



Enchanted places

Description

Who can deny that there are places whose “numinous nature” is best sensed “in the peace and tranquility of the atmosphere that surrounds them, simply by sitting still and quietly letting the energy”



quoting from a book on *ley lines* by Christopher

Can people connect directly with the

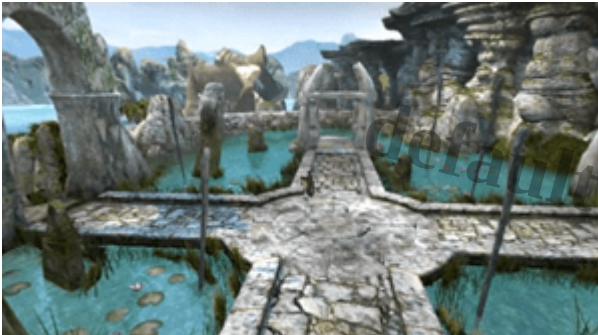
“energy” of an environment? Some people think of the mood of a place in these terms. There are haunted places, and buildings steeped in atmosphere and memories. For some people this connection is more than poetic analogy, and metaphor. It’s even more than *symbolism*. It’s as if certain places emit a vibration, a field, and provide a direct **parapsychological** connection between people and places.

So-called natural environments (the outdoors, hills, forests, meadows, parks, gardens, lakes) provide a good test case for this proposition. For one thing it’s possible to think of some kind of organic connection between people and natural environments – a set of connections that gets disrupted by artificial intrusions, such as roads, factories, power stations, and wind farms.

After all, humans and environments co-evolved. There must be all kinds of connections as yet undetected by science. Perhaps people have a sensory attunement to aspects of the environment of which they are unaware, or to which they cannot give clear expression. All they can say is that they have a certain feeling about a place, or that it exerts an influence on them in a certain way. We don't yet have the science to pin down the requisite cause and effect.

Techno-primitivism

It's a view familiar to contemporary movie watchers, and enthusiasts of fantasy and science fiction – or perhaps I should say that fantasy and science fiction feed off some primitive urge in all of us to identify connections in nature. There's the *Tree of Souls* in the movie *Avatar*, where this life source reaches out to everything through roots and tendrils, literally, connecting organisms together, at least – don't forget *The Force*.



watermark

Fantasy and computer games give ready expression to this

kind of enchantment. In fantasy games special marks, stones, plants and artefacts become instrumentalised, as if such objects function as autonomous causal agents able to influence events – the ring that has awesome power (*Lord of the Rings*, *Green Lantern*). It's easy to simulate such cause and effect relationships in computer games.

The New Age re-enchantment of nature makes for compelling stories and quests. It does however sideline the complex cultural and social factors that govern the character of a place.

In the search for magic and mystery it's easy to ignore the prosaic and the obvious. But then most of us can discriminate between fantasy and the everyday. The two seem to co-exist, a bit like the enchantment of Christmas.

I'm researching mood and place. So this all fits the project. My next post will probably include something about *parapsychology* and place.

Notes

- Also see [In meditative mood](#), [Vitruvius does steampunk](#), and [Howling at the moon](#).
- The seminal text on ley lines is by the photographer and amateur geographer Alfred Watkins (1855-1935). Ley lines are the lines of sight used by pre-historic surveyors to position and align monuments with significant land features. By all accounts Watkins saw no need to explain the phenomenon in terms of hidden forces. He did though start an industry of speculation on the

mysterious forces of nature. Of those ancients entrusted with the responsibility for mapping and siting he said: "Men of knowledge they would be, and therefore men of power over the common people. And now comes surmise. Did they make their craft a mystery to others as ages rolled by. Were they a learned and priestly class, not admitted until completing a long training—as Caesar describes the Druids. Or did they—as Diodorus and Strabo says of Druids—become also bards and soothsayers. Did they, as the ley decayed, degenerate into the witches of the middle ages. Folk-lore provides the witches with the power of riding through the air on a broomstick, the power of overlooking, that of the evil eye. They (in imagination) flew over the Broomy Hills and the Brom-leys. It may be that the ancient sighting methods were condemned as sorcery by the early Christian missionaries. Were they the laity or lay-men of Beowulf?" (30-32).

- Here's some other ways that people think we connect mysteriously with nature: geomancy, divination, feng shui, morphic fields, alchemy, hermetic philosophy, shamanism.
- The computer game image above is from *Myst IV, the Age of Serenia*, where people's memories float around like spores from some kind of plant, spirit sprites hover over water and fire rocks, and the inhabitants find out about the future when they dream.
- There's a map on a website somewhere showing Chartres Cathedral at the centre of a great circle that has Rome and Sintra (Portugal) on the circumference. Equidistant from each of those two cities and on the same circle there's Rosslyn Chapel just outside of Edinburgh.



Bibliography

- Street, Christopher. 2010. *London's Ley Lines: Pathways of Enlightenment*. Earthstars Publishing
- Watkins, Alfred. 1922. *Early British Trackways*. London: Simkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co. Available in various formats, including an illustrated version, at <https://archive.org/details/earlybritishtrac00watkuoft>.

Category

1. Architecture

Tags

1. ley lines

- 2. mood
- 3. place

Date Created

December 21, 2013

Author

rcoyne99

default watermark