

The Fat Pony Field and Spirit of place

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Based on essay for the MA-CAA Research module Sacred Geography at University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, Lampeter.
Reworked on February 22th, 2012

Introduction

This research project (Appendix A) investigates the background of my *Spirit of place* experience, when cycling on July 27th, 1991 past Gafney and Beaumont townlands and specifically the *Fat Pony Field* (in short: The Field).² Over the last 20 years I still have such experiences when passing The Field.

My experiences/feelings are close to: tranquillity, being one with Nature, well-being, at peace, slight headache, butterflies, goose bumps and tickling neck hairs. This is comparable to what Rudolf Otto defined as numinous or what Abram Maslow considered being peak experiences³. This essay will first explain a framework for describing the *Spirit of place* for The Field, which is based on the four roles defined by T. Graves and L. Poraj-Wilczynska: Scientist, Artist, Mystic and Magician.⁴ These roles have been utilised in a distinct non-overlapping way. The roles' experiences of The Field cover: its location; how it is positioned in (pre-) history and folklore; and my contemporary experiences, sometimes with others, during my nine fieldwalks. Also a questionnaire was distributed under anglers, who fish along The Field. Furthermore a detailed evaluation related to other literature will be given and the essay will end with a conclusion.

In this essay an interviewee is identified by a capitalised alias, which describes as close as possible his/her relation to this investigation. The utilised aliases can be found in Appendix B.

The archaeography framework

This section provides a framework for gathering data to establish a structured database of objective and subjective experiences of a place; which then can be evaluated against other literature. The framework chosen is described by Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska, called archaeography, and helps to investigate the *Spirit of Place*:

*... both an abstract concept and a profoundly personal experience of relationship with place. Each place and district and region has its own characteristics, both explicit and implicit, that make it "locally distinctive"...*⁵

In the past, asking questions about *Spirit of Place* might not have been common to archaeology, but since phenomenology is a respected part of archaeology; multiple branches have evolved, like the work of Tilley on archaeological landscapes and Devereux's acoustic archaeology as

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Web: <http://www.iol.ie/~geniet/eng/archaeocosmology.htm>

² Victor Reijs, "The Fat Pony Field," <http://tinyurl.com/fatponyfield>.

³ Rudolf Otto, *The idea of the holy: An Inquiry Into the Non Rational Factor in the Idea of the divine*, trans. John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University press, 1926), 18.; Abram Maslow, *The farther reaches of human nature* (Canada: Penguin Books, 1976), 106.

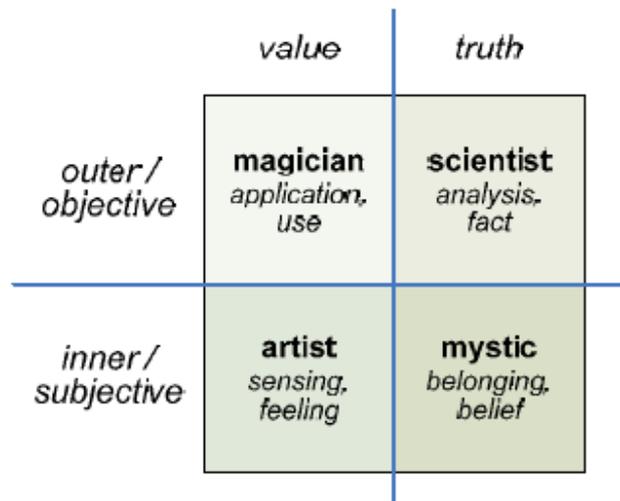
⁴ T. Graves and L. Poraj-Wilczynska, "Spirit of Place as process: Archaeography, dowsing and perceptual mapping at Belas Knap," *Time and Mind* 2, no. 2 (2009): 174-75.

⁵ Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska, "Spirit of Place as process: Archaeography, dowsing and perceptual mapping at Belas Knap," 194-95.

part of sensory investigations.⁶

Artists have always been part of the archaeology team, like; illustrators; photographers; and 3D (computer) modellers. Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska add to the well established archaeological methodologies, the investigator's subjective experiences in a structured way by using the roles of Scientist, Artist, Mystic and Magician. They call this archaeography and see this as an intersection of place, time and mind.⁷

Archaeography is about "*sensing at an identifiable location to derive information that's meaningful and useful.*"⁸ Mapping this on the four roles gives: where the Artist's role senses the location and this location is made identifiable by the Scientist. The Mystic's role looks at the meaning and the Magician keeps the usefulness of all of this in mind.⁹



The four roles: Scientist, Artist, Mystic and Magician¹⁰

Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska propose to use these four roles when determining the *Spirit of place* as part of archaeological dowsing and perceptual mapping; both are important as dowsing needs concrete questions, while perceptual mapping allows openness to aesthetic senses.¹¹

Archaeological dowsing

Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska state that archaeological dowsing is being utilised in large scale surveys, as it can provide a good indication where the most interesting area is and thus will help to narrow down geophysics and excavations. As settlements might be close to water, water dowsing can also lead to archaeological sites.¹²

⁶ C. Tilley, *A phenomenology of landscape: places, paths and monuments*, ed. B. Bender, J. Gledhill, and B. Kapfere, 1 ed., Explorations in anthropology (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994).; Paul Devereux, *Stone age soundtracks; The acoustic archaeology of ancient sites* (London: vega, 2001).

⁷ Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska, "Spirit of Place as process: Archaeography, dowsing and perceptual mapping at Belas Knap," 169.

⁸ T. Graves and L. Poraj-Wilczynska, *The disciplines of dowsing* (Colchester: Tetradian, 2008), 26.

⁹ Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska, *The disciplines of dowsing*: 26.

¹⁰ Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska, *The disciplines of dowsing*: 27.

¹¹ Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska, "Spirit of Place as process: Archaeography, dowsing and perceptual mapping at Belas Knap," 173.

¹² Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska, "Spirit of Place as process: Archaeography, dowsing and perceptual mapping at Belas Knap," 171-72.

They stress that dowsing rods move only because the hands move and the hands move in response to a nervous impulse arising from a weighted sum of multiple perceptual senses.¹³ Archaeological dowsing needs the discipline of the four roles.¹⁴

Perceptual mapping

Perceptual mapping is utilising all human's extero- and intero-ceptive senses through which we get a feel of the place, "while retaining an open awareness of context – 'thinking narrow, being wide'". So it is about subjective sensing in a structured way by using the four roles.¹⁵

The Field

In the below sections the experiences will be grouped according to the four roles defined by Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska.

Scientist role: Its location and history

The Field (53.67° North and 6.35° West) is located in the townland Beaumont between Julianstown and Duleek (Co Meath, Ireland). *Beaumont* can also be seen spelled as *Beamond* or *Beaumond*. And it is pronounced as 'Baymont'.

It is surrounded by the townlands: Annagor (north), Kilsharven (east), Hilltown (south) and Gafney (west).¹⁶

A Member of the regional Historic Society did a field name study of the region and found that The Field had no name, while the surrounding fields have. The Owner of The Field calls it now the *Fat Pony Field*.

The Field follows for some 250 m the north side of the River Nanny, its south side is the regional road (R150) and its eastern side borders the seven arched Beaumont Bridge (a protected structure that leads to towards Bellewstown).¹⁷ During winter time The Field can be flooded. According to the 6" historic OSI map, which was drawn up between 1837 and 1842, The Field had on its western side a brook bordering a grove of several trees¹⁸. On a map of around 1800 this brook was the main flow of the River Nanny.¹⁹ The brook is now gone and there is one tree left and one stump with some 170 rings.

Before the last ice age (some 12,000 years ago) the River Boyne flowed through the River Nanny to the sea.²⁰ There are steep slopes visible on the Hanging Hill (some 500m south of River Nanny). According to Resident-A, who lives in the area since his birth; late 1920s, this hill is named after the overhanging slopes which are clearly visible in the low grazing winter sun light. Now the River Boyne flows through the Brú na Bóinne landscape to the sea.²¹

¹³ Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska, "Spirit of Place as process: Archaeography, dowsing and perceptual mapping at Belas Knap," 173.

¹⁴ Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska, *The disciplines of dowsing*.

¹⁵ Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska, "Spirit of Place as process: Archaeography, dowsing and perceptual mapping at Belas Knap," 173.

¹⁶ Reijs, "The Fat Pony Field".

¹⁷ Anonymous, "Protected structures 2007 - 2013," ed. Meath County Council (2010), 49.

¹⁸ Ordnance Survey Ireland, "Shop.osi.ie Mapviewer," <http://maps.osi.ie/publicviewer/#V1,708497,769634,6,7>.

¹⁹ John Brownrigg, "A map of part of the lands of Beaumont in the barony of Duleek and County of Meath.," in *Longfield collection in the National Library*, ed. National Library of Ireland (1801-1809).

²⁰ G. Stout, ed. *Newgrange and the bend of the Boyne*, vol. 1, Irish rural landscapes (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002), 9.

²¹ Stout, *Newgrange and the bend of the Boyne*, 15.

Looking at the National Monuments Services database, the townland Beaumont has some pre-historic archaeology.²² There are a few enclosures, detected by aerial photography, more than 500 m south of the River Nanny. Further archaeology has been found during the construction of the motorway (M1) in the townland of Kilsharven (around 1 km northeast of Beaumont). Adjacent to Beaumont Bridge, on the mill race, was the Beaumont Mill from the 19th century, famous in America for its good quality grinding.²³ Nearby is a well, which is not a designated Holy well.

Artist role: Contemporary experiences

In 1991, my wife and I had rented bicycles in Drogheda and made a trip along Newgrange, Knowth, Slane, Tara and Duleek; all places embedded in historical and mystical shrouds. On the way from Duleek to Julianstown, we passed a straight piece of road that did not appeal to me. But after a bend (at Gafney; near a bridge over the River Nanny, where 20 years ago we made a picture) a totally different landscape emerged; I started to have a real good feel (might have been butterflies).

The landscape is just beautiful, with the River Nanny on the right side and the rolling Hanging Hill in the back ground. Many mature trees are along the meandering River Nanny. At Beaumont one sees this romantic seven arched bridge, which leads towards Bellewstown. Regularly I pass this area when visiting Newgrange and every time, close to this Beaumont Bridge, I have this feeling of well-being. It could be a protected area: The mature trees, the hills, the water and the ponies; all makes a very beautiful, tranquil and moody scene. The photographer Martin Hughes, taking up the role of an artist, captured this beautiful scene in some of his work.²⁴

For this research project, as supported by Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska,²⁵ I have been on The Field under many different circumstances; from sunny weather, snow storm to close to near flooding. When coming from Julianstown over Flynn's Hill, I get this butterfly feeling in my stomach. After parking the car at the gate of The Field, I climb over the gate and walk towards its western end. There are a few places where I get goose bumps; a feeling of contentment. I have this mainly at the western end around the space that is between the road (R150) and the ford that leads to the other side of the River Nanny. While walking The Field with Dowser-A, I had a few times tickling neck hairs, again it feels ok. When walking with Dowser-B, I got a slight headache and he told this was due to beneficial energy.

The air smells fresh and clean, and there are these well trodden path in the grass. I wonder about why the ponies make such paths... The ponies are grazing contently and are always friendly and the plover makes its characteristic song. The River Nanny makes its murmuring sound, while the mill race on the other side can be very wild during rainy times. It gushed with a lot of noise into the River Nanny.

So in summary, my experiences are around tranquillity, well-being, headache, butterflies, goose bumps and tickling neck hairs. While working on this research project, I asked others about their experiences of this area: A Neighbour classified The Field as "Nothing there... just a field", but

²² Heritage and the Gaeltacht Department of the Arts, "The National Monuments Service," <http://webgis.archaeology.ie/NationalMonuments/FlexViewer/>.

²³ Meath Tourism, "Beamore Heritage Trail," <http://www.meath.ie/Tourism/Heritage/HeritageTrails/BeamoreHeritageTrail/>, Section 10

²⁴ Martin Hughe, "Around Beaumont Bridge just outside Duleek in Co Meath," <http://www.photographyireland.net/around-beaumont-bridge-just-outside-duleek-in-co-meath-t7192.html>.

²⁵ Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska, "Spirit of Place as process: Archaeography, dowsing and perceptual mapping at Belas Knap," 176.

he finds the scenery picturesque! Dowser-A said: "It is the kind of place that you like to remember on a day when things don't go well..."

Eleven anglers of the Duleek Angler's Club responded to my questionnaire (appendix C) which combines quantitative and qualitative questions.²⁶ As most of the questionnaire is around feelings and experiences, the results are presented under the Artist role.

The most interesting results (see also Appendix D) are that many of the respondents (55%) were introduced to fishing on the River Nanny during their childhood (Q3). Furthermore, beside the social aspects of fishing, nature and its silence were mentioned by ~65% of respondents (Q4). The most well-being locations are at the eastern tip of Kilsharvan and at Gafney and Beaumont (Q7; see appendix D).

Some questions were related to the Numen-index, designed by Gatewood and Cameron to determine the numinous feelings of a person.²⁷ This index is a summative scale based on respondent's rating on the above seven statements (comparable with football league rating or IQ test). The average Numen-index of the anglers' most well-being locations was 3.8 out of 5 (75%).

Mystic role: Its folklore and energies

Some folklore is gathered in Appendix E and some is related to the landscape of The Field.

The River Nanny is mentioned in local folklore, as Saint Patrick cursed fishermen, who did not want to provide him with fish, by banishing the salmon from the river.²⁸ According to a Member of Duleek Angler's Club there is spent salmon in the River Nanny, but the present day weirs inhibit the salmon proper access to spawning grounds.

According to an Archivist at UCD, the local school (Mount Hanover National School) did not participate in the national Folklore Schools' Scheme 1937-1939. This means that local habits and stories are sadly partly lost. Luckily there was a pupil in a neighbouring village (Whitecross, Julianstown) who noted down a story about the Field of the Fairies in Beaumont:

*In Beaumont in a field owned by Mr Mattheus of Annaghor, fairies were seen playing football. The field stretches from the bottom of a steep hill known as Flynn's Hill, to Beaumont Cross. The fairies were seen by Mr. John Kennedy when coming from Beaumont Post Office. They wore hoble skirts, and kicked a small round shaped ball. Their height was about one foot and a half.*²⁹

Several residents said that John Kennedy was a kind of character, who could make up stories. Resident-A deducts from above story that the western side of the Field of the Fairies borders Beaumont Bridge. So there is only a road between the Field of the Fairies and the *Fat Pony Field*.

According to the Resident-A, around 1 km northeast of The Field there is a Fairy Bush, beside the former cricket grounds of Mount Hanover House.

²⁶ Alan Bryman, *Quantity and quality in social research*, ed. Martin Bulmer, 3rd, 4th ed., Contemporary social research (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), Chapter 6 and 7.

²⁷ John B. Gatewood and Catherine M. Cameron, "Battlefield Pilgrims at Gettysburg National Military Park," *Ethnology* 43, no. 3 (2004).

²⁸ Peggy Landy, "A story of St. Patrick. Given by Mr Pat Delaney, Laytown," in *Folklore Schools' Scheme 1937-1938* (1938), 262.

²⁹ Eileen Boylan, "Field of the Fairies. By Miss A. J. Flynn, Shallon, Julianstown," in *Folklore Schools' Scheme 1937-1938* (1938), 206.

Resident-B told a story that every day there would stepping stones build in a stream. According to the father; the fairies used the stepping stones at night. The father scattered every time the stones, as they hold back the stream. At that time the farming did not go well; dead animals and cattle. At some moment the father made a bridge over the stream and from that moment the farm prospered again.

Resident-B also continues with:

The imagination can play tricks, but people did believe in fairies. Lone bushes they would not disturb; hawthorn bush in the middle of a field, they ploughed around it and I think they still do it. ... There was great respect for the little people. An awful lot of people thought seeing them due to poor lighting.

Two fieldwalks have been done with different dowzers. The scope of these fieldwalks was different: Dowser-A was looking for stones, energy lines and water streams, and Dowser-B was looking for spirits and vitality levels.

Dowser-A

According to Dowser-A, the depressions near the bank of the river could be related to stone structures. A considerable amount of alternating energy lines are near the area between the ford and the road. This location would not be a good place to build your house (regardless of the flooding), but more to meditate or recharge your batteries. One energy line looks to be close to Dowser-B's spirit location.

On the western side of the field some vortex type of energy showed up. Dowser-B found a spiral hotspot that coincided to this vortex. Water streams were detected, as expected near the River Nanny. According to Dowser-A there seems to be a different atmosphere on the eastern side of the ford area than on the western side of it. The remaining tree in the grove looks, to Dowser-A, to be healthy and seems 'happy'. Furthermore it is important to realise that experienced energies are time depending; they can be influenced by seasonal effect, the Moon, human influence, etc.

Dowser-A told a story about the Italian Lords-and-Ladies plants (still growing in the former river bed of the Nanny of around 1801-1809): The berries are eaten by bears when they come out of hibernation; to restart their digestion.³⁰

Dowser-A expressed the energy of The Field as follows:

The ford is an additional place that adds a lot to The Field. And the old trees, quite a presence they are. ... The Field at the one time is a quiet and lovely place along the river, but it also feels as if there had been more going on than just a few fat ponies grazing.

Dowser-B

Dowser-B was warned, by a friend the night before, not to go alone to his appointment and he had to watch out for a polar bear. He did not understand the reason to watch out for a polar bear, so when arriving he was quite distressed and anxious. Before going into The Field the three of us got a black obsidian stone so that, acceding to Dowser-B, we were protected against negative energies.³¹ For the same reason he sprayed us with lavender oil.

Dowser-B determined there were 10 spirits stuck in The Field and they wanted to move on. Using the Hartman global grid,³² the Dowser-B cleared The Field from spirits with a ritual. While

³⁰ R. Hogg, G.W. Johnson, and Thordarson Collection, *The wild flowers of Great Britain: botanically and popularly described, with copious notices of their history and uses* (Journal of Horticulture & Cottage Gardener Office, 1864)., Plate 153

³¹ J. Wahinehookai, *Ghost Night: Wednesday Counseling The Dead* (luniverse Inc, 2004), 74.

³² M.J. Kasliner, *The Feng Shui Connection To A Healthy Life: A Guide to Healthy Living & High Vitality* (Xlibris Corporation, 2007), 54.

determining the orientation of this grid, the locations of two spirits were found (one was of an approximately 20 year old man, who died from heart problems). Near the ford a counter clockwise spiral hotspot was found; signifying a good energy. This happened to be close to the location of Dowser-A's vortex energy. Somewhat south of the tree (close to an energy line of Dowser-A), Dowser-B and myself got a slight headache; the energy of a 12 year old girl was located, she was drowned some 250 years ago. According to Dowser-B; she is happy now. The friendly retriever of the Owner crossed the River Nanny and shook off his wet coat (like a polar bear). After this fieldwalk The Field had 100% vitality.

Dowser-B expressed his inhibitions to enter The Field as follows:

I was nervous at the start ... That was the first time I felt like that ... Before I came out, I dowsed to see if I could get clearance, it never failed before, it said: "No!" I asked "Could I get clearance if accompanied by somebody", it said: "Yes". ... You gave a hand and helped to move on, and we did it!

It was coincidental that my GPS did not want to lock to any satellite during this fieldwalk, but after investigations at home this was because my video camera was interfering with the GPS' receiver.

Magician role: Chosen methods

Different methods have been pursued during the investigation into The Field. Ranging from: 9 unstructured interviews; questionnaires filled-in by River Nanny anglers, 9 fieldwalks, alone or in company; and visits to County Library Headquarters in Navan for Folklore Schools' Scheme files.

These different methods provided multiple types of viewpoints (both quantitative and qualitative).

A theoretical analysis

The experiences of the landscape were analysed using the roles defined by Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska,³³ whose ideas are firmly rooted in phenomenology; as discussed by Evans-Wentz and Tilley.³⁴ Below are other theories that can be related to my experiences with The Field.

The sacred

Eliade sees space not as homogeneous and the experience of sacred space can be uniquely personal.³⁵ Durkheim states that sacred space does not only mean gods and spirits, but also natural entities like rocks, trees, houses, woods, etc; so anything can be sacred.³⁶ Abram support such ideas, and might be seen to support Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska framework, by stating:

As soon as I attempt to distinguish the share of any one sense from that of the others, I inevitably sever the full participation of my sensing body with the sensuous terrain.³⁷

³³ Graves and Poraj-Wilczynska, "Spirit of Place as process: Archaeography, dowsing and perceptual mapping at Belas Knap."

³⁴ W.Y. Evans-Wentz, *The fairy-faith in Celtic countries*, reprint ed. (Glastonbury: The lost library, 1911). and Tilley, *A phenomenology of landscape: places, paths and monuments*.

³⁵ M. Eliade, *The sacred and profane: the nature of religion* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 20, 24.

³⁶ E. Durkheim, *The elementary forms of religious life*, trans. C. Cosman (Oxford University Press, 2001), 36.

³⁷ D. Abram, *The spell of the sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world* (Vintage Books, 1997), 60.

Name of Place not arbitrary

The Field is part of the Beaumont townland and belongs to Beaumont House.³⁸ It is interesting that The Field does not have a historic name, according to the field name research done by a Member of Regional Historic Society. The field on the other side of the River Nanny is called the Mill Race Field, as it is bordering mill race towards Beaumont Mill.

According to Trubshaw a place name should not be arbitrary.³⁹ It is revealing to hear that the Owner of The Field names it the *Fat Pony Field*, because well fed (fat) ponies can get back to their healthy size, as The Field is a less rich pasture.

So The Field has a non arbitrary name; we will see it if sticks in the future.

Ways to experience Nature

According to Trubshaw there are in general four ways of thinking about Nature: a) a connectedness and a feeling of being part of Nature, a view dominant in medieval times; b) an observation of the Nature from the outside, like depicted by Renaissance landscape paintings; c) an objectivation of Nature, like the 18th and 19th century view where Nature was seen to support the industrial revolution; and d) Nature and humans are a single ecosystem, like the Gaia hypothesis and the Earth as a Goddess.⁴⁰

These ways of Nature can be seen time sequential as described by Trubshaw or that (some) ways happen at the same time. In the latter case a Contested space can emerge, as could be seen around Stonehenge, England⁴¹ and Tara in Ireland.⁴²

Looking at The Field, all four ways exist: a) my and other interviewees' personal experience/feeling, describe above as being one with Nature, b) the very nice and moody pictures/paintings that have been made of the place,⁴³ c) the presence of the Beaumont Mill, which changed the course of the River Nanny⁴⁴ and the recent realignment of the R150,⁴⁵ and finally d) the region is part of the ecosystem of the surroundings and the Earth as a whole.

Perception and mental imagines

Aristotle described the five basic exteroceptive senses, being: sight; hearing; touch; smell; and taste.⁴⁶ But a further five additional senses can be recognised: pain; balance; motion; acceleration; and temperature.⁴⁷ Beside these exteroceptive there exist interoceptive senses, which are stimulated from within the body, like sensors to determine the carbon dioxide and oxygen levels in the blood; sensors that react on blood vessel enlargement by pain, for instance headache; and sensors in bladder and colon that result in fullness feeling.⁴⁸

³⁸ Anonymous, "Protected structures 2007 - 2013," 49.

³⁹ B. Trubshaw, "Thinking about places," in *Sacred places: prehistory and popular imagination* (Heart of Albion, 2005), 2.

⁴⁰ Trubshaw, "Thinking about places," 10.

⁴¹ B. Bender, ed. *Landscape, politics and perspectives*, 1 ed., Explorations in anthropology (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1993), 275.

⁴² Anonymous, "TARAWATCH - Save the Hill of Tara from M3 motorway " <http://www.hilloftara.blogspot.com/>.

⁴³ Hughe, "Around Beaumont Bridge just outside Duleek in Co Meath".

⁴⁴ Tourism, "Beaumont Heritage Trail".

⁴⁵ Drogheda Independent, "75 objections already lodged with Council over road plan," <http://www.drogheda-independent.ie/news/75-objections-already-lodged-with-council-over-road-plan-766546.html>.

⁴⁶ Aristotle, "De Anima." (ca. 350 BCE), <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Aristotle/De-anima/de-anima3.htm>.

⁴⁷ D. Coon and J.O. Mitterer, *Introduction to Psychology: Gateways to Mind and Behavior* (Cengage Learning, 2008), 139.

⁴⁸ G. Northoff, *Neuropsychanalysis in Practice: Brain, Self and Objects* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 142.

As stated by Berntson and Cacioppo it important to realise that the mental images made by extero- and interoceptive perception can provide the same reaction as the actual perception:

*..., researchers agree that most of the neural processes underlying like-modality perception are also used in imagery, and imagery in many ways can "stand in" for (re-present, if you will) a perceptual stimulus or situation. Imagery can not only engage the motor system, but also can engage the autonomic and limbic systems.*⁴⁹

All the senses will perceive a landscape/place in all its facets, including the resulting internal effect perceived by interoceptive senses. All these together form the mental image for a person.

Perception's and mental image's effects on the body

Both perception and mental images can bring excitement, which results in the secretion of adrenaline into the blood stream that carries it to the brain part that regulates the heart and breathing functions (medulla oblongata). Suan states that the muscles between the ribs (intercostal muscles) and the diaphragm will increase the rate of breathing when excited.⁵⁰ This contraction of intercostal muscles and the diaphragm causes the known butterfly feeling according to B.K. Johnson and M. Hunter.⁵¹ In the case of my experience of The Field it feels as a kind of well being.

Goose bumps are also felt and these are related to the tiny muscles which are contracted and pull the hairs up. According to T.J. Zimmerman this can be caused by fear, arousal and excitement.⁵²

Slight headaches can be caused by a change of blood pressure,⁵³ and this change of blood pressure can be the result of one's excitement.

The excitement when seeing the landscape (be it through perception or mental images) around the *Fat Pony Field* can induce these bodily experiences.

Fairy-Faith and phenomenology

R.W. Evans-Wentz studied the Fairy-Faith in the Celtic countries (like Ireland) and he came to the conclusion that:

*... if fairies actually exist as invisible beings of intelligences, and our investigations lead us to the tentative hypothesis that they do, they are natural and not supernatural, for nothing which exists can be supernatural; ...*⁵⁴

Abram adds something to this, as he states that any tangible form is also an experiencing subject that responds to me.⁵⁵

Evans-Wentz investigated five theories that might relate to his Fairy-Faith: a) Pygmy theory, which is based on the idea that an actual pygmy race exists/existed; b) Druid theory, which is the possible folk memory of Druids and their practises; c) Naturalistic theory, which is a belief that natural phenomena are caused by gods, spirits and/or fairies; d) Mythological theory, that the former gods are diminished into fairies as part of the folklore; and e) Psychological theory, that certain people are closer to Nature which enhances their "Subconscious Self, the

⁴⁹ G.G. Berntson and J.T. Cacioppo, "Mental images," in *Handbook of neuroscience for the behavioral sciences* (Wiley, 2009), 393.

⁵⁰ H.W.Q.Y.C.Y.K.B. Suan, *Biology* (Pelangi Publishing Group Bhd), 541.

⁵¹ B.K. Johnson and M. Hunter, *The Articulate Advocate: New Techniques of Persuasion for Trial Lawyers* (Crown King Books, 2009), 7.

⁵² T.J. Zimmerman, *Doctor Talk - Made Easy* (AuthorHouse, 2010), 221.

⁵³ R.W. Evans and N.T. Mathew, *Handbook of headache* (Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2004), 11.

⁵⁴ Evans-Wentz, *The fairy-faith in Celtic countries*: xvi.

⁵⁵ Abram, *The spell of the sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world*: 67.

Subliminal Self, the Ego” and this provides them the ability to experience invisible and/or physical energies.

Evans-Wentz gives the Pygmy and Druid theories a low priority, but he sees that all theories need the enhancement of the Psychological theory to provide a sound system.⁵⁶

Evans-Wentz also supports the idea that humans only know things, which have been perceived through our (extero/intero) senses:

*The universe of science is wholly a universe of phenomena, and behind phenomena, as no scientist would dare deny, there must be the noumena, the ultimate causes of all things, as to which science as yet offers no comprehensive hypothesis, much less an answer.*⁵⁷

Finding fairy related places around The Field could be expected when considering the Fairy-Faith described by Evans-Wentz. And indeed there are three places that can be related to this Fairy-Faith: the Fairy Bush (as remembered by Resident-A); the stepping stones (as told by Resident-B); and the Field of the Fairies beside The Field (as written down by Boylan).⁵⁸

Conclusion

The *Fat Pony Field* is experienced by many people in different ways; my personal experience is close to a numinous feeling, evoked by the *Spirit of Place*. Through present/former perceptions by extero/intero senses or internal mental images, this has effect on the body (like slight headaches, goose bumps, etc.). The fact that I experience these numinous feelings only at certain places along this road, maps on the ideas of Eliade, who states that space is not homogeneous and is uniquely personal.⁵⁹

Regardless of facts (like Berntson and Cacioppo) and theories (like Eliade and Durkheim): even if my experience is an imagination (due to my mental images), it is still my genuine experience. As Abram says:

*They are not, that is, held in place by gazes other than my own – these are entirely my images, my phantasies and fears, my dreamings.*⁶⁰

I found it very encouraging to see that there is so much information preserved by residents of the area around Beaumont. Stories, legends and experiences are closely linked to this landscape and with people. Several interviewees have the idea that present times are much faster paced (no walking to the shop or coming together at night time), and this might reduce the local knowledge and the sense of place. It is though interesting to say, that I did not know anything of the place and I still sensed this *Spirit of place*.

Epilogue

The question is if my investigations around the *Fat Pony Field* will have a similar effect as Derren Brown's purposed linking of luck to an inconspicuous statue of a dog: as the community started to really believe in the Lucky Dog.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Evans-Wentz, *The fairy-faith in Celtic countries*: xix-xxviii.

⁵⁷ Evans-Wentz, *The fairy-faith in Celtic countries*: 460-61.

⁵⁸ Boylan, "Field of the Fairies. By Miss A. J. Flynn, Shallon, Julianstown."

⁵⁹ Eliade, *The sacred and profane: the nature of religion*: 20, 24.

⁶⁰ Abram, *The spell of the sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world*: 38.

⁶¹ Derren Brown, "The Experiments: The Secret of Luck," (2011).

Acknowledgment

I want to thank everyone who helped me with producing this essay (see also Appendix B) and all the respondents; informers; and the tutors of the Sophia Centre for their valued feedback.

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Appendix A

Research proposal

Separate file: RESEARCH-PROPOSAL-Sacred-Greography-VR-03.pdf

Appendix B

Fieldwalks, interviews, e-mails and library visits that had an impact on the study of the *Fat Pony Field*, are:

Type of encounter	Date	Interviewee's alias
Interview-1	Oct. 12 th , 2011	Owner of The Field
Fieldwalk-1	Oct. 12 th , 2011	Myself
Interview-2	Oct. 14 th , 2011	Member of Regional Historic Society
E-mail-1	Oct. 17 th , 2011	Archaeologist
Fieldwalk-2	Oct. 17 th , 2011	Myself
Fieldwalk-3	Oct. 24 th , 2011	Myself
Fieldwalk-4	Oct. 28 th , 2011	Dowser-A and Myself
Fieldwalk-5	Nov. 1 st , 2011	Folklorist and Myself
Interview-3	Nov. 15 th , 2011	Neighbour
Interview-4	Nov. 15 th , 2011	Resident-A
Fieldwalk-6	Nov. 16 th , 2011	Myself
Library-1	Nov. 25 th , 2011	Myself
Library-2	Nov. 30 th , 2011	Myself
Interview-5	Nov. 30 th , 2011	Resident-A
E-mail-2	Dec. 1 st , 2011	Archivist
Interview-6	Dec. 9 th , 2011	Resident-A
Fieldwalk -7	Dec. 9 th , 2011	Dowser-B, Folklorist and Myself
Interview-7	Dec. 12 th , 2011	Member of Regional Historic Society
Fieldwalk-8	Dec. 13 th , 2011	Myself
Interview-8	Dec. 16 th , 2011	Member of Duleek Angler's Club
Fieldwalk-9	Dec. 18 th , 2011	Myself
Interview-9	Dec. 18 th , 2011	Resident-B and Myself

Appendix C

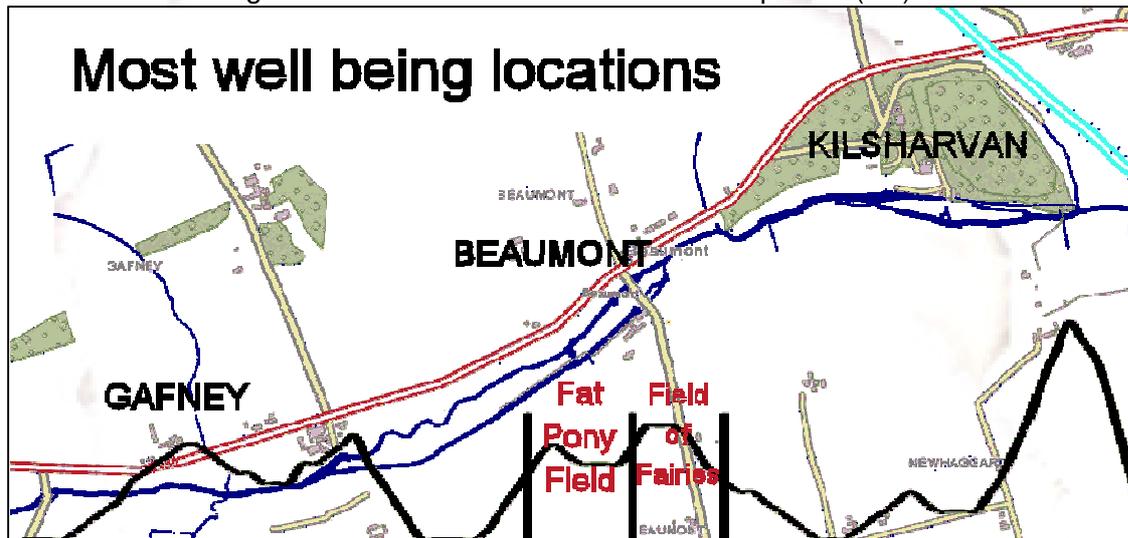
The questionnaire distributed to Members of the Duleek Angler's Club.

Separate file: Nanny-experience-questionnaire-v02.pdf

Appendix D

Out of the 35 distributed questionnaires, 11 members of Duleek Angler's Club returned the form. Around 90% of the respondents are men (Q1). Around 35% of the respondents are between 50 and 59 years (Q2) and 55% of the respondents have fished at least 100 times on the River Nanny (Q6).

The most well-being locations can be deduced from below picture (Q7):



The black curve, at the bottom of the picture, shows the relative well-being level of all the respondents. The highest well-being location is the western part of Kilsharven estate. Gafney townland has a comparable well-being level as Beaumont; where both the *Fat Pony Field* and the *Field of Fairies* areas score comparable.

The seven statements that we were part of the Numen-index:⁶²

1. I like to use my mind to go back in time while being at the River Nanny
2. I am able to connect deeply with these well-being locations on the River Nanny.
3. While at these locations, I try to feel the aura or spirit of earlier times.
4. After visiting it, I enjoy reflecting on these locations.
5. These well-being locations provoke an almost 'spiritual' response in me.
6. At these well-being locations, I lose my sense of time.
7. I enjoy talking about my personal reactions at these locations.

The Numen-index is a summative scale based on respondent's rating on the above seven statements (comparable with football league rating or IQ test).⁶³

In an earlier research project of Reijs, there was a kind of linear relation between Numen-Index and the number of feelings (Q12).⁶⁴ but in the River Nanny Experience questionnaire no such relation is found.

⁶² John Gatewood, March 23rd 2011.

⁶³ Gatewood and Cameron, "Battlefield Pilgrims at Gettysburg National Military Park."

⁶⁴ Victor Reijs, "What feelings and/or experiences do visitors report having at heritage sites?,"(2011), http://www.iol.ie/~geniet/eng/Victor_R-updated.pdf.

Appendix E

Story from Resident-A

Transcription by Victor Reijs on Dec. 9th, 2011

Resident-A talks about a Fairy Bush beside the Criquette field down from Hanover House.

Story from Resident-B

Transcription by Victor Reijs on Dec. 18th, 2011

We had dairy herd and they were down along the River Nanny; we had to pass through a stream. Every morning, when my father would go down, there would be stepping stones over the stream (... coming from McKean's...). They were damming the water and holding it back, so he used to scatter them. He maintained that this was the fairies, crossing over at night. And while he was doing this he had a lot of bad luck with animals, dying, diseases and different things and finally he decided to build a bridge over it, so he built the bridge and from that day on he prospered.

Story from Resident-C

Told by Resident-B. Transcription by Victor Reijs on Dec. 18th, 2011

She was coming home and went half way, which was Hall's Hollow, and she turned to go back and the back wheel of the bicycle would not go round (even after kicking the brake blocks, thinking it was something with the brakes, but no avail), and she had to carry the bicycle home. She got up the next morning to go to work and she called her dad and said there was something wrong and he said: 'Don't you know you should not turn in hollowed ground.'

Stories from the Folklore Schools' Scheme 1937-1938, Whitecross, Co. Meath

Transcription by Victor Reijs

Field of the Fairies

By Miss A.J. Flynn, Shallon, Julianstown. Written down by Eileen Boylan, Julianstown

In Beamond in a field owned by Mr Mattheus of Annaghor, fairies were seen playing football. The field stretches from the bottom of a steep hill known as Flynn's Hill, to Beamond Cross. The fairies were seen by Mr John Kennedy when coming from Beamond Post Office. They wore hobble skirts, and kicked a small round shaped ball. Their height was about one foot and a half.

Part of A story of St. Patrick

By Mr Pat Delaney Laytown. Written down by Peggy Landy, Julianstown

When St. Patrick was crossing the River Nanny he saw some fishermen fishing and he asked them for some fish. They told him they had none, he cursed them and told them they would never have any, with the result that no salmon ever come up the mouth of the Nanny.

A Strange Story

By John Kennedy, Shallon, Julianstown. Written down by Eileen Boylan, Julianstown

At a place known as Beamond which borders the main road from Julianstown to Duleek a man named Mr Wherty owned a shop in which he sold Groceries. During its creation a strange thing happened. The builders of the house succeeded in the work until they came to thatching. Every

night after dark a strange bull came and tossed up the thatching that the men did during the day. The house is now a stable and is owned by Mrs Reynolds.

Folklore

Written down by John Cunningham, Hilltown, Drogheda

One night a man was walking from Beaumont to Bellewstown. Coming to Beaumont gates he heard a wailing in the laurels, but he paid no heed to it. It kept crying as he thought beside him or in the field. It won't cross the Brandan he thought. So he stood on the road and watched for a while and then walked on. No sooner had he started than he heard the wailing again. He reached the top of the hill and suddenly remember a man who was dying nearby and a "ban shee" followed his family. He ran for his life home. His fear got the better of him as he neared the house and he jumped the ditch and in as fast as he could. If he hears a cat screeching to this day he begins to sweat.