

The Possible Role of Psychokinesis in Place Memory

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ABSTRACT: The idea that the environment can store recordings made by living beings—also known as place memory—has been around for over a century. This paper reviews how the term ‘place memory’ has changed since it was first used by parapsychologists. It also considers what the research literature says regarding the recording and retrieval of place memory, and suggests that there may be more than one way in which information can be recorded by, or imprinted upon, the environment. The hypothesis is discussed that psychokinesis might be involved in some of these cases, particularly when stress or peak levels of emotion are involved, as is often the case in crisis situations.

Parapsychologists have long been aware that the environment some-times appears to hold the memory of past events, which can be variously “viewed,” “heard,” “tasted,” “smelled,” or “felt” at a later time by a person with sufficient sensitivity to the information. Place memory is typically considered to be a possible factor in hauntings, along with the usual ones of fraud, hallucination, misperception, malobservation, retrocognition, discarnate entities, and environmental factors. According to some, place memory may represent over ninety percent of haunting cases (Graves, 1986). Furthermore, it can apparently exist as layers of recordings, which can be separately ‘read’ and ‘interpreted.’

The idea that objects and locations could hold such recordings is not a new one. In fact, it has been discussed by parapsychologists since virtually the inception of the field. The initial notion was a simple one, as Lodge (1920) stated:

Here is a room where a tragedy occurred, where the human spirit was strung to intensest anguish. Is there any trace of that agony present still and able to be appreciated by an attuned or receptive mind? If it happened, it may take many forms; vague disquiet perhaps, or imaginary sounds or vague visions, or perhaps a dream or picture of the event as it occurred

Relics again: is it credible that a relic, a lock of hair, an old garment, retains any trace of a deceased friend—retains any portion of his [sic] personality. Does not an old letter? Does not a painting? (p. 95)

In order to make sense of what could be holding this information, parapsychologists speculated on the presence of some kind of unseen 'ether' or 'medium' (Tyrrell, 1953). Tyrrell (1953) reported:

In the fifth Myers Memorial Lecture, Dr. C. A. Mace outlined a suggestion of what he called a 'substantial medium' capable of receiving and re-rendering 'patterns of events With regard to it he says: 'Personally I am of the opinion that we can, with good scientific conscience, postulate the existence of a medium which records impressions of all sorts of patterns of events. (p. 104)

It is unclear from the literature whether the expression 'place memory' actually originated with Sir Oliver Lodge or H. H. Price. However, it is plain that Price (1939) popularised the idea and placed his own spin on it, defining place memory as images that, "permanently, and collectively constitute the memory of the place" (p. 332). Tyrrell (1953) explained Price's beliefs as follows:

Such images he supposed to be originated by a mental act, but not to be themselves mental He then supposed these images, neither mental nor material, to be endowed with telepathic charges and illustrated his theory by applying it to haunting. Such a persistent image might, he suggested, be tied down in some particular way to a physical place or object, might act telepathically on a percipient near this place and might cause him to see an apparition. (p. 105)

This would seem to suggest that Price felt that the objects provided an anchor for active telepathic agents that were both non-corporeal and non-conscious. Thus, although Price did much to advance the term, his version of place memory differed considerably from that with which we are more

familiar, as Roll (2003) recently pointed out:

Price's concept of place memory should not be confused with the conventional meaning of the term, the tendency to remember events by revisiting the place where they took place. In Price's sense, you "remember" events that have been experienced by others. Like familiar memories, events that are recent, frequent, and emotionally significant may be more likely to come to mind than others. (p. 201)

Sometimes there has been the suggestion that such recordings could even take on something of a life of their own, manifesting as a "pseudo-haunting." McCue (2002) wrote:

Denning (op. cit.) suggests that some cases, which she calls pseudo-hauntings, do not entail the active intervention of spirit entities, but rather an "energy form created by traumatic events [that] seems to be charged with a powerful energy that continues to exist . . . for a considerable length of time." (p. 12)

This appears to take Price's original view a bit further, suggesting the possible formation of something that occultists refer to as thought forms.

During the years since it was introduced, place memory has often been lumped in the same category with retrocognition—which literally means "backward knowing" (Irwin, 1994, p. 128). In essence, this is the opposite of precognition, with the ESP extending back in time instead of forward. For example, the 'playback theory' of haunting apparitions proposed that experiencers "are simply witnessing a playback of a past scene or scenes. Perhaps that scene is somehow imprinted or recorded on the physical locality in which it happened; perhaps there is a reoccurring kink or loop in space-time" (Gauld, 1983, p. 248). Thus, in speaking of this theory Gauld is combining two possibilities—present-day environmental imprints (place memory) with alterations in time that might let you literally see the past (retrocognition).

Let us pause for a moment to distinguish retrocognition from place memory. This is critical because present thought suggests that they involve different mechanisms of action. Guiley (1991) defined the typical retrocognitive experience as follows:

Spontaneous retrocognition usually manifests as a hallucination or vision. The present surroundings are abruptly replaced by a scene

out of the past. Although the vision usually is fleeting, some last for minutes and generally feature movement, sounds, and smells.

Retrocognition is a phenomenon of some hauntings and apparitions that seem to be continual replays of events, such as murders or suicides. Psychologist Gardner Murphy theorized that most ghosts are cases of retrocognition, in which an individual becomes momentarily displaced in time and can perceive scenes from the past. (pp. 509-510)

It should be noted that an individual would not have to literally travel back in time, or be in a "time slip" where two time periods exist simultaneously, for retrocognition to occur. ESP might be sufficient.

Retrocognition cases are said to be rare (Irwin, 1994). They are often described as: 1) beginning and ending abruptly; 2) having a dream-like character; 3) focusing on some sensory modalities while excluding others; and 4) being specific to a particular object or location. Irwin (1994) observed that, when reported, retrocognition frequently (but not always) involves battle scenes. Rogo (1975) also noted that experiencers may report an altered sense of time (suggesting a shift in their state of consciousness) and that:

In each case the experiencer feels himself to be completely engrossed within the experience and, in fact, often mistakes it as reality until some inconsistency jolts him into the realization that he is witnessing something paranormal. Sometimes this realization does not occur until after the experience has been completed, and often the discovery is accidental. (pp. 142-143)

Retrocognition has not been formally investigated both because of the scarcity of documented cases and because there appears to be no way to separate it from other forms of ESP (Irwin, 1994). Although both retrocognition and place memory seem to be place-oriented events, they differ in three ways. First, people who experience place memory typically describe it as a far less intense experience than retrocognition—more often a "knowing" than a re-living or cinematic vision of the past. Second, with place memory there is the assumption that both the percipient, and the information that they are receiving, exist in the same present time period—which may not be the case with retrocognition. Finally, there may be little, if any, alteration in consciousness with place memory as opposed to the "dream-like state," altered sensory modalities and altered sense of time associated with retrocognition, and which would all seem to indicate a distinct shift in consciousness.

Place memory is most often thought of today as the apparent energetic imprint of information, produced by living beings and somehow stored by the environment, which some individuals may be able to retrieve through paranormal means. It is interesting to note that while some individuals may sometimes dispute the existence of ghosts, the notion that, under the right conditions, locations can record and hold impressions of the people, places, and events that occurred there appears to be generally accepted by the populace, perhaps in part due to our comfort and familiarity with camcorders.

Place memory is most often discussed in the research literature in association with haunting cases. McCue (2002) wrote of its possible role:

Another approach to understanding hauntings is to suppose that events occurring in a particular place, such as a house, can leave a trace, impression or record that can influence subsequent occupants or visitors, causing them to experience the characteristic phenomena. From this perspective, experiencing a haunting is similar to watching a video-recording or listening to a tape-recording of past events, and arguably this approach could help to explain cases, such as the Cheltenham ghost (Collins, 1948; MacKenzie, 1982), in which apparitions act in a rather stereotyped way. Such a theory might also make sense of some of the auditory phenomena reported in cases of haunting. If, for example, furniture had been dragged about in a particular room at some point in the past, and if some sort of trace or record of that event had been made, occupants of the haunted building might be able to hear (either physically or via some other process) the sound of furniture being moved. If the laying down of the 'trace' is a hit-and-miss business, dependent at any given point on a concurrence of various physical and emotional factors, the 'playback' might yield a telescoped and disjointed sequence of sounds, perhaps giving the manifestations a bizarre and frightening character. (p. 15)

To avoid confusion, it should be noted that the "stone tape" theory is another name for place memory that has sometimes been employed in recent years, although it appears to refer primarily to buildings (Cornell, 2002). Cornell (2002) explained:

The reader may recall that this theory was put forward some time ago as the cause of recurrent visual and auditory paranormal phenomena in old buildings. It suggests that there is a mechanism

whereby the emotions of the living become absorbed and retained by the fabric of a building. Thus, so the theory goes, these recordings either lie in wait for whatever it is that causes them to be replayed for an individual who is sensitive to their continued presence. (p. 391)

Unfortunately, as Cornell (2002) noted, the stone tape theory is more speculation than explanation. He stated:

How and why human emotions should become embedded in the material of a building has never been investigated nor theorized further, nor have the mechanics of their replaying been explored further. Even allowing that psychometry might provide an instance of a similar phenomenon, there is nothing in physics nor any recorded data which might support or allow us to develop this theory further. Unless we were concerned here solely with crisis events, the problem of why only a few fragmentary snippets of a few seconds or minutes of a former life should be absorbed—rather than longer periods—poses an as yet unanswerable question. (Cornell, 2002, p. 391)

Thus, stone tape theory does not advance our understanding of the process. Moreover, since it seems to look at a limited subset of what may be occurring, it appears to serve no advantage over the original term. Unfortunately, the same could also be said of place memory. As McCue (2002) noted in echo of Cornell's comment, "without some specification of a mechanism (or mechanisms) by which the 'recording' and 'playback' occur, much remains to be explained" (p. 15).

McCue's point is well taken. We do indeed understand little about the 'how's' and 'why's' of place memory. Part of the difficulty is that place memory is essentially a subjective, experiential event. It is perceived within the brain and even if there are objective, environmental variables that can be measured—like the geomagnetic field—they do not really get at the heart of the experience. Furthermore, place memory is difficult, if not impossible, to isolate for study. The experimenter must first rule out all the normal causes for the experience, plus some paranormal ones, as well. This can be particularly difficult because as Brugger (2001) noted, there is a "pervasive tendency of human beings to see order in random configuration" (p. 196). People may see patterns where there are none, and attribute them to discarnate entities or other causes. When there is a belief in the paranormal, this may be even more true, making it extremely difficult to separate out real findings from those of the imagination. Worse still, we

currently have no way of distinguishing between sources of ESP information—whether the environment, living minds, the future, the past, discarnate sources, or even other dimensions of existence.

It would seem likely that place memory (when real, and not a subjective experience generated by normal, if misunderstood, means) is retrieved through anomalous cognition. However, little is known about how place memory initially comes about, or what factors might act as modifiers for it. And like many who speak of place memory, McCue (2002) made an assumption that may not be correct—that place memory is recorded by the environment. Another possibility is that this information could be imprinted or stamped onto the environment by the living.

KNOWN VARIABLES IN PLACE MEMORY

Before we discuss hypothetical possibilities, let us look first at those few things that we believe to be true regarding place memory. Parapsychologists noted early on that the living seemed to be involved. In his Presidential Address, Price (1939) stated that, “We ordinarily think that memory-images can only be *generated* in connection with some sort of brain or nervous system . . . that they acquire a more or less complete independence afterwards” (p. 332). This suggests that living beings may be one of the factors in the development of place memory, which, once recorded, may remain for a period of time. Furthermore, it is the living who are responsible for the haunting, as Price indicated in the following passage:

Moreover, in haunting the *immediate* agent is not a mind, but only an image: though the *ultimate* agent is the mind which originated and projected the image long ago. So it is a case of *deferred* telepathy, resulting in the production of a “post-dated” telepathic phantasm . . . in Haunting it has long since got dissociated from the mind which originally owned it, and indeed that mind (if the Anti-Survivalists are right) may long ago have ceased to exist. (Price, 1939, p. 340)

Emotion is another factor that seems to play a role in place memory. Emotionally-charged events appear to be more apt to be recorded and/or retrieved. Sometimes this may relate to crisis situations. Alvarado (2000) noted that:

Bozzano presents statistics on the frequency of some features of hauntings and poltergeists. One is the relationship of haunting

phenomena and tragic events: "So, for example, in an initial group of 180 cases . . . the origin of the haunting coincided with a tragic event that occurred in the same place" Regarding death, Bozzano wrote that: "from a total of 374, in 304 there is, coinciding with the haunting, the precedent of a case of death." (p. 163)

Not all researchers agree with Bozzano. Alvarado (2000) observed that Maher did not find a relationship between hauntings and a preceding death. This may not be surprising given the existence of place memory, where the dead may not be involved. Somewhat amusingly, at least some ghosts would seem to agree that strong emotions can directly impact the environment and be responsible for a "haunted" locale. Hillary (2002) reported:

Many theories about hauntings speak of traces left by emotions, which do not necessarily have to be the result of violent death. Ghost-hunter James Wentworth Day reports: 'Mr. Clay [a ghost witness] gave me the most logical explanation I have ever heard of why some people see ghosts and others do not. His view was that certain happenings in life—murder, suicide, extreme agony of mind or infinite kindness to others—can leave an impression on what one might describe as "the cinema screen of time." The result is that at certain periods the episodes of the past are thrown up and repeated on, say, the anniversaries of their happening.' (pp. 209-210)

In cases where death does precede a haunting, it may not be so much because a ghost is created, but because the event was an emotional one. This would be particularly true when that death is violent or tragic. Furthermore, emotion itself may aid place memory retrieval, since it could make the information stand out from other recordings. Price (1938-1939) explained:

We can now see that it must stand out in two different ways, *both* in respect of quality *and* in respect of intensity. To use the same sort of analogy as before: if a lot of signatures were written all over a small piece of paper, one on top of the other, you could not read any of them. You would see only a confused blur. But if one were written in red ink and all the rest in black, you might be able to read the red one quite well. And you would be more likely to

do so if the ink in which it was written had been particularly strong and lasting

It may, however, be that great intensity in the telepathic charge can compensate for otherwise unsuitable quality. Conversely, if the *quality* is exactly right (if there is the maximum degree of telepathic affinity between the persisting image and the mental contents of the percipient) this may compensate for feeble intensity. (p. 340)

Thus, we see that the best known variables for place memory appear to be that: 1) a living agent is somehow involved; 2) strong emotion appears to be a factor that enhances the recording and/or retrieval of place memory. It is unclear whether the latter can entirely account for the fact that crisis situations (which may, or may not, include a being's death), are more likely to create place memory.

POSSIBLE PHYSICAL VARIABLES IN PLACE MEMORY

A number of physical variables have been proposed to affect the anomalous experiences reported in hauntings, which could possibly impact place memory recording or retrieval, as well. Perhaps foremost among these are environmental factors, such as local geomagnetic fields, geologic factors, and weather conditions. For example, Graves (1986) felt that quartz crystals (in stone or bedrock), underground water, and atmospheric water—such as a damp, misty day—could all enhance place memory retrieval. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether these factors would affect the reporting of anomalous experiences via an effect on the experiences themselves or through normal physical or psychological variables causing an increased number of normal experiences that are only mistaken for anomalous. Such cases of pseudo-place-memory could be induced by hearing odd sounds from underground water, being psychologically primed by a foggy day, or hallucinating due to standing waves of sound or temporal lobe dysfunction.

A more intriguing correlation is the one between geomagnetic fields and purportedly paranormal experiences. As Wiseman et al. (2002) reported,

Persinger (1985) argued that changes in geomagnetic fields (e.g. created by tectonic stresses in the Earth's crust) could stimulate the brain's temporal lobes and produce many of the subjective experiences associated with hauntings. In a preliminary test of this

theory, Gearhart and Persinger (1986) examined a collection of alleged poltergeist experiences and reported finding significant relationships between the time of onset of unusual phenomena and sudden increases in global geomagnetic activity More recent support has come from several on-site investigations of alleged hauntings that have reported a high degree of local magnetic activity in locations associated with eyewitness reports of unusual phenomena Some of the work arguing for a link between magnetic fields and unusual experiences has noted that the effect seems to be associated with high levels of geomagnetic activity . . . whereas other researchers have related the effect more to gradients in static magnetic fields. (pp. 389-390)

Likewise, Maher (1999) commented regarding a haunted Japanese restaurant in Georgia, that:

Electromagnetic field strengths collected by Maher at the restaurant were significantly higher at sites of reported phenomena than at control sites, suggesting to her that conventional electromagnetic fields were implicated in the phenomenology of the participants. A subsequent test . . . gave null results, however, suggesting that electromagnetic fields are likely to explain only selected reports of ghostly phenomena. (p. 64)

Persinger and Koren (2001) have suggested that such factors could explain all hauntings and be the process behind both apparitional sightings and place memory. They stated:

There is not a single case of haunt phenomena whose major characteristics cannot be accommodated by understanding the natural forces generated by the earth, the areas of the human brain that are stimulated by these energies, and the interpretation of these forces by normal psychological processes. (Persinger & Koren, 2001, p. 179)

Persinger and Koren based this statement in part on research that showed that stimulating the parietal and temporal lobes of the brain can elicit sensations, smells, and feelings similar in content to that which people report in hauntings. However, to say that such experiences can be duplicated or mimicked through artificial exposure to electric or geomagnetic fields is not to say that is why such experiences are always

reported. Nonetheless, it is a likely component of many such events and may hint at what part of the brain processes this kind of information.

Another possibility is that there may be a variable interaction between geomagnetic fields and psi. Roe et al. (2003) noted that other factors may act as modifiers for whatever effect the geomagnetic field may have:

Past research has often shown a relationship between the state of the geomagnetic field and both success in psi tasks and the frequency of spontaneous psi experiences a negative correlation has typically been found between the magnitude of the geomagnetic field fluctuations and psi success/experience However, there is some evidence to suggest that this relationship may be affected by other factors. For example, Spottiswoode (1997) reported a suggestive overall negative correlation but found the effect to be restricted to only a limited window of local sidereal time. (p. 349)

Thus, whatever effect the geomagnetic field has, if any, on anomalous cognition and hauntings, may be inconsistent. Wiseman et al. (2002) summed up the issue best in their discussion of the correlation of the magnetic fields at Hampton Court Palace with reports of anomalous experience. They concluded:

The experiment provided no support for the notion that the experiences could be explained by suggestion alone, and only modest evidence that magnetic fields caused the experiences. However, it is clear that believers tended to report significantly more experiences than disbelievers, and those reports tended to cluster or focus in certain areas. (Wiseman et al., 2002, p. 404)

One of the problems with relying on the haunting literature for information about place memory, is that the reports may involve a wide mixture of factors, including (but not limited to) both non-psychic phenomena—such as standing waves of infrasound at 19 Hz, hallucinations, temporal lobe dysfunction, malobservation, misinterpretation—and apparently psychic phenomena, such as apparitions that interact with the living and can be tracked as isolated moving electromagnetic fields (i.e., ghosts), and place memory (McCue, 2002). It is very difficult, if not sometimes impossible, to adequately differentiate between this combination of possible causes for a percipient's experience. Because of this, it may be difficult to determine the precise connections in haunting investigation

cases between weather, geologic conditions, the geomagnetic field and place memory per se. To investigate place memory properly, we would first have to rule out a wide range of normal causes of apparently anomalous experiences and other paranormal causes, such as ghosts.

THE CREATION OF PLACE MEMORY

We have little understanding about the actual creation of place memory—what conditions are required, what could play a role as modifying variables, exactly how the information is stored, and the specifics of how that information storage is accomplished. Often theories on place memory have mimicked the technologies of the time in which they were proposed. The first such suggestion was reminiscent of still photography. Price (1939) wrote:

Now it has often been suggested that such apparitions are due to some sort of localised trace or vestige or impress left in the matter of the room. These traces would be the quite automatic result of the emotions or other experiences of some person who formerly inhabited the room, much as finger-prints result automatically from our handling of a wine-glass or a poker. Thus on this view the apparition is not a *revenant*, as popular superstition supposes—not a deceased personality revisiting the scenes of its former experience nor yet an “earth-bound spirit” lingering on in them—but is something more like a photograph or a cinematograph picture. (The physical trace would correspond to the photographic negative; and it would be as it were “developed” when anyone with a suitable mind and nervous system enters the room.) This is what Signor Bozzano calls “the Psychometrical Theory” of Haunting. For in Psychometry too we seem to find that a material object retains traces of the past experiences of a person who was formerly in physical contact with it. (p. 324)

With videotape and motion film development, there appeared to be even more acceptance of the idea of an imprint. Johnson (1983) referred to place memory as, “the problem of whether mental events are accompanied by the induction or creation of traces in surrounding animate and inanimate matter” (p. 178). He discussed W. G. Roll’s theory of a ‘psi-field’ as one possibility for how place memory works. Key factors of this theory include: 1) the importance of spatial proximity; 2) the “*frequency hypothesis* which states that a more efficient communication of psi can be

obtained via a token-object which has often and over a longer period of time been in touch with the target person than a token-object which rarely and briefly has been in contact with the target person” (Johnson, 1983, p. 178); and 3) the recency of the contact between the inductor and the target. This theory would seem to be equally valid for psychometry or place memory in the environment. The notion of a passive left-over residue of energy might well explain instances where a set of actions that were repeated in identical fashion (such as a man walking on the castle ramparts) over a long period of time could become recorded by the environment. Under the right conditions, or with someone sufficiently gifted, this place memory can be “played back” so to speak.

With greater awareness of subtle energy fields, Maher (1999) theorised that place memory could derive from contact with the aura of a living person:

The psychometric energy that I'm speaking about may be the same as a person's life force or stream of life energy It may simply be the unbroken flow of energy that animates the organism from conception to death The energy itself is not ordinarily visible while a person is alive, but it can on occasion manifest to an observer as an aura, from which information regarding the person may be derived. (p. 56)

It may not be surprising that, with our increasing understanding of laser technology, Persinger and Koren (2001) have come up with a different theory of place memory. They suggested that geomagnetic fields might record events in a similar way to the creation of a hologram, stating:

In this context, local geomagnetic activity would be the working and reference beams, and the interaction between the local static geomagnetic field and composition of the earth's surface would be the equivalent of the exposure plate. If an event occurs during a geomagnetic storm with a specific pattern whose local signatures are matched with the inductance of the local crust, then a small representation might be maintained within the crystalline structure of the rock. The presence of human beings and objects during the event might generate interference patterns by distorting the ongoing geomagnetic activity (the working beam) as it is superimposed upon the static field. (Persinger & Koren, 2001, p. 192)

As with Roll's 'psi-field' theory, this is an interesting idea that

would seem to hold some promise for explaining at least some cases of place memory. Certainly, those who routinely perform haunting investigations believe it is possible to erase place memory through the use of strong magnets or a bulk videotape eraser, which would disrupt any static electromagnetic fields (Auerbach, personal communication). However, unlike Roll's 'psi-field,' Persinger and Koren's holographic method would not seem to explain why small objects, regardless of composition, seem also to be able to hold "memories" that can be picked up by those sensitive to such information.

This author would like to suggest that if we consider that living beings are involved and that this form of place memory involves emotionally charged events, then it is not only possible, but likely, that PK is the means by which this form of place memory is recorded. This would go beyond what parapsychologists have typically thought of as the role of PK in hauntings, where, as with poltergeist phenomena, apparitions are artificially created, lights and sounds created, or objects moved (Auerbach, 1986).

There are two lines of evidence that would seem to support the idea of PK as a possible active agent in the recording of some forms of place memory. First, that spontaneous ESP and PK appear to be more prevalent when an individual is under stress (Gurney et al., 1962; Rhine 1961). This would seem to be true for both poltergeist phenomena and crisis situations, where there is a greatly increased incidence of spontaneous case reports. Furthermore, others, like Radin (2001), have mentioned a possible role of PK in haunting when "intense subjective experiences . . . intrude upon the physical world, as postulated in poltergeist activity" (p. 167). Certainly some of the cases where place memory appears to be particularly strong, such as the locale of violent murders, would qualify for someone having such an "intense subjective experience." It seems likely that PK can occur, not only as poltergeist phenomena, but in other ways.

The second line of evidence is phenomenological. It is well known that peak levels of emotion are associated with all forms of spontaneous PK (Heath, 2003). Spoons bend. Objects break. Computers go haywire. Humans can and do affect the environment around them when under stress. Thus, in a high-emotion situation—whether death results or not—it does not seem unreasonable that the living person could emit signals that actively impress the environment, perhaps through affecting the local electromagnetic fields of the environment or items within it.

If PK is involved, it could explain part of the variability in why the environment sometimes picks up some memories of crisis situations but not others. Not all individuals would have talent at recording their impressions. Furthermore, there could be considerable variation at the time of the event

in key factors involved in the production of PK, such as the individual's state of consciousness, feeling of connection or dissociation, level of emotion, use of intellect, degree of focus, physical state, and investment (Heath, 2003).

It should also be noted that what kind of psi a person develops spontaneously appears to be need-related. In other words, it serves a need that the organism cannot otherwise meet. For those individuals who have no conventional means for telling others what happened to them, the recording of place memory through PK would seem to serve a similar need for expression as that which is reported with poltergeist agents. This could include a wide range of crisis situations where a victim might wish to leave some record of their passing, or communicate how they died. If unable to connect through ESP to another individual, they might imprint the information instead onto the environment around them. That it can work is shown by some of the "cold cases" solved by psychics who go back and "read" what really occurred, allowing crimes to be solved years later.

One of the greatest difficulties with the hypothesis that PK is involved in some forms of place memory is how to test it properly. It must be falsifiable. This would require finding a way to separate PK-created place memory that is 'read' by ESP, from other normal and paranormal elements—clearly not an easy task. Nonetheless, if PK is involved, then it might be possible to use intentional PK to create place memory—which was previously considered a random or uncontrollable event.

McCue (2002) commented that one of the problems with designing haunting experiments in the past was that, "to the extent that hauntings arise in settings of unhappiness or trauma, it might not be possible, within the scope of ethical practice, to reproduce all the necessary conditions occurring in spontaneous cases" (p. 19). This, of course, presupposes that death or trauma are required—which may not be the case if PK is involved. Certainly, as mentioned earlier, some haunting investigators have reported place memory involving positive emotions or situations (Auerbach, 2004, personal communication). If spontaneous PK is involved, it should be possible to ask a PK performer to try, intentionally, to imprint an emotion, sound, or set of images onto a location, and then take a combination of sceptics, psi-believers, and individuals with psychic sensitivity to that location along with "control" locations to see whether they are able to "pick up" on that feeling or information. Whoever interacted with the participants trying to receive that information would have to be blind to what others had attempted to record on those locations. However, there would still be the problem of trying to differentiate between telepathy between the living PK agent (or the experimenter) to the participants, general ESP, retrocognition, precognition (if they received future feedback

as to whether they had been correct or not), normal (if misunderstood) causes in the environment, and what is being “stored” paranormally as place memory.

Nor need future investigations be limited to quantitative studies. The fact that place memory is a subjective experience brings up another possible avenue of research. Phenomenological inquiry is specifically designed for dealing with this kind of situation. Thus, a detailed phenomenological study on place memory that compares and contrasts it to other forms of psi, such as retrocognition, or even with non-paranormal experiences such as the artificial stimulation of the brain described by Persinger and Koren (2001) might lead to some valuable insights.

In conclusion, it is easy to see why many researchers would become discouraged with the idea of investigating place memory, and move on to easier topics to investigate. Isolating place memory is a daunting task for the investigator. Nonetheless, this is an aspect of psi that appears to literally surround us, and there are numerous possible areas that could be investigated. One concept that might be useful to experimenters is to look at place memory not as a solitary kind of phenomenon, but rather as something by which there could be two methods of creation—one active, involving PK, and the other a more passive phenomenon relating, as W. G. Roll noted, to repetition, proximity to the object/place, and recency. It is hoped that by looking at place memory in this way, it can improve our understanding of the topic and open up new avenues of research.

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