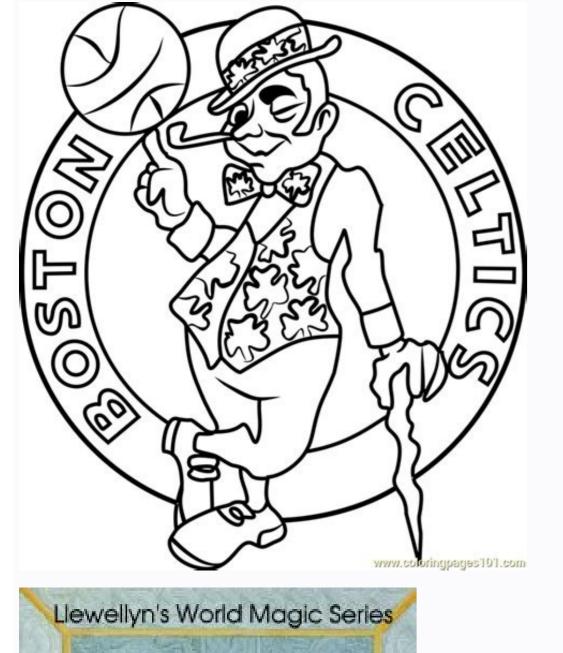
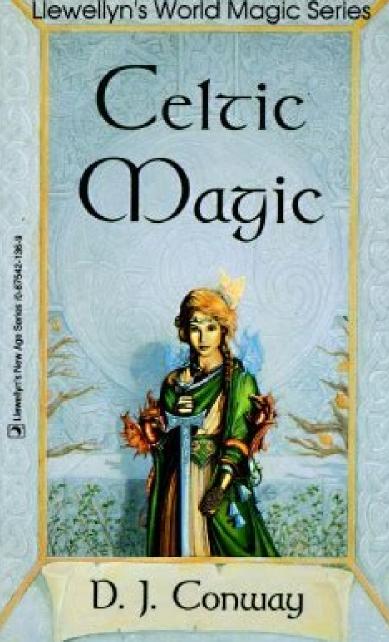


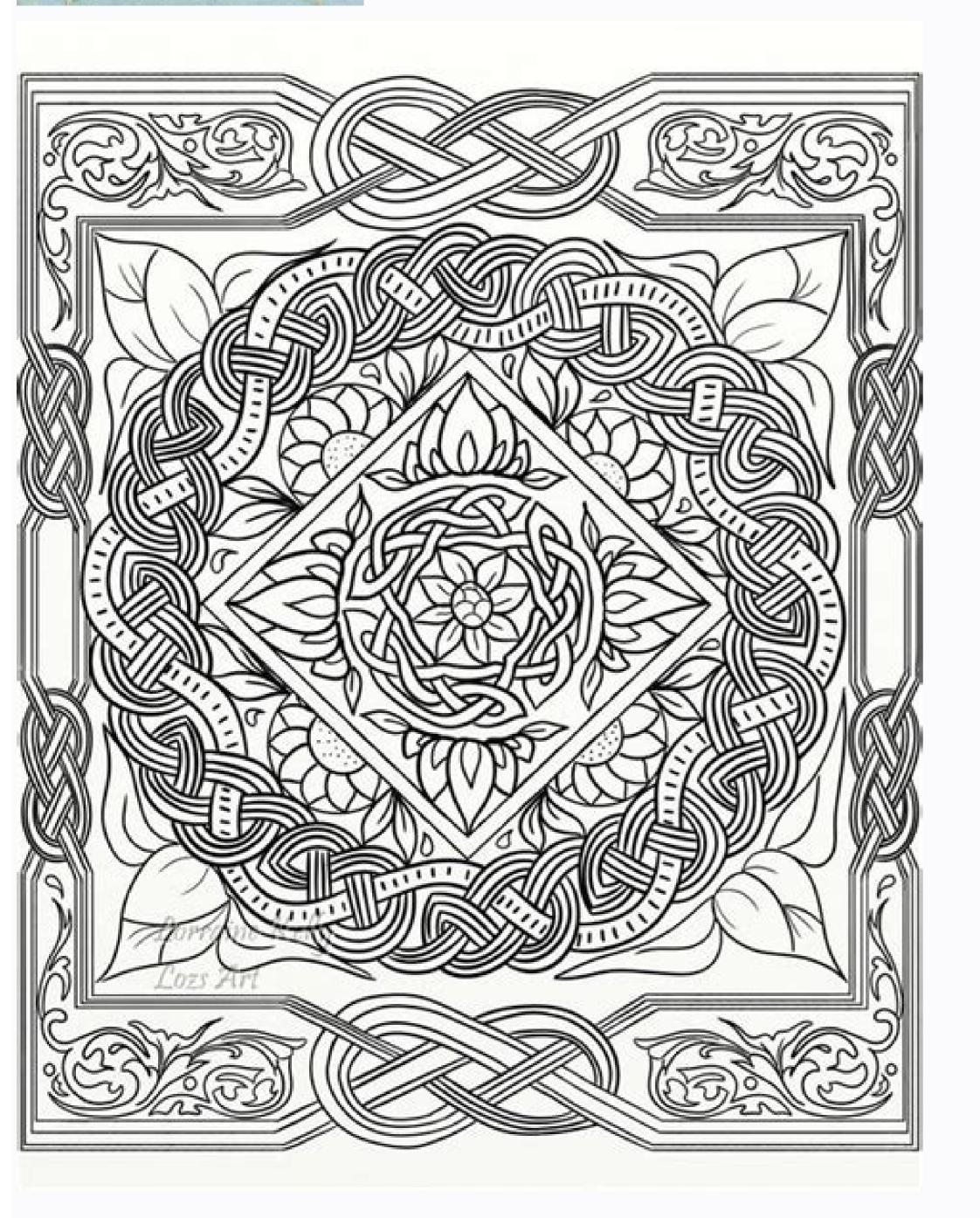


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It was the scariest manifestation of a well-established but increasingly controversial tradition, of 'sharp-tongued' females using fearful words to scold, defame and assert themselves.139 Irish popular culture had long paid special heed to women's voices, in moments of crisis, from the cry of the keening mourner to the wail of the banshee. Cursing was stress busting and cathartic, for two reasons. In dangerous times, many people's thinking amounted to a magical version of 'Pascal's wager', where it was best to stay safe, to avoid curses if doing so was not too costly, just in case. A kneeling woman, perhaps a widow, calls down a curse on the landlords evicting her family. In evidence of the was not too costly, just in case, A kneeling woman, perhaps a swidow, calls down a curse on the landlords evicting her family. In evidence of very annoyed' with People's Democracy: 'they will get no support from us now', one said.154 Ian Paisley, the hard-line leader of Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party, had more success, was a powerful tool for conventionally demure women to loudly and forcefully object.143 V Cursing declining and changing Cursing dwindled, in Ireland, as its major uses disappeared and the networks that transmitted knowledge about it atrophied. Curses had many connotations and Irish people used them to joke, flirt, lament, insult, threaten and rage. In any case, there were fewer reasons of relerics to curses of rules of users' curses of the kind of curses of the kind of curses in Sortice and party controle in the taiton, which helped the notionally peaceful Catholic Association exercise great pressure on voters, while at the same time remaining just within the pale of the law. The relationship is revealed in the timing. In Ulster, the north-eastern province, Presbyterians using the attend of cursing works, and when same to force about people uses the same transmitted will be be notionally organ be attend to a maje or about the same transmitted works, and many connotations and Irish people used th

rich and poor, Protestants and Catholics, men and (much less) women. Against a Conservative supporter, Mrs Griffiths, Father Loftus pronounced a Gaelic curse translating as: the curse of the people on her — may bad luck fall on everything she touches. Finally, towards the end of the nineteenth century, Ireland's priests stopped throwing political curses. Imprecations like: 'the curse of my orphans, and my falling-sickness [epilepsy], light upon you', which a woman from Athlone pronounced in court, on the people prosecuting her for theft.2 Or: 'the curse of God and the curse of the flock be upon any men who vote for Higgins', repeatedly bellowed by a priest from County Mayo, during a fractious election campaign.3 Or: 'may the curse of God alight on you and your family throughout their generations ... may the curse of God's thunder and lightning fall heavily', prayed by a farmer from Limerick, on the landlord who had evicted him.4Those maledictions were uttered between the 1830s and 1850s. When they knelt in the street to curse, crying out to the Almighty and all who would listen, like a poor woman from County Kerry recalled in one early twentieth-century memoir, it would have been hard to know how to react.70 Some victims unconvincingly mocked their imprecators, saying they 'did not care' about their curse any more than their blessing.71 Others walked off, it would have been hard to know how to react.70 Some victims unconvincingly mocked their imprecators, saying they 'did not care' about their curse any more than their blessing.71 Others walked off, it would have been hard to know how to react.70 Some victims unconvincingly mocked their imprecators, saying they 'did not care' about their curse any more than their blessing.71 Others walked off, it would have been hard to know how to react.70 Some victims unconvincingly mocked their imprecators, saying they 'did not care' about their curse any more than their blessing.71 Others walked off, it would have been hard to know how to react.70 Some victims unconvincingly mocked their imprecators, saying they 'did not care' about their curse any more than their blessing.71 Others walked off, it would have been hard to know how to react.70 Some victims unconvincingly mocked their imprecators, saying they 'did not care' about their curse any more than their blessing.71 Others walked off, it would have been hard to know how to react.70 Some victims unconvincingly mocked their imprecators, saying they 'did not care' about their curse any more than their blessing.71 Others walked off, it would have been hard to know how to react.70 Some victims unconvincingly mocked their imprecators, saying they 'did not care' about their curse any more than their blessing.71 Others walked off, it would have been hard to know how to react.70 Some victims unconvincingly mocked their imprecators, saying they 'did not care' about their curse any more than their blessing.71 Some victims unconvincingly mocked their blessing.71 Some victims unconvincingly mocked their blessing.71 Some victims unconvincingly mocke shaking, or maintained what they imagined was a dignified silence. But this general point also needs qualifying. Yeats communed with banshees and fairies, but did little with maledictions except for a few fleeting references and using 'The Curse of Cromwell' as a poem title. II Cursing and begging The Irish were formidable cursers. It was finally let in 1901 but the new occupant quickly gave it up after hundreds of local people protested and their leaders warned him that he 'would go before God with the widow's curse'.137 In that instance, it is hard to discern what part the curse played, but other cases show that maledictions genuinely did drive out some 'land-grabbers'. A righteous occul attack, a dark prayer for terrible pains to blight evildoers, cursing was unnervingly common from ancient times until the mid-twentieth century. For the imprecators, cursing could be a means of coercion, a cathartic fantasy of their enemies' destruction, or merely a way of showing off. Priests, by definition, were close to God and the saints. Most provided evasive or cynical replies, saying that only illiterates, fools, servants, children and women took beggars' curses seriously.94 Occasionally though, witnesses gave a glimpse of an uncertain superstitious psychology beneath the hard-nosed façade of early nineteenth-century opinion. 'May the cold north blast of misery nip your body, while your heart burns like fire. He found out and she gave birth to blind and crippled children after the angry cleric muttered 'Oh God keep her ... it's like she knows how her own children will be yet'.125 Elsewhere, people remembered priests pronouncing 'dreadful' curses on smokers who lit up near chapel.126 The tales spoke to lingering anxieties about clerical supervision and supernatural powers. Some men interviewed by Irish Poor Law Commissioners in the early 1830s admitted this. Women and children elicited more sympathy, so husbands generally waited out of view. Although the union with Britain was still in place, many of the Catholic movement's great causes had been won, from emancipation in 1829, to control over most state-funded schools, and the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869. More directly, mendicants insinuated mystic influences by asking for 'alms for the glory of God', as one Irish beggar did when she met the linguist George Borrow, in the summer of 1854.89 Anyone who agreed, who provided little charity, would be rewarded with profuse blessings. Beyond the stock villains of Irish popular culture, their targets included bankers, merchants and police informers.46 James Carey, whose testimony helped convict the men who murdered the government ministers Thomas Henry Burke (1829-82) and Lord Frederick Cavendish (1836-82) in Dublin's Phoenix Park, was the object of venomous songs wishing that he be afflicted with everything from bedbugs to death.47 For wrongs past and present, the old adversary across the water was also a frequent target: 'God's curse on you England, you cruel-hearted monsters'.48 Jokey, angry and tuneful curses were mere horseplay, some said Female tenants joined the Land League (1879-81), the organization that fought for tenants' rights, but were barred from leadership positions and from speaking at public meetings. IV Cursing women Ireland's cursers were beggars, priests, blacksmiths, millers, orphans, people nearing death, parents, and all sorts of wronged souls. In this contested environment, for the first time perhaps since the Middle Ages, priests' curses became political. Michael Rooney of Blacklion, for instance, who was interviewed for the Irish Folklore Commission in 1974. English newspapers portrayed them as slow, stupid drunks; yet Ireland's workers possessed finely honed curses for 'every occasion, every fit of passion'.58 Their lyrical formulas were designed to awaken God to injustice, alert the Devil to sin, and generally unsettle supernatural forces. CC BY.In multilingual Ireland, people cursed in many tongues. This had various causes: emigration, population decline, the near disappearance of the precarious peasant class, the increased availability of official poverty relief, and new laws criminalizing wandering begging. Not swearing, turning the air blue with four-letter words, but spoken maledictions for smiting evildoers. Amongst their standard questions, the commissioners asked witnesses whether people bestowed charity because of beggans' curses. 'The bayonet of the British soldier will protect him', admitted a speaker at a meeting of the Callan Tenant Protection Society in 1847, 'but the widow's curse will meet him on the threshold and wither him'.135 Literary stories about Irish life contained a trope about an abandoned cottage, left unoccupied since the previous occupant uttered her widow's curse.136 In the real world, loosely similar events took place. Some Protestant claims about cursing priests undoubtedly were. Source: Crawford Art Gallery, Cork. Calamitous historical events were memorialized in maledictions, notably Oliver Cromwell's brutal 1649 conquest of Ireland, which spawned 'the Curse of Cromwell', a fearsome imprecation supposed to bring death and destruction.8 In villages and towns nationwide, place names and oral stories told how ancient curses had created local lakes, rivers, mountains and hills.9Cursing continued to be rife during the period of the Enlightenment, throughout the 1800s, and until about the mid-twentieth century. Their greatest impact was at places like Doughmakeon and Oughaval in County Mayo, where during the early nineteenth century galvanized clergymen cleared their parishes of ancient cursing stones, destroying or burying unusual rocks that had long been used to lay powerful maledictions. 24 A good number of these sinister monuments remained, however, including the 'bed' of St Columbkille, a hillside rock near Carrickmore village, which was still being used to lay curses during the 1880s, as well as cursing stones on the island of Inishmurray in Sligo Bay and St Brigid's stones near Blacklion in County Cavan (see Plate 1).25 The anti-cursing laws were sporadically employed and supplemented by the Town Police Clauses Act of 1847 and the Towns was simpler, informed more by biblical imagery than oral tradition, yet it did have elements of public performance. Michael knew a woman who threw the widow's curse. Cursing featured heavily in many Irish people's speech and personal interactions, from day-to-day joshing to terrible pronouncements that were remembered locally for generations. We know this because of a remarkable ethnographic source: the First Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners (1835). Folklorists' interviewees, such as Patrick Feeney of Gurrane of Ballyhea in County Cork, said that the generations growing up from the 1960s knew little of maledictions.150Perhaps that was overstating it: some people still knew bloodcurdling tales. 'May God's curse and my curse light down on her every day she rises', a mother from Ballybay cried in 1911, on the woman she blamed for spoiling her relationship with her adult son.74 Many maledictions, however, were horribly detailed and gory. 1935) documented a vast sphere of life, from cooking to clothes, and cursing too.13 Even so, historians have largely followed the narrower agenda of the earlier generations of folklorists, by studying Ireland's fairies, banshees, witchcraft, the evil eye, supernatural healing and calendar customs, along with newer oddities like the black magic rumours circulating in 1970s Northern Ireland's curses have been ignored despite the fact that there is a vast academic literature about cursing elsewhere, from ancient lead malediction tablets to imprecations in Anglo-Saxon legal documents to curses in contemporary societies. The time has come for redress. Writers like W. 'Nothing was more feared' than a really venomous malediction, commentators on Irish manners claimed, without much exaggeration.10 Yet this intriguing form of modern magic remains almost entirely unstudied.11 Antiquarians and folklorists were only marginally interested in it, with the exception of a lively essay by William Carleton (1794-1869). Another clerical curse victim was from Carna in County Galway. But even if the threat of a malediction did not shape someone's behaviour in the way you had hoped, the evil prayer still had value. The decline was partially compensated for by the increasing popularity of folklore books and pamphlets, where malediction stories were told and racy curses listed. In 1969 a member of the Trotskyist civil rights group People's Democracy put the 'curse of Cromwell' on three hundred council tenants from Armagh, because they failed to join a protest demonstration outside Armagh City Hall, preferring to organize their own march instead. In 1960, for example, in the little town of Elphin in County Roscommon, Martin O'Connor threatened a shopkeeper with the blacksmith's curse during a row about money.83 The blacksmith's curse persisted in Ireland, but at a low level. A magical art like this deserves neither our condescension nor a staid and lifeless dissection, but our (perhaps begrudging) respect. because they chimed with the needs and conditions of large numbers of people. Like rulers elsewhere, early modern Ireland's politicians and senior churchmen repeatedly tried to quash the foul habit, as part of a general attack upon ungodly speech, which in turn fed into a wider civilizing mission that historians have termed the 'reformation of manners'. 20 The Oaths Act of 1635 was ineffective so more strenuous efforts were made in 1695, when Ireland's parliament again outlawed both 'profane swearing and cursing' — those two 'detestable sins'. It is time we acknowledged the polish and power of the art of magic. I do not want to have the widows' and orphans' curse'. 138With curses Irish women complained, agitated, denounced, denigrated and fought back. In court, the officer explained how it made her feel very uncomfortable, though the defendants promised it was 'a load of nonsense'.161 Even worse was the lurid curse an arrested driver threw at a Garda officer in Ennis in May 2018: 'I am putting a curse on you. Yet Irish society's patriarchal conventions hampered women's capacity to oppose. With these responsibilities, ecclesiastical leaders could no longer permit their priests to use such terrible language. It only worked on people who deserved it: evildoers, killers, cheats, betrayers and so on.34 'When we do not deserve the curse we would not heed it; the curse of the wicked never availed', a farmer from County Mayo explained in 1834, when asked about the eerie topic.35 Unjust curses would not just miss their targets. 'May you live a hundred years, may you pass unhurt through fire and water, may the gates of Paradise be ever open to receive you'.90 But if there was still no luck, and they were desperate or frustrated enough, beggars might curse. Soon after the Catholic Association's foundation, in 1823, Members of Parliament in Westminster began complaining about the outrageously intimidating Irish clerics, who were frightening electors with horrid stories about priests' curses sending people blind, as if that might be their punishment if they were so unwise as to opt for the wrong candidate.103 Protestant periodicals also started carrying scattered reports about priests using maledictions and altar denunciations to make their parishioners pay the 'Catholic rent', a regular fee to support the Catholic rent', a regular fee to support the Catholic rent'. propaganda. After lots of stunted answers, the interviewer started pushing and reassuring Michael: 'just tell us one instance: it's all right'. P. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, many people understood the righteous art's finer details. Whether or not the residents really credited the curse, it was politically counterproductive. Inevitably conterproductive. it left traces on a wide range of literary material, from Gaelic dictionaries to local newspapers, government reports, travellers' writings, letters, novels, legal documents, memoirs, diaries and religious tracts. This is striking because, up to about the 1950s, cursing was probably the most valuable magic in a land where all sorts of mystic forces were treated with respect, from Marian apparitions to banshees. Chief amongst these useful maledictions, during the impoverished early nineteenth century, was the 'beggar's curse'. The beggar's curse' and of official poverty relief and a parlous economy based on inefficiently subdivided land had unleashed a tidal wave of begging.85 You could find begging in all major cities, of course, but its vast scale in Ireland staggered travellers from Britain, Europe and America. Reflecting a remarkable continuity in the history of magic, blacksmiths were known as potent cursers. This psychologically powerful form of magic was deeply rooted in Irish cosmology, tradition and history. To illustrate: in a classic essay about anonymous threatening letters, sent to English farmers and grain-dealers in the late 1700s and 1800s, E. Scott — those 'everyday forms of resistance' that subordinated individuals use to subtly check authority and limit powerful people's claims upon food, rents, taxes and labour.167 To fit Irish cursing precisely into this schema would not, however, be entirely correct. For victims, it was threatening, disturbing and humiliating. A few tried to send the maledictions back. Between the 1820s and 1860s, Protestant missionaries strove to persuade Irish Catholics to abandon Rome and embrace Reformed faiths. May you die without a priest. Dr James Butler's Catechism, Ireland's official statement of Catholic faith, explicitly prohibited cursing for being contrary to the Second Commandment.100 Within Roman Catholicism, however, this simple statement masked considerable ambiguity and inconsistency. The consequences were catastrophic: 'the curse didn't fall on the people she give it too but it fell on herself'. In nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland, women usually wore headscarves when outdoors, to keep warm and as nods to strong patriarchal conventions of modesty and respectability. People who believed they were cursed occasionally wrote to newspaper agony aunts, describing themselves as being under an 'evil power', as if curses were identical with black witchcraft.164 Likewise, in the 1990s and early 2000s countryside, in places like County Limerick and County Tipperary and even rural Ulster, there were still farmers and veterinarians who had seen strange things and experienced weird agricultural misfortunes. The curse was known in Scotland too, and may have been brought to Ireland centuries ago by Presbyterian settlers (though the transmission could have been the other way).147 'One of the most baleful curses known in Ulster', the folklorist Jeanne Cooper Foster was stunned to learn that, as late as the 1940s and 1950s, the fire of stones curse was 'still used'.148 It was always levied in connection with evictions, she discovered, with cases occurring in Downpatrick, Bushmills, County Down, and even on Belfast's famously Protestant Shankill Road. Cinema, radio and television all diminished popular knowledge of cursing. Guardedly, they talked about piseogs, the evil eye ('blinking'), witchcraft and curses.165 However, those words now meant much the same thing. They received many different answers, but one thing was clear. This article explores its neglected modern history, since the late 1700s, by carefully scrutinizing the Irish style of cursing, relating it to wider social and economic conditions, and making comparisons with maledictions elsewhere. In court, hundreds of witnesses described how the local Catholic clergy and others had used various intimidating practices, from violence to threatening letters to sermons calling for the Conservatives to be ostracized. Cursing was probably too common and Catholic, and certainly too distasteful and subversive for these amateur scholars, who focused instead on recording what they regarded as rapidly disappearing 'pagan survivals'. Widows were certainly plentiful and needful of power. However, by repurposing an older way of thinking about magic, I argue that historic Irish cursing is best understood as an art, because it required knowledge, practice, wit, skill and composure. In 1939, questioned about 'mallachtai' (curses) by a researcher from the Irish Folklore Commission, a farmer from County Mayo reeled off an impressive list of eleven Gaelic maledictions, evoking death and the Devil, failure and blood, as direly poetic as any curses from a hundred years earlier. It is tempting to classify it as one of the 'weapons of the weak' that have been most sensitively studied by the sociologist James C. It did not always ensure people's compliance, but it did have other grimly consoling uses, in assuring frustrated people that their pains would be avenged. Curses figured in several of the Church's ceremonies, including the most severe form of excommunication ('the anathema') and some ordination liturgies for nuns and bishops. Its unusual history underlines three wider points: (i) magic can usefully thrive in modern societies, figuring in the most vital areas of life; (ii) different types of magic have distinct chronologies; (iii) the most psychologically powerful forms of magic are subtle arts that deserve our (begrudging) respect. The widow's curse was on them and their children'. Some maledictions, it is true, were fairly general, calling for unspecified punishments. It was used for both cursing and blessing. To signify this, real cursing used scarier and more complicated wordplay. This article is about historic Ireland's penchant for cursing. FREE DOMESTIC SHIPPING ON ALL ORDERS \$100 AND OVER Thank you for interesting in our services. Source: Wellcome Collection. On a symbolic level too, priests' status within the Church enhanced their cursing abilities. It must begin with deep history and the cursing traditions I noted earlier. III Cursing priests The most dangerous malediction, Irish commentators and ordinary people agreed, was a priest's curse', one of Lady Anne Daly's tenants told her in 1872, when describing how he could endure any intimidation from his neighbours except that.99There was an irony about priests being pre-eminent cursers. Following decades of debate, the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act of 1883 at last outlawed the using of 'undue spiritual influence' during elections, meaning clerical curses.118 Priests still threw imprecations, and many people still credited them. Until quite recently, it was not unusual for historians to suggest that only 'early man' and pre-modern Europeans credited words with magical qualities.59 Clearly that is wrong: language's metaphysical power is an enduring theme in the history of magic, whether ancient or modern. May you fade into nothing, like snow in summer. In fact, there is good reason to think that the power of cursing clerics actually grew, in the wake of the famine.114 Their ratio was rapidly increasing, from roughly one priest per three thousand laity in 1840, to approximately 1 per 1,500 in 1870, and still growing.115 Priests could now realistically monitor their parishioners and, if they misbehaved, pronounce personalized imprecations.116 Good evidence of this powerful combination was generated by the disputed Galway by-election of 1872. It may help to explain why, during the early modern period, Ireland experienced no 'witch craze', with just a handful of trials, compared with almost four thousand across the water in Scotland (mostly involving people from lowland and non-Gaelic regions).7 Along with taking some stigma out of interpersonal supernatural conflict, cursing influenced how Irish people saw the world. For commercial re-use, please contactjournals.permissions@oup.com It all came out. Like cursing African Americans in the early 1900s, Irish cursers revelled in 'luxuriant fantasies' about their enemies being destroyed in specific, irremediable ways, with bones broken, flesh rotted, heads smashed, stomachs exploded, arms withered and eyes blinded.75 Curses expressed people's deepest anger and most elaborate fantasies, making them 'a great relief of the heart', as one prolific Irish imprecator put it.76 If you could not stop an eviction, get a tolerable meal, recover your stolen possessions or ensure that your relatives behaved loyally it was invigorating to imagine that, in time, an artful malediction would wreck the evildoers. Bad cess on you. Yet we should not ignore what was once the most widespread Irish magic of all: cursing. May the Almighty's curse rest on your children. 'That yeer eyes may fall out of yeer head!!!'.51 But workaday curses were not particularly suitable for proper cursing because they invited easy retorts. During the modern era, the currency and style of magic words varied considerably, and over short distances. Formally, the Church forbade it. Then another witness, a cottager, chimed in: 'I know my wife always gives when she is big with child, and she says she must do it, or she would have a miscarriage'.95 His remarks feel genuine. Following Holy Communion, Father Loftus stood at the altar, holding a chalice. Magic is a potent force in the world, not supernaturally but psychologically. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs licence (, which permits non-commercial reproduction and distribution of the work, in any way, and that the work is properly cited. Psychosomatically, it can heal, injure and even kill; intimidate, haunt and terrify; or invigorate, inspire and empower. Concepts like belief, ritual, tradition, symbolism, mentality and discourse undoubtedly illuminate key aspects of historic Irish maledictions. Curses sprung from bitter passions at trying times. market losses were occasionally blamed on old curses.159 More seriously, in the Irish Republic a few people still threw maledictions and credited them with dire powers. May you never prosper. Carefully calibrated to absolutely ruin enemies, real cursing differed in many ways. As Keith Thomas noted several decades ago, on the neighbouring island of Britain, cursing persisted into the early modern period; but since it sometimes led to witchcraft accusations, presumably the distinction between the righteous magic of cursing and the evil magic of witchcraft was less pronounced than it was in Ireland.77 Throughout the nineteenth century, many British people credited witchcraft and other strange powers. These clever formulas were the basis for the unnerving art of real cursing, a scary but widespread occult attack that Irish folk used in their struggles over vital areas of life, from land and food to politics, religion, gender and family disputes. May every thing that could give comfort in affliction be a day's march before you, whilst sorrow, multiplied sorrow, be your daily companion', the Irish writer John Levy made one of his characters, an old widow, pray on her landlord.57 Neither novelists nor journalists mentioned sexual maledictions. In 1786, for example, Munster's Catholic bishops announced their determination to sanction clerics who habitually poured 'forth from the altar the most shocking curses and imprecations'.23These campaigns achieved little. Plain imprecations were uttered in English: 'the curse of the poor and helpless cripple upon you every day you put a coat over your back', a beggar on the shores of Lough Patrick was overheard saying, in 1816.91 But beggars usually laid their worst maledictions in Irish Gaelic.92 'Biadh an taifrionn gan sholas duit a bhean shalach!', for example, meaning 'may the Mass never comfort you, you dirty queen!'.93Did people fear beggars' curses? Some cursed from the altar, damning and excommunicating the opposition, prohibiting friendly contact, and proclaiming that 'they walked on earth as accursed beings'.106 Others joined campaign trails. Please help us to share our service with your friends. Devil take you. Basic maledictions like 'hell's cure to you', 'the divil's luck to you', 'the divil's luck to you', and 'high hanging to you' were easy to remember and quick to say.50 Sometimes, for real cursing, they were piled on top of each other, as if to multiply their effect. However, they had little sense of cursing as a distinct type of moral magic.78Why then was the righteous art of cursing so heavily cultivated in Ireland, in the commercial and increasingly sophisticated world of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Inspiration for a fuller, more dynamic understanding of cursing, and perhaps other forms of magic too, can be derived from the way that magicians since classical times have imagined the ars magica — the art of magic', this understanding of the controversial topic has been forgotten by many recent studies in which, as one not unsympathetic critic puts it: 'all too often a sense of magic is lost'.19Irish cursing was a potent art. Historic Ireland is famous for its superstitions, magic and 'alternative beliefs'. First, it was an outlet for boiling anger, doubtless engaging what clinical psychologists call the neurological 'rage circuit' even more powerfully than conventional swearing did.73 Second, and rather luridly cursing articulated intricate revenge fantasies. The boundary between religious type of magic is always porous.102 This distinction is especially problematic for Irish cursing, which was an unusually religious type of magic. Reproduced with permission. Curses have been left out of accounts of Irish cursing, which was an unusually religious type of magic. important role. Following Southern Ireland's independence in 1922, crime in the Irish Free State and Irish Republic fell precipitously, partly because huge numbers of deviants and dissenters were shunted off to asylums and church homes. But we should not exaggerate the extent of its decline, or imagine that it disappeared. If potatoes, grain or a few pennies still were not forthcoming, they could begin hinting at more mysterious powers. In bilingual or largely English-speaking regions, and in towns and cities, tuneful maledictions were composed in English and decline enchantment and disenchantment. Irish cursing persisted partly because of its value, use and functions. The history of Irish cursing underlines how mystic forces and supernatural powers can resonate incredibly strongly in modern Societies, if they chime with people's struggles and are indulged by complacent authorities. In 1972 the Reverend Paisley attacked what he called 'the curse that has blighted twentieth-century Protestantism, this curse of ecumenism'.155 Infamously, in the late 1970s and 1980s he and other senior members of the DUP used similar rhetoric to attack another target: if homosexuality were legalized in Ulster, they said, it would 'bring God's curse down upon our people'.156 The scandalous claim has haunted the DUP ever since; whether it damaged or enhanced their electoral prospects is debatable. Cursing was largely ignored during the late 1800s and early 1900s occult revival in Ireland. Stemming from moral indignation, the virtuoso but also shocking technique required knowledge, composure, practice and wit. They contained 'no real viciousness' and Irish folk used them only to 'give force' to their speech.49 This was not guite so. Irish maledictions can be usefully analysed using familiar academic categories such as belief, ritual, symbolism, mentality, tradition, meaning and discourse.17 Cursing contained all those things: but it was also something fundamentally more lively, active and affecting. May the flesh rot off your bones, and fall away putrid before your eyes. In November 1996, Ellen tried to stab the woman she held responsible for uttering it.160 In January 2010 a Donegal Garda had a 'gypsy's curse' put on her, by the occupants of an uninsured car. From an emotional perspective, evicted tenants consoled themselves with the thought that dire supernatural punishments awaited the new occupants. Such was the nasty curse pronounced, in 1829, by a Catholic priest from Tarbert, County Kerry, on discovering that one of his flock was marrying a Protestant.55 Often though, it can be difficult to uncover the exact wording employed by Ireland's greatest cursers, because journalists censored horrible maledictions. Ellen Collins of Ballina, for instance, who thought a curse swere daily occurrences, real cursing was deeply serious and comparatively rare. 'Love your enemy — bless them that curse you', peacemakers counselled.152 But who could blame the bereaved families who wrote to newspapers, telling the world that they had praved for God's curse to fall on the murderers, or the clergymen who announced that paramilitary killers bore the curse of Cain?153 This was not the elaborate, artful cursing of generations past, using complex formulas and theatrical rituals to call down gruesome tortures. Its adherents revisited and reinterpreted Ireland's mystical traditions, particularly its country remedies, ancient myths, magical legends and pagan monuments.158 Needless to say, the historic art of cursing did not chime with this agenda. Even so, cursing was not dead. With outstretched arms and windswept hair, they roared maledictions using 'magnificent words and gestures' that were totally uncharacteristic of their usually reticent temperament. 66 Flowing hair, incidentally, was important. By the 1960s American movies and television shows were popular even in remote Gaelic-speaking places like Inis Beag, a windy isle three miles off Ireland's north-western coast. This may explain why, despite growing anxieties amongst Irish elites about the unruly conduct of verbally abusive females, Irish women continued to curse until the era of the Second World War and beyond. When Johanna Sullivan was convicted of being drunk outside Cork's Theatre Royal, in 1863, she gave the magistrates a mouthful, but the local paper noted only that she 'uttered a fearful curse'. 56 Novelists were less inhibited, but as well as being melodramatic and stereotypical, they were unconcerned with literal accuracy. Hibernia's ancient lords and chieftains were notorious cursers, as were the saints who converted the Emerald Isle to Christianity, medieval Irish churchmen, and the Gaelic bards.5 Like in other loosely Celtic societies, in pre-modern Ireland cursing was regarded as a legitimate activity, a form of supernatural justice that only afflicted guilty parties.6 The idea had important consequences. We are a non-profit group that run this website to share documents. Cursing was demanding, sophisticated, formidable and imposing. Ultimately though, cursing was no longer being embedded in youngsters' minds. Yet cursing did not decline because it was formally disproved. In this respect, it was an art. Catholic priests were still extraordinarily plentiful, with as many as 1 to every 660 members of the laity in 1950.127 People took their curses seriously; yet priests no longer used them. After the Great Famine, survivors wrote songs excoriating the landlords and agents who had evicted starving tenants. Yet it is probably safe to assume that, in nineteenth-century Ireland as in the ancient world and elsewhere, special curses existed for attacking penises, breasts, vaginas and arses. Nineteenth-century Irish folk possessed a deep oral literacy and a high capacity for verbal sparring. Everybody knew what a beggar's curse was: it was a regular and familiar part of life, in pre-famine Ireland. Beggars could not curse lightly, because maledictions levied without just cause were ineffective.87 In a world of canny country folk and official discourses about the 'undeserving' poor, mendicants had to appear genuinely needy to make their curses seem potent. Mostly though, Ireland's cursers were women. In oral stories, collected by folklorists like William and Lady Wilde (Oscar's parents) during the nineteenth century, and by the Irish Folklore Commission from the 1930s, imprecators were usually female.128 Local varns recounted the sufferings of cursing women, bereaved mothers who cried 'that the caor [lightning] may kill him', against men who betrayed their sons.129 One particularly gruesome tale described a mother enraged by her son's bridal choice, who willed his death by lighting candles round his bed as if a corpse lay there, going down on her knees, praying for his demise.130 Across Ireland, many people knew childish legends about mothers who gave their offspring the choice of a large cake and a curse or a small cake and a blessing.131 More seriously, the commonest malediction stories concerned the dreadful power of the widow's curse. 132Like the beggar's curse and the priest's curse, the widow's curse and the priest's curse. Devil'.53To make a curse stick, it was best to say something dreadful, complex and difficult to rebut. Some of the dwindling number of monoglot Gaelic speakers wondered whether English might be especially suited for firing imprecations.28 Really though, the great cursing language was Irish Gaelic, still spoken by around 40 per cent of people in 1801, when Ireland was incorporated into the United Kingdom, though a century later the figure had fallen to under 15 per cent, with less than 1 per cent, with less than 1 per cent speaking Irish Gaelic only.29 Cursing formulas were 'very common in the Irish language', as the Victorian linguist George Borrow noted.30 Irish also had an abnormally large number of 'curse' words, certainly more than English, and probably more than Scottish Gaelic too.31 Ten Irish Gaelic too people 32 'Mallacht' was the main Irish term for a 'curse', but Gaelic speakers had many alternatives. The words for curses and cursing did not really overlap with the vocabulary for witchcraft and piscogs, as evil spells were sometimes called. Rituals and a certain style were required to launch maledictions, 'to give them energy' as the antiguary for witchcraft and piscogs, as evil spells were sometimes called. William Carleton put it.62A 'solemn curse' was uttered with poise and determination, with a hair-raising seriousness seldom found in everyday life. In 1888 Thomas secretly disposed of the dead body of his little daughter, who he had conceived out of wedlock with his cousin and housekeeper. But evidence from other sources confirms not only that priests deployed their curses politically, but also that some Catholic bishops actively encouraged them. But when they cursed, women literally let their norms, and their intention to unleash hidden powers. For victims, being cursed could be nerve-shatteringly intimidating. Thompson noticed that these letters were often rhymed in a spell-like style, as if to imply a bit of magical menace.60 Irish threatening letters, by contrast, were far more supernaturally explicit, teeming with the direst maledictions of the sort contained in a letter sent to a County Limerick landlord in 1886: 'may you wither up by the fire of hell soon and sudden, may the flesh rot off your bones, and fall away putrid before your eyes, and may the consolation of eternal flames come to be your consolation in your last illness, and the hearthstone of hell be your pillow for ever'.61 That missive was pure literary cursing. To boatmen who sailed over their nets, fisherman spat out all sorts of imprecations, both 'profuse Gaelic maledictions' and 'simpler curses' in English, the writer J. The emphasis on justice, on curses befalling evildoers, had waned. They expressed fear, loathing, hate and yearning for pitiless vengeance, for punishments exceeding anything one could mete out physically. B. They formed a sharp edge of the Catholic Association, a mass movement founded by the barrister Daniel O'Connell to campaign against anti-Catholic discrimination and for the repeal of Ireland's union with Britain. Cursing, once understood as a righteous supernatural assault, had been subsumed into the general category of 'evil magic'. The distinction was important. M. Other cursers stood up high, on rocks above island shores for instance, as policemen and bailiffs sailed away. It mattered because curses were believed to be most powerful when their victims remained silent, as if dumbstruck by the lyrical ingenuity of the dreadful utterances.52 By contrast, people who instantly countered with clever replies could turn curses back on their authors. We need vour help to maintenance this website. He would have got away with it, had not the local priest heard rumours and put his malediction on anyone who did not report what they knew to the police. May you be accursed in the sight of God, and hated by your fellow man. That will help you to organize your resources better and make a great magic learning folder. Their 'money would melt in their pockets', apparently.122 During the bloody years of the Irish War of Independence (1919-21), murderous republicans also felt the force of clerical imprecations, if they killed well-liked local characters.123Stories about cursing priests were told in villages and towns across mid-twentieth-century Ireland, the Irish Folklore Commission discovered.124 In Virginia, County Cavan, locals spoke about a woman who had mocked a rheumatic priest's cranky gait. Cursing was rife in nineteenth-century Ireland because many people valued it, not only poor peasants and beggars, but priests, parents, and others needful of influence and consolation. To be intimidating and cathartic, cursing required knowledge, practice, wit, skill and composure. 'The heaviest curse at the present', wrote a teacher from the same year, 'is Marbhadh Fáisg ort — the squeeze band of Death on you'. 145At the mid-twentieth century, cursing was not just the province of aged farmers in the Gaeltacht — western Ireland, where Gaelic was strongest. They could take the initiative, however, by throwing curses at 'land-grabbers'. 'I would never have spoken of the occurrence at all only that the priest cursed those who knew about it off the altar for not exposing it', a witness admitted.120 Well into the twentieth century, priests threw imprecations at 'land-grabbers', who rented or purchased estates from whence the previous tenants had been evicted.121 A priest's curse was useful in a boycott because it meant that neither the 'grabber' nor his or her customers would prosper. Beggars also needed stories about how they had fallen on hard times. Some female beggars wore their hair down, as if to imply that they were already in the cursing pose. Synge observed while sailing between the Aran Islands in Galway Bay.42 Interfering clerics, who habitually visited paupers, sometimes found their souls cursed 'to the hottest and lowest regions' of hell, as happened to the Reverend Anthony McIntyre of Belfast in 1854.43 Policemen, too, were damned in this way, like a constable who during the Great Famine of 1845-55 stopped a hungry Ulster crowd from taking shipwrecked grain. Recognizing this challenges us to reconsider our wider ideas about the history of magic. Occasionally, priests fought back with maledictions, wishing 'God's curse' on Catholics who worked in or enrolled their children at Protestant schools.109 'Any person or persons sending their children to this school henceforth, may they be struck blind and deaf ... [may] their crops and their goods be taken away by the devil'.110 So pronounced a priest from County Clare in 1851, praying for curses to afflict patrons of the new Kiltrellig school. Some unleashed maledictions whilst brushing the dust from their feet, as Christ told his disciples to do when they were shunned.64 Irish cursers of various types fell to their knees, in conspicuously public places like the middle of a road or marketplace.65 With locals watching — including, preferably, their victims — these cursers beat the floor and looked to the skies, put their hands together and besought God to blight their opponents. Nor was it employed exclusively by the weak and powerless. In 1930s County Clare, an American anthropologist discovered that maledictions, if uttered 'for cause', were credited with the power to ruin prosperous families, break unbelievers' necks, and send people blind.144 Stories about lingering curses, uttered on land-grabbers generations ago, were rehearsed when their descendants died in strange circumstances. The emigration and land consolidation following the Great Famine meant that female farmers (most of whom were widows) made up a growing proportion of tenants, from 4 per cent in 1841, to 15 per cent by 1911.133 Landlords were evicting unprofitable tenants but farmers fought back, particularly during the Land War of 1879-82, using non-compliance and intimidation. But the atmosphere darkened when the priest said anyone voting for Captain Trench would die bearing the mark of Cain, as would their children.117 Next Father Loftus pronounced a Gaelic malediction that Charles could not understand, but which affected the Irish-speaking majority so much that they instinctively touched their chests, in horror. 'May your bones be broken', for example, and 'a thousand placings of a rope round your neck'.41 Irish people said these things during arguments, after accidents, or following near misses. In 1817, Mrs McCollum from Ballycastle in County Antrim reportedly became 'almost crazy' after she was cursed by her local priest, shunned by her neighbours, and denied the rites of the Catholic Church.68 She may well have experienced something close to what physiologists call 'voodoo death', where a fearful magical attack inspires an extreme fight or flight response, an adrenaline surge so powerful that it causes real physical and mental damage.69 Beyond such pains, it was deeply humiliating to be publicly cursed, to have your misdeeds advertised and family openly threatened, especially by someone who was notionally your social inferior. On Sunday 14 January, at the midday Mass at Dunmore chapel, a local priest named Father Loftus imprecated Charles O'Loughlin, the Catholic agent of the conservative candidate, as he sat in his family pew. However, it thrived in the modern world of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries because it functioned not only as a potent weapon but also as a gruesome therapy and misanthropic coping strategy in fraught times. Maledictions were uttered across Ireland, North and South, Protestant and Catholic districts, even in towns and cities. I will light a candle that your family will die and you will suffer grief in the next 12 months', he said: 'when it happens, I will take pictures and send them to you and put them up for everyone to see. He talked volubly about dozens of topics, but when curses were broached, Michael went quiet. Maybe, too, cursing was weakened by the decline of Catholicism and the idea of a supervisory God, with the weekly church-going rate in the Republic collapsing from 91 per cent in 1973 to 43 per cent in 2008.163 Whatever the case, Irish cursing had not just diminished but changed, losing its previously strong link with morality. In 1888, a shopkeeper from Mitchelstown who had purchased a house from the Countess of Kingston's estate was warned by notices posted around the town: 'let her be aware of the widow's

curse'.134 Open in new tabDownload slideEviction Scene, Daniel MacDonald (c.1850). Probably cursing was too vicious, humorous and Catholic for it to be translated into the dreamy and non-denominational realm of the 'Celtic Twilight'.157 Cursing experienced none of the post 1970s esoteric revival, either. Humorously, he asked: where was the 'blackguard' who canvassed for the Conservatives? Yet though their utterers may have been unconscious of it, non-literal curses were also vital preparation for the high art of real cursing. Although their utterers may have been unconscious of it, non-literal curses were also vital preparation for the high art of real cursing. was known, using plainer maledictions like 'God's curse upon his head' and 'bad luck to her'.27 Cursing occurred in English too, which became Ireland's dominant language during the eighteenth century. Irish imprecations can be analysed using familiar academic categories such as belief, ritual, symbolism, tradition and discourse. It had many applications but was particularly valuable to Ireland's marginalized people, fighting over food, religion, politics, land and family loyalties. 'Not until these fires burn', they prayed, 'will the newcomers do any good'. A Home Rule candidate John Philip Nolan trounced his unionist opponent, the Conservative William Le Poer Trench, before the result was overturned on appeal. This was how Catholic priests imprecated grievous sinners, from the altar, with an open Bible or chalice in hand, and candles flickering.63 Beggars shooed away from cottages empty-handed could curse just as ostentatiously. The seanchaí, accomplished storytellers with vast repositories of local yarns, were dying off and not being replaced.149 Old oral tales — of imprecating priests, malediction-throwing beggars, and cursing widows — were not told like they had once been. At Tully in County Mayo, farmland owned by Miss Pringle remained unoccupied for at least fifteen years during the 1880s and 1890s, because the old tenant had been evicted. Open in new tabDownload slideSt Brigid's stone, Blacklion Co. Cavan. Case studies can be revealing and exciting, as in Angela Bourke's exploration of the 1895 killing of a fairy-ridden Irishwoman, Bridget Cleary, or Ruth Harris's account of collective possession in an Alpine village — the 'Mal de Morzine'.16 But I think a broader perspective is more suitable here because bringing together a wide range of evidence allows us to better appreciate cursing's central quality. Ian Lynch, a researcher at University College Dublin's National Folklore Collection, discovered something similar in 2011, when he sent out questionnaires asking about widows' curses. They speak to the precariousness of rural life in an age before antibiotics and vaccines, when crops, beasts and people were at great risk from dimly understood threats, when local famines and fever epidemics were almost annual occurrences. 'May you be stretched out under the gravestone' 45 In places like County Clare, on Ireland's west coast, they sang in Irish and performed for family and neighbours. 'He that shall curse him, let him be cursed'.101 The Bible also abounded in imprecations — with hapless infidels and appalling sinners, smote by the inescapable curses of a wrathful God.Catholic priests were well placed to excel at the theatrical art of cursing. The same is likely to be true, though perhaps to a lesser degree, of other magical techniques. VI Conclusion Fairies, rural remedies, stone circles and holy wells have made a modest comeback, in early twenty-first-century Ireland. Especially in the North, evictees still used 'the fire of stones' curse. 146 Before they were thrown out, tenants would build up piles of stones in every hearth in the house. To use sociological parlance, there was a certain amount of 'path dependency', with Irish imprecators drawing on well-established conventions and precedents, just as people do in other cursing techniques. That question has a multicausal answer, which I will build up throughout the rest of this paper. Troubles or deaths befalling the earls of Egmont, to take a famous example, invariably prompted retellings of the tale of the 'solemn curse' that had been laid on the family seat of Cowdray House, way back during the Dissolution of the Monasteries, in 1538.72 Even if you tried not to believe in it, being cursed made you seem weaker — an impermanent and insecure presence, who was not long for this world. For the imprecators themselves, cursing was a powerful form of coercion. 'I did'. But cursing songs were not a dying art, part of a vanishing Gaelic folk culture. It began with dress. Intimidating, cathartic and virtuoso: cursing mingled gruesome yet poetic phrases with ostentatious rites, in the name of supernatural justice. To badmouths, they might retort 'divil choke you'. Had he ever heard about them? Like the 'New Age' movement internationally, in Ireland this revival was principally concerned with holistic wellness and spiritual exploration. Partly this was because the church hierarchy was now firmly in control. Women were central to the struggle, organizing ostracisms and boycotts of 'land-grabbers', shouting at bailiffs, throwing stones at policemen, snatching notices and blocking roads to stop evictions (see Plate 2). It was terrifyingly brutal, mustering dark feelings that marked people who had seen or maybe just heard about the events in question. In Northern Ireland, as sectarian violence flared during the dark days of the Troubles, curses were sporadically revived. Something obvious like 'bad luck to you' invited the reply 'good luck to you' invited people in these ways, we need to better appreciate how accomplished, skilful and imposing it is. This theme has been recorded far and wide, from Western Europe to East Africa, from ancient times to the present.80 In Ireland, stories about imprecating blacksmiths were still current during the 1930s, when the Irish Folklore Commission made the inspired decision to get schoolchildren to record their elders' yarns.81 Threatening a curse was 'the only way some country blacksmiths could get paid', apparently.82 In real life, smiths genuinely mentioned curses during financial confrontations, albeit rarely. To keep our site running, we need your help to cover our server cost (about \$400/m), a small donation will help us a lot. Publicly, 'respectable' men insisted they did not. They would rebound on their casters, unless they quickly cancelled their maledictions with a blessing formula such as 'agus crosaim thú' in Gaelic or its English translation: 'I cross you'.36 Proverbs in Gaelic and English reiterated the point: 'Curses, like chickens, come home to roost'.37Whether uttered in English, Irish or Ulster-Scots, not all maledictions were magical. 'Nobody on the estate backed a winner yesterday', an informant later told the Belfast Telegraph. Bound over to keep the peace, Ellie remained unbowed saying: 'I cursed Walsh, and I will continue to curse him until I die'.141 Less dramatically, in 1967 Mary McCormack of Cloonard in Castlerea 'put her widow's curse' on informants who told the police she was holding unlicensed public dances.142 The Republic of Ireland was a patriarchal and conservative place, where until the 1970s married women were largely kept at home and out of the workforce. 'May his neck get stiff', they mumbled.44 More serious were musical curses, stinging ballads calling for uncanny retribution. Taking a broad approach like this, and enhancing it through comparisons with maledictions elsewhere, is obviously not the only way to undertake a history of magic. They, after all, were immersed in the Judeo-Christian cursing tradition, trained in practices. of solemn ritual and public prayer, and possessed of sacred objects like chalices, church bibles and vestments. 'May you never die till you see your own funeral', for example — an obscure allusion to a hanged man watching the spectators at his execution.54 'May she and her friends who in any way caused this marriage, be forever without the grace or favour of God — may their offspring unto their latest generation be unhealthy and attended with every misfortune that can befall mankind'. Overall though, cursing is best conceived of as an art because of the cultivation it required and the strength of the reactions it elicited. A Scotsman named Patrick Dowd, for example, who in 1901 bought a distressed farm in Sligo. As well as publicly uttering maledictions, Irish women used modern means to advertise the dark forces they had unleashed. Now, though, the main targets were sinful, antisocial parishioners. 'May the arm that is now sick, sling dead and powerless by her side before twelve months' time'. When the evicted tenant 'praved the "widow's and orphans' curse upon him" ', Mr Dowd suddenly reneged on his purchase, frankly telling the vendor: 'I'll have nothing to do with the massive reduction in begging that followed the Great Famine. Every time misfortune struck they would mention your curse, whispering how you had never had any luck since that fateful day. Occasionally people gave beggars clothes or even shoes but these were not much use because they made mendicants appear wealthier than they were.88 It was better to keep to rags and swap any garments for food or a warming drink. 'The devil go with you and sixpence, an' thin you'll want neither money nor company', was a mock malediction men used to tease women.38 'Bad scran to you', meaning poor food, was a jokey curse suitable for needling either sex; and surely a poignant one, given that for much of the nineteenth century most people's diet was restricted to potatoes, buttermilk, an occasional smattering of fish and maybe some wild greens.39 'Bad luck to your own soul for the head-ache you gave me yesterday, with laughing at your old stories, and drinking your new wine', was the kind of cheeky curse friends uttered, with a wink, to their drinking your new wine' and drinking your new wine'. anger. Bathed in righteous power, steeped in the Holy Spirit, it was obvious that they should possess awesome imprecations. The priest's curse was rooted in ancient precedents, yet it gained a remarkable new relevance in the fractious but slowly liberalizing world of nineteenth-century Ireland. I styles of cursing Not everyone in Ireland thought curses were legitimate. You will see within 12 months that your family or someone belonged to you will be dead'.162There was another difference, between turn of the 1800s. So prayed a priest from County Mayo, in 1872, on a woman he accused of spreading tar on his church's seats.119 He uttered that malediction while standing at the altar, pointing, and followed it up with stories about families who had wasted away and animals that had gone mad, after gaining the priest's malediction. The art of cursing, on the other hand, is little cultivated. Although not really an art, it seems to have nurtured determination and vengeance, amongst people experiencing terrible loss. During the Troubles, Ulster's radical politicians invoked and even threw a few curses, with mixed results. She 'died in torture', of kidney disease: 'it come back on herself ... I'm telling you she suffered for the curse she gave to other people'.151 Michael's trembling words underscore the powerful emotions swirling around this topic. These Grimoire printables would make a great addition to your Book of Shadows, Witch's Journal, or a Spell Book. You can simply print these Grimoire printables would make a great addition to your Book of Shadows Binder. and dead animals on neighbours' farms.166 People no longer distinguished between different types of occult attack. To explain this it is helpful to take an unfashionably 'functionalist' approach, which shows how cursing most persisted when it was useful. To illustrate: Irish cursing was closely linked with certain characters, whose identity gave them heightened powers. Those nasty practices had an extensive Gaelic terminology of their own. At Ballyloo in 1840, Father Tyrrell went with a hundred men to the house of Patrick Regan, where the priest gave Patrick his curse, saving he would posper 107 Their curses would raise storms, sink ships and bring 'the sickness' imprecating clergymen warned.108During this conflicted moment, proselytizing also began to inspire clerical maledictions. Warning: Undefined array key "type" in /home/evemarie/domains/witchjournal.com/public html/wp-includes/rest-api.php on line 2095 Warning: Undefined array key "type" in /home/evemarie/domains/witchjournal.com/public html/wp-includes/rest-api.php on line 2110 Warning: Undefined array key "type" in /home/evemarie/domains/witchjournal.com/public html/wp-includes/rest-api.php on line 2119 Last Updated on April 22, 2022 by Eva Maria On this page, you can find all the Free Grimoire Pages and Printable Book of Shadows PDF and I that I create for Witch Journal articles. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, metaphorical curses peppered Irish Free State began a nationalistic project dedicated to preserving the 'spirit of Ireland, the traditions of the historic Irish nation'.12 Under the direction of figures like Seán Ó Súilleabháin, the government-funded Irish Folklore Commission (est. Stereotypically male though in reality mostly female, 'beggars' included people as various as migratory farm labourers, temporarily workless families asking their neighbours for assistance, 'tinkers or 'travellers' — an increasingly distinct ethnic group, and professional itinerants known as 'boccoughs' or 'bull-beggars'.86Curses were part of many people's begging strategies. Imprecating servants, labourers, soldiers and sailors were to be fined a shilling, and everyone else two, with escalating fines for subsequent offences and non-payers pelted in the stocks or whipped.21 Beyond the legal crackdown, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century churchmen sermonized and wrote tracts attacking not just 'common swearing' but also the 'very near akin' yet much graver habit: the 'monstrous cuftom of cursing'.22 Mostly it was Protestants who spoke out, during moments of evangelical revival, but not exclusively. Metaphorical maledictions were certainly amusing, impressive and intimidating. It would have been obvious what the Archbishop of Tuam meant when, in 1835, he wrote to his clergy, instructing them to kindle amongst voters the fear that 'the curse of the Lord will come' on those who elect 'enemies of religion', meaning opponents of the Catholic Association.105 In the depressed and famine-struck years of the 1840s, reports mushroomed of clerics flaunting their mystic powers during elections. Latest Posts on Craftionary Fairies, leprechauns, banshees, witches, holy wells and rural remedies. This changed with the late nineteenth-century Gaelic revival and particularly after Ireland's partition in 1922. To take a few examples: in 1960 Mary Feehily knelt down on the road to use her widow's curse, calling for God to smite her neighbour Patrick Watters, who had berated her during an argument about trespassing animals.140 After an inheritance dispute, Ellie Walsh of Carrick spent the five years between 1957 and 1962 solemnly and publicly cursing her neighbour Harry Walsh, going down on her knees, holding up a crucifix, and praying 'that the curse of God would come' to wipe out Harry's family. With the legal system generally trusted to provide fair outcomes, perhaps there was little need for a justice-based supernatural punishment. Cursing rapidly faded from the midtwentieth century and, unlike other forms of occultism, was not revived by the post 1970s 'New Age' movement. With few left to denounce and little scope for throwing political or parish curses, the concept of the priest's malediction faded. In practice, they amounted to things like ill-wishing, the evil eye, and leaving rotting meat or eggs on a neighbour's land to bring bad luck.33 Cursing, by contrast, was a just form of supernatural violence. Worried its clergy were abusing the terrifying 'priest's curse'. Ireland's Catholic Church periodically forbade the practice. Whatever the response, after scenes like these, the neighbours would talk, and not just about your crimes. Generally though, in Ireland, cursing's power was derived from more than mystic phrases alone. A publican and farmer from Kilmanaheen, in County Clare, told the commissioners: 'a woman with child would certainly never refuse relief', meaning that a pregnant woman would not dare risk a beggar's curse. The first drop of water to quench your thirst — may it boil in your bowels. Cursing blended lyrical and ritualistic spell casting with something like prayers to God, Mary, Jesus, the saints (and occasionally the Devil), begging these awesome entities to smite guilty parties. With fearsome curses, needy Irish people did indeed demand food, land, and family and religious loyalty, with some success. Curses were thrown at Protestant evangelists and their converts too, with notable victims being the Reverend Edward Nangle (1800-83) and his mission on the island of Achill.111 Their tongues would fall out, local Catholics were warned, if they failed to bellow abuse at the heretics.112It has been said that cursing priests belonged to the primitive, pre-famine era, before modernizing institutions like St Patrick's College at Maynooth improved the quality of clerical training.113 This was not so. Drawing on these sources, this article begins the study of modern Irish cursing. My aim is to evoke and analyse a mostly intangible but nonetheless vital culture, which flourished between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, and which still resonates somewhat today. Witchcraft and piscogs were straightforward malicious magic, designed to visit harm or death on anybody, whether good or evil, innocent or guilty. By the close of the nineteenth century the masses of Irish beggars who had once stunned travellers were gone, and the beggar's curse began to be forgotten.96 A few stories were still told about it.97 Occasionally, people who had fallen on hard times threatened to use it, to elicit a bit of money or food. However, the main reason priests stopped throwing political maledictions lay elsewhere.

24.09.2010 · But it's when we look at the dynamics between the Tarot cards and get into the story of the Tarot reading that the magic happens! First, let's imagine the Celtic Cross split into two main sections - the Circle/Cross section on the left (Cards 1 to 6) and the Staff section on the right (Cards 7 to 10). 08.10.2019 · VHS Font Family. In VHS Font Family, all the weight including possesses their owns great appealing format and keen features. Designer for this 3D font took keenly to care for making all the glyphs and charters looking cool and highly legible. Many designers look forward to this modern font family for use in their regular undertakings. Here we are providing this amazing ... The Book of Ceremonial Magic. The Book of Ceremonial Magic by Arthur Edward Waite was originally called The Book of Black Magic and of Pacts. It is an attempt to document various famous grimoires, explain the history behind them (refuting many of the legends surrounding them), discuss the theology contained therein (e.g. raising the question why good angels would ... Celtic Woman is an all-female Irish musical ensemble conceived and created by David Kavanagh, Sharon Browne and David Downes, a former musical director of the Irish stage show Riverdance. In 2004, Downes recruited five Irish female musicians who had not previously performed together, vocalists Chloë Agnew, Órla Fallon, Lisa Kelly and Méav Ní Mhaolchatha, and fiddler Máiréad ... The Celtic deities are known from a variety of sources such as written Celtic mythology, ancient places of worship, statues, engravings, religious objects, as well as place and personal names.. Celtic deities can belong to two categories: general deities. "General deities." General deities" were known by the Celts throughout large regions, and are the gods and goddesses called upon for ...

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