



Some Musings on Things Paranormal Can Water Explain Some Ghost Cases?

The Stone Tape Theory

For years paranormal investigators have spoken about the 'Stone tape theory' as an explanation for some types of apparition. Referred to as the recording apparition, such manifestations characteristically are seen to perform some action without reference or acknowledgement to either the witnesses or to their surroundings. A Figure moving through a wall where once a door stood, or climbing a long removed staircase are classic examples of such encounters.

Rather like a TV programme can be recorded onto a tape or DVD, events or emotions can be recorded into the very fabric of buildings or indeed the surrounding ground. The events are then played back at a later time causing the viewer to interpret the recorded impressions as an apparition.

The idea of past events being recorded is far from new: Sir William Barrett , Physicist & founding member of the Society for Psychical Research suggested in the late 19 th Century;

“In certain cases of hauntings and apparitions, some kind of local imprint, on material structures or places, has been left by some past events occurring to certain persons, who when on Earth, lived or were closely connected with that particular locality; an echo or phantom of these events becoming perceptible to those now living.”

The term 'Stone Tape ' seems to have been first used in a BBC television play of the same name aired in 1972. Written by playwright Nigel Kneale , it follows a team of scientists eager to discover a new recording medium and who take over a gothic mansion only to discover... Sorry! I'm spoiling the story, {for those of you interested then the original BBC play has been released on DVD by bfi Video Publishing }.

A major problem with the Stone tape theory has always been that there is no satisfactory explanation as to how or why such a recording could take place or how the solid structure and fabric of a location is able to store information about events that took place previously. Researchers have suggested that somehow iron oxide (rust) particles within the structure or local environment might behave like the iron oxide particles used to store information on video and audio tape. Initially, this sounds like a promising explanation until the mechanism of tape recording is considered:

A complicated electro-mechanical mechanism is needed to ensure that the tape is passed through a powerful variable electro-magnetic field which changes the magnetisation of the iron oxide particles coated onto the tape thus storing the sounds & images as a series of magnetic fields. A further complex mechanism is needed to 'read' the stored magnetic fields and return them to a form we can watch or listen to. How any stone recording could be played back and influence later witnesses without this complex machinery makes the stone tape idea almost unworkable.

Another Possibility?

However, a possible hypothesis has emerged that may well explain how an environmental recording might work and it is supported by some scientists. The answer could lie in a substance that is a part of

just about every location where ghosts are to be found - common water! Water it appears from research being undertaken may even be capable of recording both human thoughts & emotions.

The notion that water might be able in some way to record emotions or impressions of past lives is itself not a new one. In the early 1960's Archaeologist and later psychical researcher T. C. Lethbridge together with his wife had a series of powerful experiences of "depression and fright" whilst walking close to a small stream on the beach at Ladram bay, Devon. He discovered that a suicide had taken place at the site some years before. Further research and experiences at other sites associated with water lead him to develop a theory that the water was able to record strong human emotions and that these may later affect subsequent visitors to the site.

Can Homeopathic medicine help us?

Science has brought this idea right up to date with eminent scientists subscribing to and testing the notion that water can retain some form of memory.

This breakthrough has come from a quite unexpected direction - Homeopathic Medicine.

For hundreds of years people have been using homeopathic medicines and remedies, they are today being used by millions of people worldwide with much reported success.

In Homeopathy a therapeutic agent is given to the patient but the agent is often toxic, so in order to prevent the person from being poisoned it is necessary to dilute it in water. In fact the therapeutic agent is diluted so much that all trace of the original agent is removed and the patient is effectively given nothing more than ordinary water. Of course, science could never accept this as a real world treatment - you can't give someone nothing but plain water and expect them to get better - but they get better regardless. Science simply ignored this anomaly and people continued to use the treatments without really caring how or why they treatment worked.

This attitude changed in the 1980's when an eminent French scientist and immunologist Professor Jacques Benveniste an expert in the field of allergy, made a rather strange discovery:

In particular he was studying a type of blood cell involved in allergic reactions - the basophile. When basophiles come into contact with an allergen such as pollen grains they become activated causing a telltale reaction. Benveniste developed a test that could tell if a person was allergic to something or not by observing the basophile reaction. But then, something utterly unexpected happened. A lab technician noticed that something appeared to have gone wrong with an experiment; a solution had been wrongly diluted, to levels similar to those used in homeopathic medicines, yet a strong reaction had been observed. The observed reaction was the same as if the allergen was still present. Suspecting an error had been made the experiment was repeated but again the same reaction took place - this seemed to be impossible.

Repeatable Results

Baffled, the team carried out hundreds of experiments in which the results remained consistent. The water, diluted until all trace of the original substance was removed continued to react as if the substance was still present - the water appeared to have a memory! Benveniste concluded that the configuration of molecules in water was biologically active; a journalist coined the term 'water memory' for this hypothesis. Benveniste asserted that this 'memory' could be digitized, transmitted, and reinserted into another sample of water, which would then contain the same active qualities as the first sample. The experiment has been repeated by researchers in labs around the World. Although there remains some controversy about this repeatability many scientists now accept that the water molecules do seem able to retain a memory for substances in which they have been in contact. Benveniste's research and its controversial conclusion were finally published in Nature Vol. 333 in June 1988.

For the moment, it serves little purpose to discuss the pros and cons of homeopathy but let us consider the possibility that water might indeed be able to develop a memory. Instead of a Stone tape theory how about a ' Water tape ' theory?

How might the water tape work?

Water exists as a component of most things - an average brick or stone wall for instance is between 7 and 15% water, the ground also has high water content, as indeed do we - in fact we are made up from more than 90% water!

Let us imagine that by some mechanism the water in everyday objects and locations could have a memory of events placed into its molecules - how could that happen?

Perhaps homeopathy may again be able to help us here; In order to make a effective remedy it is important to strongly agitate the water at every dilution stage - this is required in order for the water to pick-up the therapeutic properties of the substance that is being diluted.

When the water is agitated in this vigorous fashion it develops a small electro-magnetic charge. According to some researchers this electro-magnetic charge is what allows the memory to be implanted into the water.

Instead of the vigorous shaking of the water let us instead imagine that some person or event generates sufficient energy (perhaps during a traumatic or intense event) to allow the water molecules in nearby structures to become imprinted with a memory of the person or event to be played back at some later time to a receptive witness. But why make it even that complicated. Using well understood biological processes let us consider an even simpler way the water tape might function:

Imagine that our long deceased person exhales, maybe even their last breath! That act releases a large quantity of water vapour in the exhaled air, that water vapour has all the imprinted memories of the person. The water vapour droplets float free and some may eventually bond with the water already within the fabric of the location. As they bond, the memory becomes shared and so becomes fixed into the building or landscape. Years later a witness may simply inhale some of the imprinted water molecules as they evaporate into the air. The imprinted water inhaled through the lungs would pass their stored memories to the water within the bloodstream and thus to the brain of the witness where it may trigger a playback of the original event as a living memory which would appear more or less real to the percipient.

Is it possible to reinforce the case for the existence of a Water tape still further by examining some aspects of reported ghostly activity?

Ghosts and water memory

Ghosts and apparitions seem to have a limited lifespan, fading with time until they are no longer observable. Water in time evaporates and as the original molecules evaporate and disperse the memories & emotions they hold becomes weaker and fainter. The original molecules would continue to pass their imprinted memory to neighbouring molecules but with each successive copy the memory becomes less clear and distinct - this would be similar to making successive copies of a video tape, each copy being less clear and less distinct than the ones that went before it. The water may also evaporate completely; this of course would cause the imprinted memories to disappear completely.

Ghosts are frequently reported to become active following a disturbance, such as when renovation or demolition is carried out. Again, the water tape may offer an explanation for these particular phenomena:

Deep inside some structures the water may be 'locked in' and prevented from evaporation. Disturbing that security may cause the water that has been stored perhaps for decades to be released and permit its stored memories to be replayed. This water would retain a higher quality copy of the original event memory and thus the ghost may be witnessed as a strongly perceived event. Once the water has evaporated then the ghost will fade in a short time - a feature often reported in certain ghost cases.

Ghosts and apparitions are commonly observed in places where there is a close association with water in the environment, such as a stream for example. This constant supply of water may help to retain the imprinted memory and the freshness of the event memory recording.

Science investigates

Of course the notion of a water tape and a link to reports of apparitions and ghosts is at present nothing more than a series of speculations, full of problems and pitfalls.

Evidence supporting the hypothesis that water is able to store memories remains controversial but it is intriguing how many experiments appear to show this ability.

For example, researchers at the Heartmath Research Centre in the USA have developed technology that can detect and measure the capacity of water to amplify weak electromagnetic fields. They have found that the electromagnetic field produced by the human heart can be detected in a glass of water placed several feet away. They have also demonstrated that water exposed to weak electromagnetic fields has the property of amplifying the signal many times.

In 1996 Dr . David Schweitzer , grandson of Albert Schweitzer succeeded in photographing images of thoughts that had been impregnated in water: “ Demonstrating that water was capable of acting as a liquid memory system that could store information” .

Subsequently, Schweitzer developed a fluorescent microscope that enabled him to see how minute particles within the water were changed in response to thoughts and other influences.

Prior to his death, Benveniste continued with his original studies with water in relation to it's homeopathic abilities and discovered that electronic circuits can impress lasting information into the water and that low frequency electromagnetic radiation also affects the ability of the water to retain the 'memory information'.

Professor Emeritus William Tiller working with co-researcher Walter Dibble Jr . in the USA have had a great deal of success in significantly altering the chemistry of water by getting test subjects to impress their thoughts and intentions into the water. They describe the water as being “A special material, well suited for information / energy transfer from the intention domain into our conventional domain of cognition” .

Dr. Glen Rein , Director of the Quantum Biology Research Lab (and formerly of Stanford University) has gone on the record stating that “Physicists are aware of the existence of energy fields with properties, which are not explained by classical equations” .

The above represents a fraction of the ongoing work at more than a dozen Universities and Research Institutes around the World which are looking closely at the ability of water to retain information. Even NASA is exploring the uses of water as a memory medium for future space exploration probes!

The ability of water to somehow store information has inevitably many critics. Most notably the sceptic and magician-cum-paranormal researcher, James Randi .

Whatever the actual ability of water to retain some form of emotional information turns out to be, it is

clear that water on its own can never be a simple answer to the creation of recording ghosts (if they themselves actually exist!). If that were the case then we must surely be inundated with spooky recordings being played back. There must be other, as yet undiscovered factors that need to be considered. Lethbridge suggested that weather conditions may be significant; he noted that experiences seemed to be stronger when the air was still and humidity levels were high. Substantial evidence for the ability of water to be able to develop a memory in the first place remains inconclusive but it is intriguing how many results from experiments in a number of labs seem to demonstrate this ability. A Google search using the search words "Water Memory" will provide the reader with a clear indication of just how much work is being carried out.

What now?

Some of the ongoing research suggests that electromagnetic fields may play a key part in the mechanism of water memory and it would seem that a person, either as the donor of the original event memory recording or as the recipient of the subsequent replay is also an important part of the process.

Science is still struggling with the idea that water even has the ability to store memories. But perhaps paranormal researchers should give serious consideration to the possibility of a 'Water Memory'.

There is scope for some relatively simple research to be commenced by the amateur field investigator making objective measurements of the amounts of water present within haunted locations. Simply put, if water memory plays a part in recording apparitions then locations in which such phenomena are reported should have higher levels of water or moisture within them. A simple hygrometer (humidity meter) can be used to measure the humidity levels within a location. There are also inexpensive meters available that can be used to measure the amounts of water within the structure and fabric of a building. Over time we would start to build a database of the water and humidity levels at haunted sites and also importantly control sites with no such haunted reputation to allow suitable comparisons to be made.

The original Stone tape idea has only been tested in a very limited way and no substantial evidence has ever been provided to support the hypothesis of solid matter being able to record events. Perhaps the time has come to move away from the Stone tape theory as a cornerstone explanation and instead start examining the Water tape or Water memory theory which at least has some evidence to support its potential.

Further Reading:

Ghost and Diving Rod , T.C. Lethbridge, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London. 1963. Out of Print but usually easily found 2 nd hand via Amazon book sales.

Psychical Research , Sir W.F. Barrett FRS, Williams & Norgate, London. 1911. Out of Print but available can be found 2 nd hand via internet book sales.

DVD - " The Stone Tape " British Film Institute. bfi video publishing. 21, Stephen Street, London. W1T 1LN. www.bfi.org.uk

Some useful Google Search Words : "Water Memory", "Jacques Benveniste", "Stone tape Theory".