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GENDER, FOLKLORE AND MAGICAL HEALING IN IRELAND, 1852–1922

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This chapter explores magical healing¹ in later-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Ireland. It challenges existing historiography that contends that magical beliefs and practices were increasingly rejected after the Great Famine of the 1840s as a consequence of urbanisation, emigration, the strengthening of the official Church, a decline of the Irish language, and technological, economic, and educational change. These linguistic, social and cultural shifts ensured that even the strongest adherents, the rural, Roman Catholic poor, began to increasingly shun this older, moral magical universe. This was a universe that had been populated with an interventionist God and Satan, demons, angels, witches, and supernatural entities such as fairies.² Feeding into this narrative of decline of belief in the supernatural in Ireland was a similar picture painted of diminished belief in witchcraft, ghosts, fairies, banshees, and the curative power of Holy Wells among Irish diaspora communities in England and North America in the later nineteenth century. In this reading, traditional culture did not survive migration due to clerical hostility and because the urban landscapes that Irish people inhabited in their new countries held no place for supernatural beliefs that were place-specific and intimately related to surviving and negotiating the harsh environment of rural Ireland.³

It has been long acknowledged that in the later nineteenth century the poet William Butler Yeats and his contemporaries ‘were drawn to the study of the occult and the supernatural, with its own nationalising angle: he discovered Theosophy and Eastern Mysticism, as well as fairy-lore, in 1880s Dublin’.⁴ Indeed, the Victorian age in Britain and Ireland witnessed an upsurge in interest among women and men, especially the middle class, in magic and the occult, from astrology, mesmerism, and ceremonial or ritual magic to spiritual mediumship and spiritualism.⁵ More importantly, recent research has corrected the old picture of a disenchanted, post-Famine Ireland by demonstrating that many Irish people continued to believe in fairies, ghosts, death messengers and omens. They also believed in and practised, or at least

were thought by their contemporaries to practice, beneficial and harmful magic, including divination, fortune telling, and supernatural cursing. These beliefs were strongest among the rural poor and crossed denominational lines from Roman Catholic to Protestant.⁶ Historians have demonstrated that magical belief and practice in Victorian Britain and Ireland was not incompatible with the urbanisation, secularisation, and rationality often associated with modernity, but was adaptive and transformative and enabled people of varied socio-economic backgrounds, in the countryside and in cities, to negotiate the uncertainties and challenges and of modern life.⁷

In common with Scotland, England and America,⁸ belief in witchcraft in Ireland (the use of magical or occult means to steal agricultural produce or harm or kill animals and humans) retained cultural currency among the poor up until at least the early twentieth century. This was long after witchcraft had ceased to be a crime in Ireland. In 1821, the Westminster parliament repealed the 1586 Irish Witchcraft Act, which made harming by magical means a felony punishable by a year in prison and four appearances in the pillory on market-day. For a second offence, or a first offence that involved a murder, the sentence was death by hanging. A consequence of a continued belief in witchcraft in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ireland, however, was that men and women were accused of witchcraft by their neighbours. Suspected witches, along with the people that accused of them of witchcraft, were both male and female. The establishment in Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century of a government-controlled, national police force and the extension of lower courts of petty sessions made it easier for complaints involving witchcraft or popular magic to be made by the poor and to be investigated and acted upon. Consequently, suspected witches were more able to charge their verbal or physical attackers with slander or assault and have them dealt with by the authorities. Victims of witchcraft, on the other hand, charged suspected witches with theft if they believed they had stolen milk or butter using magic, or with slander or assault if the suspected witch had responded to their accusation with violent words or actions. Witch beliefs crossed the religious divide between Catholic and Protestant but were strongest among poorer people who worked the land or looked after livestock. Nevertheless, they can be detected in this period in urban areas and among those of a higher social class.⁹ Recent research has shown that Irish people emigrating to America or relocating to England took their belief in ghosts and witches with them, and rather than dissipating in their new environment they changed and adapted to them.¹⁰

Another vital aspect of Irish magical culture was magical healing. Magical healers should not be conflated or confused with miraculous or faith or healers who channelled God's power to heal the sick by touching them or by 'the laying on of hands'.¹¹ Magical healing in Ireland was dispensed primarily by charmers and cunning-folk who cured ailments, diseases and illnesses attributable to both supernatural and natural causes, in either cattle or humans, using a mixture of oral and written charms, rituals, herbs, and magical objects.¹² Charmers worked free of charge and often specialised in curing one ailment or naturally occurring complaint or illness.

Cunning-folk were paid for a range of magical services with money or goods, and, although they occasionally healed natural occurring illness, they specialised in the diagnosing, detecting and countering of witch and fairy attack. This distinction drawn between cunning-folk and charmers, on the basis of specialisation and commercialisation, was first established in studies of magical healers in Scotland, England and Wales.¹³ Before exploring the activities of these, specialist magical healers, it is necessary to pause to consider amateur magical healing in the context of wider heterodox magical practice.

Remedies, rituals, and charms were used all over Ireland in the nineteenth and early-to-mid-twentieth century by ordinary people, for a range of complaints and illness in animals and humans, without the intercession of specialist magical healers.¹⁴ This herbal and magical knowledge was culturally transmitted through oral tradition and local female networks.¹⁵ Given that some of the charms and rituals used by amateurs were the same as those used by charmers and cunning-folk, it could be that they learned how to perform these operations by watching a specialist at work. A chief source of historical knowledge of magical healing, employed by non-specialists and specialists alike, is folklore, of which Ireland has inherited an unusually rich collection. In the nineteenth century, folklore was published by largely Protestant, Anglo-Irish landowning elites and collected from rural, small-holders and tenant farmers. It focused on customs and what they termed 'superstitious' supernatural beliefs and practises, including fairy lore. Established in 1935, the Irish Folklore Commission employed full-time, part-time and volunteer field collectors to gather folklore and local traditions, including these relating to traditional medicine and healing. These collections were archived in 1971 in the Department of Folklore, University College, Dublin, which became the National Folklore Collection (NFC) in 2005. They are increasingly accessible through digitation projects, most notably the records of the Schools Folklore Scheme (SFS), which ran from 1937 to 1938. This scheme charged primary schoolchildren, attending around 5,000 primary schools in the Irish Free State, with collecting local folklore under the watchful eyes of their teachers. In 1955, in Northern Ireland, the journal *Ulster Folklife* was published and folklore began to be recorded by employed collectors and through the issue of questionnaires. These collections are now housed in the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum near Belfast.¹⁶ The methodological issues inherent in using Irish folklore as a historical source have been well documented, but it nevertheless provides a crucial understanding of under-documented aspects of lives of the poor, especially those of women, including their magical beliefs and use of traditional or heterodox medicine.¹⁷

Simple, well-known, amateur remedies for everyday illness and complaints were legion in Ireland, and incorporated vegetables and herbs as well as modern, manufactured products. Brown paper saturated with vinegar was applied to the head to cure headaches, garlic was ingested to treat asthma or measles, and boiled burdock (a common medicinal plant) used as a 'blood purifier'.¹⁸ Meanwhile, magical healing rituals, such as walking blindfolded 'three times round a pigsty', were used to cure mumps (a contagious viral infection affecting children),¹⁹ while riding

‘a donkey’ was employed as a ‘charm for curing ... whooping cough’ (a bacterial infection of the breathing tubes and lungs).²⁰ In twentieth-century Co. Sligo, whooping cough, referred to there as ‘chin cough’, was cured by drinking donkey’s milk.²¹ Children in various parts of Ireland were also passed three times under donkeys to cure this infection.²² More macabre amateur charms were also employed. In later-nineteenth-century rural Ireland, north and south, teeth were removed from corpses as a charm to prevent toothache.²³ Irish antiquarian Thomas Johnson Westropp discovered, in his folklore survey of Connacht in the west of Ireland in 1922, that ‘toothache can be charmed by rubbing the gums with a dead man’s finger’.²⁴ Although a tool of the trade of specialist magical healers, some rural people also owned prehistoric arrowheads (also known as ‘elf-shot’ or ‘fairy darts’ as they were believed to have been fired by fairies) which they immersed in water and gave to ill livestock and humans to drink.²⁵ People often tried to cure bewitched cattle themselves before going to the trouble or expense of consulting a specialist. They employed a variety of methods to do so, including muttering simple incantations near the afflicted animal, feeding them plants and herbs known to have healing properties, drawing magical symbols around milk churns, and tying branches of the Rowan or Mountain Ash tree (in folklore bestowed with magical properties) or red rags to their tail or horns.²⁶

Specialist magical healers, cunning-folk and charmers, along with other unregistered, traditional or folk medical practitioners such as bonesetters, handywomen, and chemists, formed a part of a diverse, mixed medical economy for the poor, especially in rural areas, as Breathnach’s contribution demonstrates. Heterodox magical practitioners shared the same diagnostic, curative and cultural space as the public health system and qualified medical practitioners, and often formed part of a blended approach to disease and illness, either used in conjunction with one another or consecutively.²⁷ However, for many of the rural poorer class in the later nineteenth century, traditional medicine remained the recourse of choice; a choice not necessarily dictated by the limitations of provision of free, professional medical care but by socioeconomics, culture and politics.²⁸ Along with witchcraft and ghosts, magical healing also made the successful crossing to America with Irish migrants. A case study of an Irish magical cure for scrofula or the King’s Evil (a bacterial infection of the lymph nodes known today as Tuberculous Cervical Lymphadenitis) reported in the *New York Times* in 1858 has been recently used to discuss the importance of Irish magical healing, charms and charming in the United States in the later nineteenth century. Hospital admission records from this period have also shown that Irish immigrants in New York City often only sought hospital care and the advice of physicians when traditional healing strategies failed.²⁹ Irish immigrants to the United States also resorted to cunning-folk when witchcraft was suspected. In 1876, Julia Welsh, who had emigrated to New Jersey from Co. Mayo in 1866, was prosecuted for an assault on Mary Meehan whom she suspected of bewitching her daughter. In an attempt to cure the child she heeded the advice of a cunning woman, Mrs Collins, and employed the stock, Irish counter-charm of burning a piece of Meehan’s clothing; an action which placed her on the wrong side of the law.³⁰

Magical healing in post-Famine Ireland, and indeed abroad in diaspora communities, thus formed part of a complex, changing and enduring magical culture, and was employed both with and instead of scientific medicine. But who were charmers and cunning-folk, and what exactly did they do? Before answering these questions, it is best to discuss the types of primary sources, apart from folklore, that historians use to explore modern magical beliefs and practices, which are by definition secretive and mysterious and thus often hidden from the historical gaze. Historians have increasingly turned to newspapers to study popular magic and witchcraft in its wider social context at both national and local level.³¹ This effort is aided by an increase in court reporting and the rise of the provincial newspaper in Britain and Ireland in the nineteenth century. In Ireland, the rise in court reporting was facilitated by an increase in numbers of crimes to report on in an era of expansion of policing and the court system. Once identified in newspapers, criminal cases involving magic and witchcraft can be followed up in the often-patchy (in terms of temporal and geographical coverage) official records (court, coroner, census, and prison records) to provide a fuller picture of the case and the people involved.³² Objects of magical culture are increasingly used by historians and archaeologists to further our understanding of how magic was practised in the past. These objects provide particular insight into apotropaic magic, used either as all embracing protection against evil, or more specifically to thwart attacks by fairies or witches. Material culture also illuminates the ways in which counter-magic was used to undo the effects of bewitchment or fairy 'shot', 'stroke', 'blast' or abduction.³³

Charmers were both Roman Catholic and Protestant, men and women, and although found mostly in rural areas they were also present in towns and cities. They were drawn from the same social class as their clients and combined unpaid healing with other work or employment. They were often well-known and respected in their area, but it nevertheless took local knowledge to link a specific to a charmer to a particular ailment or complaint. Their methods and practices varied from district to district and place to place but again some generalisations can be offered. Charmers often specialised in a 'charm' or 'cure' for a particular ailment or illness. In humans, they treated minor ailments and complaints and occasionally more serious illness, including: burns and scalds, ringworm, sprains, back pain, warts, toothache, oral thrush, bleeding, whooping cough, erysipelas (a bacterial infection of the skin), and heart complaints. There are also a few examples of charms being used in the mid-nineteenth century to cure cholera or prevent its contraction. Charmers were thought to inherit their charms from other practitioners, sometimes on their deathbed, and the charm was often passed in sequence from male to female and vice versa. Their charms often comprised a ritual, the use of an object such as a plaster or a piece of bread, and a rhyme or prayer. The fact that their charm was essentially magical, which might have caused embarrassment to Christian practitioners or their clients, was obscured by this patina of Christianity; by referring to the Trinity, repeating portions of the Lord's prayer, or by saying a Hail Mary. Charms could also be written down to be worn close to the body as a curative or protective talisman. When they were inherited, charms came with instructions on how they

were to be used. Recipients were often warned by the person passing them on that the efficacy of the charms depended upon their not charging for them and keeping their healing method a secret.³⁴

Some charmers were born with an innate power to heal certain ailments, particularly the seventh son of a seventh son. In early twentieth-century Co. Cavan, charmers of this type were believed to cure scrofula by their touch, and if born posthumously (after their father's death) they were able to cure oral thrush in children by breathing on them three times.³⁵ It was reported by folklorist Joseph Meehan in 1906 that in rural Co. Leitrim, elderly Lackey Gallagher specialised in 'the cure of the ringworm' and that his curative powers were the result of being 'the seventh son of a seventh son'.³⁶ In Co. Monaghan, a collector for the SFS reported that 'the seventh son of a family has a cure for warts and rickets', and that 'a child who was born after his father's death has a cure for a child's dirty mouth [oral thrush]'.³⁷ Although many charmers specialised in treating either humans or animals, some treated both. In Co. Clare, in 1912, a blacksmith, Denis Curtis, was said to cure cows who had swallowed raw potatoes along with liver complaints in humans. He treated human patients by placing them 'on their backs on his anvil' and pretending to 'strike them with a sledge hammer ... on three occasions'.³⁸ The number three is not only a significant motif in this case but more generally in Irish, English and Welsh charming between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. Written and oral charms often stated that the ritual, rhyme or prayer had to be performed three times, or contained references to three Angels or three people, or ended with three 'Amens'. The number three held Christian significance as it referred to the Holy Trinity, as well as number of key events and people in the New Testament, but also held ancient mythological and pre-Christian magical significance.³⁹

Due to the legal and journalistic developments described above, some magical healers were prosecuted in the lower courts by dissatisfied clients seeking redress and recompense.⁴⁰ At Galway Petty Sessions in 1905, the alleged crime of a small tenant farmer, Edward Halloran, of 'selling charms and taking money for doing so' were deemed serious enough, given the tragic circumstances surrounding the case, to warrant a trial at the higher criminal court of the Quarter Sessions. After diagnosing John Concannon's illness as a liver complaint, Halloran put a 'charm on ... [a] cake and the butter' and gave it to him to eat. The cure proved ineffectual and feeling he would never be cured, his brother Thomas told the officiating magistrate, he 'drowned himself'. Halloran 'admitted giving the charms, but said he did not know it was any harm, and that he took no money for it'.⁴¹ Coroner reports given at inquests also throw light on charming. In these reports, charmers were often treated as misguided but essentially inculpable dabblers who stood in the way of poorer patient's receipt of proper medical care. In January 1897, William McIlhattan, dealer and magical healer, attended Belfast Recorder's Court for an Inquest into the death of John James Stewart. The infant died after McIlhattan had muttered an incantation and passed him three times under a donkey to cure his whooping cough. A verdict of death by bronchitis was returned and McIlhattan was absolved of any blame, and it was noted that he had provided his charm free

of charge.⁴² In Co. Down in April 1910, a young woman named Greenfield died from blood poisoning after being treated for erysipelas over a number of years by 'a man' who had a 'cure'. A local physician, Dr McWilliam, was contacted a few days before her death by her father, a labourer. The father later informed the inquest that after this consultation he 'continued the use of the "cure" in preference to the [physician's] medicine, and refused to allow the District Nurse to bathe the girl'. Dr McWilliam stated 'he believed that by the use of this "charm", which did neither good nor harm, valuable time was lost: and that if proper medical treatment had been used the girl's life might have been saved'.⁴³

Cunning-folk operated in both Catholic and Protestant communities throughout Ireland in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries much as they had done in the previous two centuries. Variants of cunning-folk have been found all over Europe and America in the early modern and modern period under different names and often displaying regional variation in their practices and methodologies. These seemingly diverse practitioners can be linked together by the fact they provided a range of magical services, took money or payment in kind, and often specialised in countering and curing the effects of harmful magic or supernatural attack.⁴⁴ Ronald Hutton has suggested that to adequately reflect both the diversity and shared characteristics of these practitioners, who are to be found all over the world, the nomenclature 'service magician' should be used instead of 'cunning-folk', 'witch doctor', or 'medicine man' or 'medicine women', which are too culturally specific to, respectively, England, Africa, and North America.⁴⁵ This is a compelling argument but the terms 'cunning-folk' or 'cunning man' or 'cunning women' have been used in this chapter to retain continuity with earlier research on Irish magical practitioners. What complicates matters further, however, is that Irish cunning-folk were known by a number of names, which often reflected subtle differences in their main magical specialism: in English they are known as wise men or wise women, fairy or elf doctors, fairy men or fairy women, and cow doctors; in Irish, they are referred to as *doctú' ir' na sí'ofraí'* (fairy doctors), *mna' feasa* (wise women) *bean feasa* (wise woman), or *lea' sí'* or (fairy healers).⁴⁶

By definition, Irish cunning-folk were commercial practitioners who were paid for their services with cash or with goods. Male and female, they came in two principal guises: the settled practitioner, who served local clients as well as those coming from further afield; and the travelling specialist, whose living was often more precarious and were thus more likely to defraud or steal from clients. Settled practitioners tended to be more prosperous than their itinerant counterparts, and gained respect and power in their communities that would otherwise not have been open to them. Clients of Irish cunning-folk, in common with those of charmers, were usually but not exclusively drawn from the ranks of the rural poor. Irish cunning-folk in the late nineteenth century offered one or more of the following range of services: they told fortunes using simple methods such as cards or palms; found lost or stolen goods (including cattle); healed natural, minor ailments in cattle and humans; and, most importantly, diagnosed, protected against, and cured illness believed to have been caused by fairies, witches, and the 'evil eye' (an innate, magical power located

in the eyes that can be used intentionally or can work unintentionally). Belief in fairies was strongest (as it had been for centuries) in rural, Roman Catholic communities but can be detected in counties in Ulster where Protestants predominated. It was, however, in Catholic communities that cunning-folk were called upon to return children, occasionally adults, that had been abducted by fairies and replaced with sickly ‘changelings’. Cunning-folk who performed dangerous ceremonies that involved ‘changelings’ being made to drink noxious draughts, being exposed to the elements, or burned, occasionally found themselves on the wrong end of a criminal prosecution or inquest verdict. In an case, from the mid-nineteenth century onward, legal action was increasingly taken against wandering cunning-folk, charged either with theft or obtaining money under false pretences. These charges were levied by disgruntled clients and by local police.⁴⁷

The most prominent of Irish cunning-women in the nineteenth century were Mary Butters, Moll Anthony (Mary Lesson) and Biddy Early. Presbyterian Mary Butters told fortunes and cured bewitched cattle in early nineteenth-century Co. Antrim. She became infamous when she was tried (and later acquitted) in 1808 for the murder of three clients who had succumbed to carbon monoxide poisoning by a counter-spell she had concocted to cure a bewitched cow. Moll Anthony died in Co. Kildare in 1878 having enjoyed a long career telling fortunes, curing minor ailments, and by returning or healing animals or humans attacked or abducted by fairies. In Feakle, Co. Clare, Early told fortunes and found lost or stolen cattle and goods by looking into a mirror, and treated minor ailments using incantation, herbs, and a strange liquid contained in a black bottle. She also countered the spells of witches who stole milk or butter, and cured ‘fairy-stricken’ children and adults afflicted by the ‘evil eye’. All three women were paid in goods or money for their services, and local folklore suggest that Anthony and Early derived their magical powers from the fairies.⁴⁸

Lesser-known cunning-folk can be found in newspaper court and coroners’ reports. In 1856, in Kilmoganny, Co. Kilkenny, labourer Patrick Kearns, convinced that his bedridden nine year-old son was ‘being gradually carried off by the fairies’, consulted ‘fairy-man’ Thomas Donovan. Donovan confirmed the child had been ‘blast[ed]’ by fairies and immediately dragged the boy out of bed and into the front yard into the elements to cure him; an action which an inquest later heard had led to his death.⁴⁹ Mary Doheny, a 40-year-old Roman Catholic from Co. Tipperary made a living by providing love potions to unmarried women, providing herbal cures for sick children, and diagnosing and curing bewitched cattle. Doheny finally fell foul of the law in 1864 and was brought before Carrick-on-Suir Petty Sessions for defrauding sub-Constable Joseph Reeves of a substantial amount of money and goods. She had taken these ‘gifts’ for foretelling Reeves’ future and for ‘raising the spirit’ of his dead son, whom he had lost a few years previously. The case was upheld in the petty sessions and referred to Clonmel Quarter Sessions, where in October 1864 a jury found Doheny guilty and the judge sentenced her to 12 months’ imprisonment with hard labour.⁵⁰ In Tipperary in May 1902, cattle drover and part-time cunning-man William Murphy was found guilty at Clogheen

petty sessions of theft and trespass. The complaint was brought by his neighbour, tenant farmer John Russel, who was convinced that Murphy came onto his land to bewitch his cattle.⁵¹

Folklore enriches the picture of cunning-folk gained from court reports in contemporary newspapers. Folklorist Nathaniel Colgan noted that in the Aran Islands in May 1892 there was an old woman who used incantations, herbs and the power of the 'evil eye' to cure clients by transferring disease from her paying clients onto random, unsuspecting members of the public.⁵² In 1893, Leland L. Duncan related a story popular at that time in the parish of Fenagh, Co. Leitrim, about a family who had successfully used a travelling cunning-man to counter the spells of a witch who had stolen butter from their cows. The family were obviously lucky as the man was reputed to have used the same type of counter-spell that Mary Butters had used to kill three people in 1807.⁵³ In the 1930s, in Killruran, Co. Clare, Michael Peppard, collecting for the SFS, reported that only 'Bid[d]y Early or an Bean Feasa' could return the ability to churn butter from milk once stolen by a witch.⁵⁴

This chapter has argued that a rich magical culture is discernible in post-Famine Ireland up until at least Partition in 1922, in both Protestant and Catholic communities, north and south, and was strongest among the rural poor. At the centre of this magical mental world was magical healing, which is often overlooked in historical treatments of the period. Magical healers were both men and women who often came from the same social class as their clients. Magical healing was often used in tandem with, but more likely instead of, the public health system and qualified medical practitioners. Historical categorisation imposes perhaps too neatly on what was often a messy past, but magical healers can be separated into three broad categories: well-informed amateurs; charmers; and cunning-folk or service magicians. Well-known 'home' remedies, charms and rituals were used by amateurs to cure or prevent common complaints, illness and disease. These were often used before recourse was made to a specialist magical healer and they were transmitted culturally via oral tradition and networks of local knowledge. Charming was provided free of charge by men and women either born with an innate gift to heal a specific ailment, or who had inherited a charm to do so. Charmers treated a whole manner of naturally occurring illness, especially those affecting the skin. Members of the medical profession were understandably angry when treatable conditions developed into untreatable ones due to delayed medical intervention. Cunning-folk were paid in goods or with money, and while they performed a range of magical services, from the provision of love magic to divination, they often specialised in diagnosing and curing the effects of fairy and witchcraft attack in humans and animals. The commercial aspect of their practice left them open to prosecution for fraud when they either failed to deliver the promised outcome to clients or the client or their family member died. Some of their number were also suspected of inheriting their gift from the fairies.

There is still much research to be done on magical healing in Ireland in this period. For example, a dedicated, large-scale project is needed to establish the precise gender balance, geographical spread, and denominational make-up of cunning-folk

and charmers. More use needs to be made of folklore, especially sources in Irish, in particular the main manuscript collection of the NFC. The imagery and iconography of Irish cunning-folk should also be explored in detail.

Notes

- 1 Magic is defined broadly as the use of occult or supernatural methods involving ritual, incantation, plants or objects to manipulate or alter the physical world.
- 2 For research that posits a post-Famine decline of magic in Ireland: Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, “The Fairy Belief and Official Religion in Ireland,” in *The Good People: New Fairylore Essays*, ed. Peter Narváez (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 199–214; Sean J. Connolly, *Priests and People in Pre-famine Ireland, 1780–1845* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1982, repr. 2001), 112–29; Timothy G. McMahon, “Religion and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ireland,” *History Compass* 5, no. 3 (2007), 855.
- 3 Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1979), 179–96.
- 4 Roy F. Foster, *Words Alone: Yeats and His Inheritances* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 131–2.
- 5 Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power and Spiritualism in late Victorian England* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed., 2004); Antonio Melechi, *Servants of the Supernatural: The Night Side of the Victorian Mind* (London: Arrow Books, repr. 2009); Alison Butler, *Victorian Occultism and the Making of Modern Magic: Invoking Tradition* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011).
- 6 Andrew Sneddon, *Witchcraft and Magic in Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), chapters 5–7; John Fulton, “Clerics, Conjurors and Courtrooms: Witchcraft, Magic and Religion in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Ireland” (PhD diss., Ulster University, 2016); Jodie Shevlin, “The Supernatural in Catholic Ireland in the Long Nineteenth-Century: 1821–1921” (PhD diss., Ulster University, 2020); Christina S. Brophy, “What Nobody Does Now’: Imaginative Resistance of Rural Labouring Women,” in *Women, Reform and Resistance in Ireland, 1850–1950*, ed. Christina S. Brophy and Cara Delay (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), 185–210.
- 7 See: Karl Bell, *The Magical Imagination: Magic and Modernity in Urban England 1780–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Angela Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story* (London: Pimlico, 1999); Thomas Waters, *Cursed Britain: A History of Witchcraft and Black Magic in Modern Times* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2019). For modernity and magic: Michael Saler, “Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review,” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006), 692–716.
- 8 See, Lizanne Henderson, *Witchcraft and Folk Belief in the Age of Enlightenment: Scotland, 1670–1740* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2016); Owen Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Culture, 1736–1951* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Owen Davies, *A Supernatural War: Magic, Divination, and Faith during the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Owen Davies, *America Bewitched: The Story of Witchcraft after Salem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- 9 See: Andrew Sneddon and John Fulton, “Witchcraft, the Press and Crime in Ireland, 1822–1922,” *Historical Journal* 62, no. 3 (2019), 741–64; Sneddon, *Witchcraft and Magic in Ireland*, chapters 5–6; Andrew Sneddon, “Witchcraft Belief, Representation and Memory in Modern Ireland,” *Cultural and Social History* 16, no. 3 (2019), 255–7.
- 10 Davies, *America Bewitched*, 37–9, 77; Waters, *Cursed Britain*, 103.
- 11 For divine healing in Ireland: Anthony D. Buckley, “Unofficial Healing in Ulster,” *Ulster Folklife* 26 (1980), 26–9, and Laurence M. Geary, “Prince Hohenlohe, Signor Pastorini and Miraculous Healing in Early Nineteenth-Century Ireland,” in *Medicine, Disease and State in Ireland, 1650–1940*, ed. Greta Jones and Elizabeth Malcolm (Cork: Cork University Press, 1991), 40–58.

- 12 Sneddon, *Witchcraft and Magic in Ireland*, chapter 7.
- 13 Owen Davies, "Healing Charms in Use in England and Wales 1700–1950," *Folklore* 107, no. 1–2 (1996), 19–32; Owen Davies, "Charmers and Charming in England and Wales from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries," *Folklore* 109, no. 1–2 (1998), 41–52; Owen Davies, "A Comparative Perspective on Scottish Cunning-folk and Charmers," in *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin and Joyce Miller (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 185–205.
- 14 Meredith B. Linn, "Irish Immigrant Healing Magic in Nineteenth-Century New York City," *Historical Archaeology* 48, no. 3 (2014), 151; Bryan H. Jones, "Irish Folklore from Cavan, Meath, Kerry, and Limerick," *Folklore* 19, no. 3 (1908), 315; Marion Dowd, "Bewitched by an Elf Dart: Fairy Archaeology, Folk Magic and Traditional Medicine in Ireland," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 28, no. 3 (2018), 458–60.
- 15 Sneddon, *Witchcraft and Magic in Ireland*, 134.
- 16 For overviews of the history of folklore collection in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ireland: Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000, repr. 2004), chapters 2, 4; and, Ciara Breathnach, "Handywomen and Birthing in Rural Ireland, 1851–1955," *Gender & History* 28, no. 1 (2016), 34–9, 43–5; For digitised collections from the NFC, see <https://www.duchas.ie/en> [last accessed 21/2/2021].
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