nearby hotel where overnight accommodations had been arranged.

M.C.M. gave each of the 2 remaining sensitives a roll of B&W high-speed infrared film, and asked them to make photographs at any site where they sensed the presence of a ghost. L.S. began by photographing the main stairs where the hostess had reported an apparition, while M.K. went upstairs to photograph the George Washington Bedchamber Dining Room, where the séance had been held. She returned shortly to request another roll of film because she believed she had loaded the first one improperly. When L.S. finished photographing the locations that interested her, she had difficulty unloading the film from her camera. She reported that her camera had inexplicably “jammed” in the middle of rewinding the film, and when she opened it to see what was the matter she found a jumble of film inside. When the sensitives were ready to depart, M.C.M. telephoned the manager, as had been prearranged, who returned to lock up. The 2 sensitives and M.C.M. then drove to the hotel in the sensitive’s car.

On the following night, M.C.M. went to the inn at approximately 11:30 p.m. with video equipment. The proprietor was there, and M.C.M. asked him to document his account of the disturbances by responding to the items on the checklist and marking the relevant locations on a copy of the floor plan. After the owner completed his responses, M.C.M. made video tests, ranging from 5 to 20 minutes, at 10 sites. Approximately 6 hours were spent at the inn.

M.C.M. returned to the inn the next night to continue testing. She made tests with Polaroid film at various site locations, and 2 sound tests with a tape recorder at sites in the basement and on the second floor. At approximately 3:30 a.m., M.C.M. set her portable tape recorder on the fireplace mantle in the bar. After the tape recorder was activated, M.C.M. left the inn, locking the door behind her.

From August 29-31, M.C.M. tape-recorded interviews with witnesses that were conducted by the TV segment director and simultaneously filmed by a TV production crew. When it did not interfere with filming, M.C.M. conducted supplementary interviews and recorded them on videotape. She made additional tests with Polaroid film and administered House-Tree-Person/Person psychological tests to three witnesses who agreed to be tested. The test responses were sent to G.R.S. who did a preliminary analysis and subsequently added more details. On August 31, two sensitives returned to Philadelphia to reenact their participation in the study for the TV cameras. On October 15, 1993, M.C.M. revisited the inn to collect magnetic-field data. She also made 40 additional Polaroid tests on this occasion.

RESULTS

Scoring

Unlike a typical ESP laboratory test in which targets are randomly drawn for every participant, the floor plan and checklist tests contain the same target and control locations and the same descriptive characteristics (true and false) for all of the participants. This places constraints upon interpretation of the results, because participants' responses cannot be assumed to be wholly independent. Group probability values have been derived by a method suggested by Markwick (see Maher & Hansen (1995, p. 42).

Floor-Plan Test Results

Table 1 presents the results of sensitives and controls on the floor-plan test. Participants' patterns of responding appeared idiosyncratic, and sensitives did not exhibit a tendency to mark the same locations on the floor plan. As can be seen in Table 1, 1 sensitive's location responses showed significant correspondence to the locations of disturbances reported by witnesses ($p = .026$), and sensitives' combined responses showed suggestive similarity to the witnesses' reports ($p = .084$). No control's location responses resembled the reports of witnesses and the combined responses of controls also showed no similarity to the witnesses' accounts.

TABLE 1
FLOOR-PLAN RESULTS OF SENSITIVES AND CONTROLS

	Target site Affirmative	Control site Affirmative	Target site Negative	Control site Negative	Fisher exact Probability
<i>Sensitives</i>					
PR	3	4	11	27	.3742
MK	3	0	11	31	.0256
LS	3	6	11	25	.5826
Combined	$p = .0844$				
<i>Controls</i>					
JM	2	4	12	27	.6176
AC	1	5	13	26	.9096
Combined	$p = .7902$				

Checklist Test Results

Results for sensitives and controls on the checklist test are displayed in Table 2. As can be seen in the table, the checklist responses of 1 sensitive were suggestively similar to the

witnesses' descriptions of the phenomena ($p = .059$), but sensitives' combined responses were not significantly or suggestively related to the witnesses' reports. No control's responses to the checklist were significant, and controls' combined responses did not show any significant or suggestive correspondence to characteristics of the phenomena reported by witnesses.

TABLE 2
CHECKLIST RESULTS OF SENSITIVES AND CONTROLS

	Target site Affirmative	Control site Affirmative	Target site Negative	Control site Negative	Fisher exact Probability
Sensitives					
PR	23	38	12	25	.3770
MK	5	6	1	11	.0595
LS	18	31	13	29	.3608
Combined $p = .1109$					
Controls					
AC	9	13	12	29	.2551
JM	21	36	13	26	.4476
Combined $p = .2491$					

Magnetic-Field Test Results

A total of 173 magnetic-field readings were taken at the inn. Target-site readings ranged from 1 milligauss to 30 milligauss while those at control sites ranged from 1 milligauss to 100 milligauss. Magnetic-field magnitudes at target versus control sites were compared with the Mann-Whitney U test. The target- and control-site differences for peak values ($p = .228$), mean values ($p = .765$), and all measured values ($p = .490$) were not significant. Four target-sites had peak magnetic-field magnitudes of 10 milligauss or more, as compared with only one control site (which displayed a peak of 100 milligauss). However, only 1 sensitive marked any of these four target sites, and she marked only one of them. Her result on the floor-plan test was not significant. The sensitive who achieved a significant score on the test marked only areas with magnetic-field magnitudes of 3 milligauss or less.

Photography Test Results

Infrared photographs taken by 1 of the sensitives (L.S.) contained conspicuous light streaks that ran across four of the eight prints. The photographs and negatives were shown to a photography expert. He determined that the camera had been opened in the vicinity of a light

source before the film inside had been completely rewound onto the spool. His independent analysis corresponded with the sensitive's prior report that she had experienced a "camera jam" that forced her to open the camera and manually rewind film that had become tangled inside. Since the anomalous photographic effects had been satisfactorily explained, no further expert opinion was solicited.

Projective Test Results

The projective-test drawings were evaluated by G.R.S. who mailed her comments to M.C.M. The gender of percipients was provided to G.R.S. for evaluation purposes. One set of drawings prompted G.R.S. to describe the respondent as "highly competent," "well organized," and "careful about detail." G.R.S. saw no indications of exceptional ESP ability in the drawings, and she believed the respondent to be someone "not open to inner impressions" who "likes to be realistic." She commented, "Nothing here suggests a poltergeist focus; orderliness is too important to her."

A male witness was evaluated as "realistic," "masculine," and a "four-square type of person" but one who was "not fussy about details." G.R.S. wrote: "I'd expect any unusual report he gave to be worth attention as having a basis in fact, though I'd not necessarily accept his interpretation of it." Indications of "strong aggressive tendencies not overtly recognized" and "not under conscious control," as well as a house drawn with "gaps at its base through which anything might enter," led G.R.S. to suggest that he might potentially be a source of poltergeist activity. However, judging from his projective-test responses G.R.S. would not, she wrote, "dismiss what he said as pathology or fantasy."

The third set of drawings suggested to G.R.S. that the respondent was a "weak, unhappy, immature" person who "denies that his life truly represents him." The test responses implied "withdrawal from the real world and from thinking things through." The drawings further indicated to G.R.S. that the respondent "feels not only incomplete but grotesquely unbalanced." She commented, "His view of women is so unrealistic as to hint at schizophrenia." Although she judged the individual to be "open to inner impressions, perhaps in an unhealthy, fantasizing way," she cautioned: "If he reported an apparition, I'd suspect pathology."

DISCUSSION

The field researcher faces a special challenge. Confronted with a morass of seemingly chaotic phenomena, can order and precision—so germane to the goals of science—be imposed without obfuscating the nature of the phenomena under consideration? The present case, with its array of diverse features, illustrates the problem. Reports of apparitions, footsteps, doors opening spontaneously, and sudden gusts of cold air vie for coherent explanation alongside descriptions of electrical and electronic malfunctions, furniture and objects being overturned or strewn about, glasses rattling in cupboards, and water appearing in the most unlikely places.

Some may prefer to dispose of the enigma by maintaining that there is nothing in the percipients' reports that demands a paranormal interpretation. Indeed, some of the disturbances might be explained by positing that a nocturnal miscreant—someone with a key, perhaps a past or present employee—habitually entered the inn after-hours to gain access to the liquor supply. The perpetrator, if sufficiently imaginative (or deranged) might have left behind bizarre

indications of ghostly activity to divert suspicion and avoid detection. Yet neither the owner nor his son, the tavern manager, who had occasions to enter the inn when it was closed, ever encountered an interloper. There is no evidence to support the premise of a miscreant save the disturbances themselves.

Other reports, with more or less difficulty, can also be explained without invoking ghostly enterprise. It is conceivable that employees who were engaged in a violent (but whispered) dispute overturned chairs and tables in the locker room, and then quickly left the area. But it is not possible that the hypothetical culprits fled by means of the only third-floor exit, because they would have encountered the owner who rushed up the stairs as soon as the loud, disruptive sounds were heard. A search found no one in the third-floor rooms or on the exposed stairway leading to the attic. The perpetrators could not have hidden in the attic storage room because it was kept locked.

There is possible merit in the conjecture that conventional vibrations or electrical problems may account for some of the reports. A building nearly three centuries old is likely to be more vulnerable than modern structures to vibrations caused by drilling and the like. Indeed, according to the owner, vibrations from a jackhammer in the street had caused an antique glass pane stored on the third floor to shatter years before. Perhaps a cupboard suspended from the ceiling or a crystal hung more delicately than its neighbors could have been set into motion by subtle vibrations, even if they originated from a source at some distance from the property. Or possibly the inn's equipment or deteriorated electrical wiring played an unknown role in the disturbances. The owner's wife, for a period of time, customarily went to the third-floor office at about three in the afternoon and turned on the photocopier and adding machine. The timing of her actions corresponded suggestively with the time at which glasses in the overhead cabinet were observed to begin shaking—that is, after the lunch shift was over and employees were relaxing in the bar. But if vibrations caused by the inn's equipment or wiring were implicated in the phenomenon, it remains to be explained why the spectacle was intermittent and did not happen every time the equipment was turned on. Moreover, other odd phenomena witnessed during the customary afternoon activity lull, such as the overturned furniture and the apparition observed on the main stairs, were not likely caused by subtle vibrations.

Regarding apparitions, such reports are routinely dismissed as flights of fancy or hysteria. And in the present case there is some indication, based on the results of a projective psychological test, that one percipient's experience may have been modulated by a psychopathological condition. But this does not explain the reports of percipients that didn't exhibit symptoms of pathology. Although the use of projective tests remains controversial, and evaluations drawn from them must be regarded cautiously, it seems unlikely that more extensive psychological testing would have detected unbalanced mental states in all of the percipients. No target for the floor-plan or checklist test rested on the testimony of the witness whose drawings exhibited pathological features because his experiences occurred in locations that were also cited in other witnesses' reports. Moreover, M.C.M. did not learn of his experiences until after the checklist had been devised.

Some may find themselves impatient with conventional rationales for the disturbances and protest that psi phenomena of all varieties are too readily dismissed because of their subtle, borderline nature. And when scientific tests were administered to sensitive individuals brought to the locale, both significant and suggestive scores were obtained. Whereas the ghost hypothesis receives only tentative support from these data because only 1 sensitive scored significantly, control participants showed no ability to deduce the reported locations or features of the

phenomena. Thus, the positive results demonstrated by sensitives do not appear to have resulted from ubiquitous stereotypes regarding ghosts that caused witnesses and sensitives to respond to the locale in a concordant manner.

The sensitives believed themselves capable of sensing ghosts, and that is what they attempted to do. Tests of magnetic-field magnitudes at target and control locations provided no evidence to suggest that strong magnetic fields or sudden changes in field magnitudes had caused witnesses (or sensitives) to mistakenly interpret certain locations as sites of ghostly activity. Yet, other physical tests—such as those using infrared photography, Polaroid photography, videorecording, and audiotaping—were unsuccessful and produced no conspicuous anomalies that might support the premise of a ghost. And the possibility that the sensitives' positive scores reflect psi-test ability, rather than sensitivity to ghosts, cannot be experimentally addressed and therefore cannot be discounted.

But even if one adopts a paranormal hypothesis for the disturbances, the combination of haunting and poltergeist features places a strain on classical interpretation, and theory falters. Apparitions invite a survival hypothesis whereas poltergeist disturbances do not. If the widely accepted theoretical distinction between ghosts and poltergeists is valid, we ought to be able to routinely classify such cases according to dichotomous variables: place-centered or person-centered; long lasting or brief, discarnate agent or one that is living. Yet all too frequently the characteristics associated with haunts commingle with those that have come to be associated with poltergeists.

Nor can the phenomena conveniently be subsumed into one or the other classification. If a classical “ghost” were responsible for the poltergeist-like effects, the revenant would appear to be an RSPK virtuoso. And how do we fit the poltergeist notion of unconscious motivation into the hypothesis of a ghost? An unconscious ghost? A ghost with an id? Attributing the apparitions to a living poltergeist agent is no more rational or parsimonious, for it imbues the agent with remarkable unconscious powers of telepathic hypnosis. To presume that an RSPK agent is unconsciously generating hallucinations in his or her associates strains credulity. Nor could the agent likely simulate the hallucinations fraudulently.

Since the combination of haunting and poltergeist features is the rule rather than the exception in these cases, perhaps it is time to dispense with orthogonal interpretations. Classical theory has failed to make good on its premises. Whatever ghosts and poltergeists may be, it is increasingly apparent that they are facets of the same phenomenon. A productive approach in future research might be to study their similarities rather than focusing on their differences.

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