

### Spaces of encounters and experience: embodiment and emplacement at Irish holy wells

**Richard Scriven** Department of Geography, University College Cork





Places as 'spectral gatherings': "where many different things gather, not just deliberative humans but a diverse range of actors and forces, some of which we know about, some not, and some of which may be just on the edge of awareness" Anderson & Harrison 2011, p. 12.





# approaching the well

### • historic & general accounts

Brenneman & Brenneman 1995; Bord & Bord 1985; Carroll 1999; Harbison 1991; Healy 2001; Huws 2010; Logan 1980; Lysaght 2001; O'Cadhla 2002; O'Giolláin 2005

- shifting roles Gillespie 1997; Healy 2001; Varner 2002
- peculiarly Irish

Carroll 1999; Nolan 1983; Nolan & Nolan 1992

- new interpretations Foley 2011; O' Brien 2008; Rackard 2001; Ray 2013
- pilgrimage

Aziz 1987; Barber 1991; Bhardwaj 1997; Campo 1998; Dubisch 1995; Gesler 1996; Reader 1993; Morinis 1992; Stoddard 1994; 1997

## encountering the well

### • geographies of mobilities

Adey 2006; 2009; Cresswell 1999; 2006; 2010; 2011; 2012; Cresswell and Merriman 2011; Jensen 2009; Merriman 2009; Sheller and Urry 2006; Spinney 2009.

#### nonrepresentational geographies

Anderson & Harrison 2011; Dewsbury 2003; Dewsbury et al. 2002; Lorimer 2005; 2008; Macpherson 2010; Rose 2002; Rose & Wylie 2006; Thrift 1996; 1999; 2000; Wylie 2002; 2005; 2010

### spiritual & spectral geographies

Connerton 1989; Brace et al. 2011; Cloke 2011; Dewsbury & Cloke 2009; Harvey 2002: Holloway 2003; Holloway & Valins 2002; Ivakhiv 2003; Kong 2001; MacKian 2011; Martin and Kryst 1998; Maddern & Adey 2008; Maddrell & Della Dora 2013; Slavin 2003; Wylie 2007; Yorgason & Della Dora 2009

PEOPLE Tours DRINITING HANDS Nor COMMUNITY Touch FAITH PRAYER PAUSE -FEATURES BELIEFS LAYOUT TRADITION ETHEREAL PLACE PATHS SPIRITUAL 2 CONNECTION SPECTIPAL SPACES NOITDA

30



"It's \*very\* active, and there's that element of walking the site [...] so the site makes you pace your rosary, which is a curious thing and there's impediments to that because there's things sticking out and [...] that it sort of...slows you down or accelerates your rhythm and cadence" - Nell



"I know my ancestors would have walked those...and maybe try and get back into their thinking" - Eoghan



"Spectrality – the unsettling of self, the haunting takingplace of place, the unhinging of past and present – is an irreducible condition..." Wylie 2007, p. 172/3.



"Yeah, I like just sitting there, have a cup of tea there, bit of peace, reflection...yeah. It's...you see the dreams and wishes of people there, you know, they've left behind" - Kim



"...the researcher can actively experience the creation of the temporary spaces that filled with senses and passion..." Morton 2005, p.672.

"...as a relational, connective medium in which research, researchers and research subjects are necessarily immersed." Bondi 2005, p. 433.



## go raibh maith agaibh

#### select references:

Anderson, B. & Harrison, P. (eds.) 2011. *Taking-Place: Non-Representational Theories and Geography,* Ashgate.

Cresswell, T. 2006. On The Move, Routledge.

Foley, R. 2011. Performing Health in Place. Health & Place, 17

Holloway, J. 2003. Make-believe. E&P A, 35 (4)

Martin, A. & Kryst, S. 1998. Encountering Mary: IN Nast, H.J. and Pile, S. (eds.) *Places through the body*. Ldn: Routledge, pp. 207-227.

Morton, F. 2005. Performing ethnography. Soc & Cult Geog. 6(5)

O'Brien, S. 2008. Well, Water, Rock. *Material Religion* 4(3)

#### acknowledgments:

Dr John Crowley, Mr Ray O'Connor, staff and fellow research postgraduates in the Department of Geography, UCC

Research funded by the Department of Geography, UCC Studentship Scheme and the Geographical Society of Ireland Postgraduate Fieldwork/Travel Award 2013

#### contact:

102087081@umail.ucc.ie liminalentwinings.com Twitter: @RichardScriven/@CorkGeog

