

wrong and they can prove it; then they tell you you're right but it isn't important; then they tell you it's important but they knew it all along''.

It's a shame that this understanding has not informed the whole of Gratzner's book. A decade ago he published a useful collection⁴ about how science has featured in literary works, which admirably filled a notable lacuna in discussions of the role of science in human culture.

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1. Henry H. Bauer. *Beyond Velikovsky: The History of a Public Controversy*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984; chapter 8, especially pp. 145–46.
2. Henry H. Bauer, *Science or Pseudoscience: Magnetic Healing, Psychic Phenomena and Other Scientific Heterodoxies*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001; especially pp. 116–18.
3. Henry Bauer and Patrick Huyghe, "Those Who Lapse: Are Mavericks Bad Scientists or Just Unlucky?", <http://www1.mightywords.com/> and use their Quick Search for Bauer or Huyghe.
4. Walter Gratzner, *Literary Companion to Science*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990.

The Field Guide to Ghosts and Other Apparitions by Hilary Evans and Patrick Huyghe. New York: HarperCollins, 2000. 166 pp. \$13.00 (p). ISBN 0-380-80264-3

Hilary Evans and Patrick Huyghe are names likely to be familiar to *JSE* readers. Evans is the Director of the Mary Evans Picture Library (UK) and has published some brilliant ideas about apparitions (e.g., Evans 1984, 1986, 1987). Huyghe is the editor of *The Anomalist*, a popular chronicle of mysterious phenomena. I was excited for the opportunity to review their collaborative effort, which is the latest in a series of "Field Guides into the Unknown" from Quill (a HarperCollins imprint). My respect for the authors prompted high expectations for this work, and overall the book is charming. Spanning only 166 pages, it is a quick read and easily comprehended.

Evans and Huyghe present short cases of apparitions derived primarily from previously published material. The cases, however, are divided into three main sections that seemingly follow from the authors' main thesis. This thesis basically argues that the content of apparitions appears to fall into one of three classes: ghosts of the past, present, and future. Before *JSE* readers think that the ghost of Charles Dickens visited the authors, let me add that the book does not merely restate popular theories of "place memories" and kindred notions. Instead, the patterns that define this three-fold typology are used to illustrate

the premise that the ghost experience is a phenomenon of time itself. I recall Charles Berlitz making a similar comment pertaining to UFOs (“people might be seeing images of our own *future* crafts”). The time hypothesis is an interesting proposition that contrasts nicely with the more traditional explanations of discarnate agency, psi, and psychiatric symptomatology. Not too worry; the authors also discuss these explanations.

The Field Guide to Ghosts and Other Apparitions is a happy marriage of ghost narratives and theoretical speculation, but it is not a work with a strong empirical foundation. After reading the book, I had two uneasy feelings that deserve comment. First, I kept pondering, “who was the intended audience for this book?” It is not an in-depth scholarly work, but rather an entertaining overview of the ghost experience and its popular conceptualizations—combined with some clever ideas. Experienced parapsychologists of course neither need the narratives nor a simplified overview. Interested laypersons, on the other hand, might be the ideal audience. But, this audience might also be misled in thinking that some of the cited “experts” such as self-styled ghost-hunters are indeed experts. This brings me to my second source of anxiety. In particular, I was dismayed that such “ghost-hunters” were consulted for this book and that their organizations are listed as resources in the Appendix. A brief section on “Ghost Hunting” (a theory-laden term!) in the book’s opening (pp. 12–14) is almost entirely based on these questionable individuals. For instance, one ghost-hunter boasts that anomalous effects “tend only to appear in photographs of haunted places” (p. 12). This is inaccurate, as I have discussed repeatedly (Houran, 1997; Houran & Brugger, 2000). Furthermore, proper control conditions are rarely used even in studies of haunts and poltergeists conducted by parapsychologists (Houran & Brugger, 2000). The relationship between electromagnetic fields and apparitions is another issue that is distorted by ghost-hunters, who likely have never heard of Michael A. Persinger or understand what his studies suggest (see e.g., Persinger & Cameron, 1986; Persinger, Tiller, & Koren, 2000).

I believe my criticisms of the book are not being overstated, and I am not the only one to voice concern over the proliferation of ghost-hunting groups. Nancy Zingrone’s (2000) Presidential Message in a recent issue of the *PA News* echoes some of my points. I used to regard ghost-hunters as harmless organizations, akin to folklorists and history buffs who reenact Civil War battles on weekends as a hobby. But, this view is naïve. It seems that these individuals are being increasingly consulted (i.e., mistaken) by the popular media as parapsychologists. They are dangerous because they do not understand the psychology and parapsychology of these experiences, and the genuine authorities go unrecognized. It is no wonder why skeptics such as James Randi or Joe Nickell have little difficulty making paranormal interpretations of ghostly phenomena look silly in the popular media.

This leads me back to my first question of the intended audience. Those most in need of a simply presented overview are laypeople and ghost-hunters. I

cannot envision either group fully appreciating the clever ideas dispersed throughout the book. That is fine, however, because the clever ideas will primarily only benefit parapsychologists. Still, the notion that the phenomenology of apparitions suggests we are facing a *time* phenomenon deserves an even richer, more empirical treatment. Therefore, parapsychologists will want this book to appreciate the authors' thinking that has led them to their provocative conclusions. Following Evans and Huyghe's leads with more detailed work would be an ideal topic for graduate or post-graduate students in psychology, parapsychology, or anthropology.

I may be putting too much burden on the shoulders of two people whom I greatly admire. They have written a fine, inexpensive book that is a welcome alternative to many other commercial treatments of ghosts. My critical remarks about the book stem from a deep concern for the topic of apparitions, haunts, and poltergeists. These phenomena constitute my main research interests, and I am devoted to promoting a serious study of them by mainstream scholars and scientists. The inclusion of some questionable sources (several listed under organizations in the United States, pp. 161–162) disappointed me. I was moved to contact Patrick Huyghe about my concerns. He listened with an open mind and partially agreed with me. He pointed out that the inclusion of the appended list of organizations was a last-minute request by the editor, who wanted it so that readers could report their personal experiences (personal communication, Huyghe, March 23, 2001). In addition, Huyghe deliberately developed a mixed list of organizations because in his experience the more scholarly and academic associations often do not give correspondents the support and feedback they seek as they struggle with understanding their paranormal experiences.

Assuming Huyghe's depiction is accurate, the parapsychological community at large is partly responsible for the popularity of ghost-hunters. Perhaps this book is a wake-up call for our field to better temper academics with sympathy and public education. We must be mindful of our approaches to both the public's hunger for information on ghosts, as well as to the popular media which is eager to satisfy that hunger with resources that it may not even realize are dubious.

Let me clarify that my criticisms do not preclude me from recommending this book. The easy reading and delightful illustrations by Harry Trumbore will make this a wonderful introduction to the topic of apparitions for the layperson, especially someone who is trying to understand a personal ghost experience. Parapsychologists should seriously consider referring such individuals to this book when they are approached for consultation. However, I would not recommend leaving such a layperson/experient alone to digest the contents of the book. Responsible scholars and scientists will want to discuss the contents with these readers in order to guarantee that they come away with a proper understanding of the status of the field (and its researchers), as well as the science behind the experiences that prompt the reading of a book like this in the first place.

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