

A cultural interpretation of
Oidheadh Cloinne Lir
through the ages:
the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.



Bachelor Thesis Celtic Studies
Lisa van der Zanden
4028872
Mentored by Natalia Petrovskaia
06-04-15

Image: John D. Batten 1895

Plagiarism Statement

I hereby declare that this Bachelor Thesis is free from plagiarism.

Name

Lisa van der Zanden

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. van der Zanden', written in a cursive style.

Date

03-04-2015

Content

Plagiarism Statement.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Origin.....	6
Comparison.....	9
Death.....	10
Christianity.....	12
Irish Language.....	14
Politics.....	17
Silver chains.....	19
Sleep-music.....	20
Conclusion.....	22
Bibliography.....	24
Appendix.....	27

Introduction

Oidheadh Cloinne Lir (OCL) is known today as one of the most popular Irish tales.¹ It has been an inspiration for songs, poems and even statues², but first and foremost it is known through its retellings for children.³ The people who are familiar with the tale often came in contact with it through schoolbooks and Irish tale collections.⁴ Nevertheless, much is unknown about this tale: its origin remains in question and its literary motifs are debated, as will become apparent later in this paper. I will compare the late 19th-century translations with 1990's – 2000's adaptations for children, for reasons discussed later in this paper.⁵

Children are, in the present day, almost automatically regarded as the main audience for retellings of (folk)tales⁶ and myths, for example the Brother Grimm tales and their Disney adaptations⁷, and OCL is no exception to this phenomenon. The purpose of this paper is to answer the following question: How did the tale *Oidheadh Cloinne Lir* evolve from a (late) medieval Irish tale to a popular contemporary tale often aimed towards children throughout the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries in terms of narrative, themes and motifs, and can this evolution be explained by looking at the cultural environment of these times?

Firstly, I will provide a historical overview of the origins of the tale. Secondly, I will make a comparison between the different versions of the tale. I will use Eugene O'Curry's 1863 translation⁸ as the basis for the comparison. His translation appears to be the most reliable source available, because he aims to stay as close to the possible original form of the tale⁹ as possible. It is important to note that O'Curry had to reconstruct the tale out of multiple manuscripts, which, according to him, were "rude

¹ Ní Bhroin 2011: 10

² For example: Thomas Moore "The song of Fionuala"; Statue "The Children of Lir" by Oisín Kelly to be found in The Garden of Remembrance in Dublin.

³ Ní Bhroin 2011: 8

⁴ Ní Bhroin 2011: 10

⁵ See page 5 of this paper.

⁶ OCL will be considered as a folktale in this paper. Stith Thompson gives a definition of 'folktale' in his book *The Folktale*: "[...] it [the folktale] is also legitimately employed in a much broader sense to include all forms of prose narrative, written or oral, which have come to be handed down through the years." (Thompson 1946: 4). Many versions of OCL exist, so it can be considered to be a fluid tale.

⁷ For example: May, Jill P. "Walt Disney's interpretation of children's literature" in *Language Arts* Vol. 58, No. 4 (April 1981) 463-472

⁸ I use an edition of the Society for the preservation of the Irish language (1908), which uses the edition and translation of O'Curry published in *The Atlantis* vol iv in 1863. For the original, see "The 'Trí thruaighe na scéalaigheachta' (i.e. the 'Three most sorrowful tales',) of Erin." — II. 'The fate of the children of Lir'", *The Atlantis* 4 (1863): 113–157.

⁹ 'Original form' as far as the survived evidence shows us.

and defective, and almost worthless, from their corrupt orthography.”¹⁰ O’Duffy and O’Looney¹¹ mention that O’Curry’s English translation stays close enough to the original “as it was deemed sufficiently literal to be of use to the student of Irish, and, at the same time, interesting and readable to the general lovers of Irish literature.”¹² Lady Gregory’s translation from 1904¹³ is another version that dates back to the period of the Celtic Revival and will be used alongside O’Curry’s translation. These two translations will be compared with the adaptations for children. I will use one 19th-century children’s book by Joseph Jacobs, *More Celtic Fairy Tales*¹⁴ in order to provide a comparable source from the same time period as the other two sources. Jacobs based his adaptation on O’Curry’s edition and translation,¹⁵ and could therefore give an insight into the difference between 19th-century adult/scholarly sources and children’s literature. The five 1990’s-2000’s children’s books that are used for this paper are: *The Children of Lir* by Sheila MacGill-Callahan (1993)¹⁶; *The O’Brien book of Irish fairy tales & legends* by Una Leavy (1996); *Coll the Storyteller’s Tales of Enchantment* by Lucy Coats (2000); *Tales from Old Ireland* by Malachy Doyle (2000); and *Pocket Irish Legends* by Fiona Biggs (2014). The children’s books that are used for this paper are published between 1993 and 2014. These sources are focussed on specifically in this paper, because a change in attitude occurred in the 1990’s when the Irish started to expose their culture more to the international public and market, and the interest in the Irish culture from foreign countries grew.¹⁷ This led to a significant increase in, to use Ní Bhroin’s words, “glossy, lavishly illustrated Irish myth and legend collections for children, [...]”¹⁸. Thus, the focus of the paper will be on how OCL and the Irish motifs and themes that occur in the scholarly edition made by O’Curry are presented to children in adaptations from the 1990’s and 2000’s.

Peter Hunt points out the factors that occur when it comes to reading and analysing children’s stories. There is a difference in approach between a child is

¹⁰ *Oide* 1908: x

¹¹ Co-authored preface.

¹² *Oide* 1908: xi

¹³ Gregory 1904

¹⁴ Jacobs 1895

¹⁵ Jacobs 1895: 219-20

¹⁶ MacGill-Callahan writes that her version is “loosely based on an Irish myth” (1993: 32) and in comparison to the other four she has added the most completely new story-elements such as a whale named Jasconius. (As Ní Bhroin also pointed out (2011: 11)).

¹⁷ Ní Bhroin 2011: 8

¹⁸ Ní Bhroin 2011: 8

reading or is being read a book meant for children and when an adult is reading (and analysing) a book for children,¹⁹ and this will be taken into account during this research. This paper focuses not so much on the child's experience but rather on the message that the text sends.

The study method of placing text within its historical and cultural context is called Historical Literary Criticism.²⁰ This type of research method is beneficial in our case, because the versions of OCL that are examined come from different periods in time and therefore have a different cultural and social background. The study of texts from different times and eras is interesting because these texts can either reflect the culture²¹ of the time that the narrative is set in, or that of the time when the text was composed or transmitted, as the versions of OCL used in this paper do.²²

Origin

The origin of the tale is problematic in itself, for there is much uncertainty about its date and possible influence, as multiple scholars²³ have pointed out. According to Ní Bhroin the misconception that the tale is one of the oldest Irish tales occurs very often.²⁴ She points out that Una Leavy, the writer of *O'Brien Book of Irish Fairy Tales & Legends*, says that it is 2000 years old.²⁵ But even among scholars there seem to be misconceptions²⁶ and disagreement. Some scholars examine the text in relation to *Oidhe Clainne Tuireann* (The fate of the children of Tuireann; OCT) and *Oidhe Chlainne Uisnigh* (The fate of the sons of Usnech; OCU).²⁷ This combination of tales received the title *Trí Truaighe na Sgéalaigheachta* (the Three Sorrows of Storytelling; TTS).²⁸ This raises the question: was the tale always meant to be part of a triad or was it originally a stand-alone tale?

¹⁹ Hunt 1991: 45-6

²⁰ Brillenburg & Rigney 2006: 425-6

²¹ The definition of culture in this paper: "The distinctive ideas, customs, social behaviour, products, or way of life of a particular nation, society, people, or period." See: OED (electronic edition) s.v. 'Culture' definition 7a (last accessed: 06-04-2015)

²² As will be seen below.

²³ Such as: Ikeda 2006; Carney 1955; Breatnach 1999.

²⁴ Ní Bhroin 2011: 10

²⁵ Ní Bhroin 2011: 10 and Leavy 1996: 94

²⁶ In *The Irish literary tradition* (1992: 31) Williams and Ford confuse the synopsis of OCL with OCU.

²⁷ Welch 2003, see <www.oxfordreference.com> s.v. Three Sorrows of Storytelling. (Last accessed 06-04-2015); Carney 1955: 158; Thurneysen 1921: 327; Williams and Ford 1992: 133; Jacobs 1895: 220 (collector of tales, not a scholar)

²⁸ Some scholars, such as Welch (1996: 440), mention the tale only in relation to TTS, instead of a stand-alone tale.

Opinions differ.²⁹ Thurneysen has suggested that the OCT and OCL may have a common author due to their stylistic similarities³⁰, but that this has yet to be proved by linguistic research.³¹ In line with Thurneysen lies Carney's idea that OCL might have been composed by an author³² who wished to make a triad of OCU and OCT (and made new redactions of the tales so that they would have similar endings).³³ Welch mentions that the three tales often occur in manuscripts from the 15th and 16th centuries but he does not provide any references.³⁴ Jacobs remarks that OCL is always found in reference with OCU and OCT (which is not true), but that there is no evidence for an equal antiquity.³⁵ Murphy's idea is that the compiling of TTS is an 18th-century invention, but he does not this explain further.³⁶ Thus, there are multiple ideas about OCL in relation to TTS and their dates, but solid proof seems to be missing for most of these suggestions. Murphy's suggestion, although he did not refer to it himself, seems approved, because the earliest manuscript, known to us, that groups these tales together is Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland MS 72.2.6 and is, indeed, dated to the 18th century.³⁷

There are more promising arguments that suggest that OCL was a stand-alone tale before being combined with OCU and OCT. OCL is found on its own in a manuscript that has been dated to the early 17th century: Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland MS 72.1.38.³⁸ According to Carney and Byrne, the earliest mention of the title of the tale is found in a 1526 catalogue from the Earl of Kildare's library, which refers to the tale as 'The History of Clane Lyre'.³⁹ With this in mind I would conclude

²⁹ An alternative overview can be found in Breatnach 1999 pp 1-2. My overview is based on Breatnach's overview, but differs slightly.

³⁰ Thurneysen's words are, in my opinion, taken too literal by Breatnach (1999) and Williams and Ford (1992) Breatnach writes: "Rudolf Thurneysen, nonetheless, was of the opinion that the three tales may have had a common authorship." (Breatnach 1999: 1) and Williams and Ford: "The three stories resemble one another in style, a fact that suggest, as Thurneysen said, they share a common origin." (Williams and Ford 1992: 133). My interpretation is that Thurneysen merely gives it as a possibility but notes that has not been proven whatsoever and could be completely wrong.

³¹ Thurneysen 1921: 327. No linguistic study has been done, as far as I know.

³² Carney uses the term 'author' himself.

³³ Carney 1955: 160

³⁴ Welch 1996: 558

³⁵ Jacobs 1895: 220

³⁶ Murphy 1971 (revised): 33

³⁷ <http://www.vanhamel.nl/wiki/Oidheadh_chloinne_Lir> (last accessed: 06-04-15)

³⁸ <http://www.vanhamel.nl/wiki/Oidheadh_chloinne_Lir> (last accessed: 06-04-15)

³⁹ References to the catalogue: *The Earls of Kildare, and their ancestors* 1864: 330 and Southern and Nicolas 1828: 138. Carney refers to 'Gilbert's Facsimiles, Nat MSS. of Ireland, III, ii, plate lxiii' (see Carney 1955: 158 f.3); Byrne 2013: 153.

Breatnach made the same reference to Carney's book (see Breatnach 1999 2 f.10).

that it is more likely that OCL was originally a single tale, and was later, at least by the 18th century, combined into the triad TTS.⁴⁰

That leaves the question of the date of the tale itself. It is expected of folktales to be passed on through oral transmission long before they were written down, but there is no way of dating the origin of an oral tale. We can only rely on the written sources that survived the test of time. As mentioned above, the earliest mention of the title is dated to 1526. OCU and OCT are probably as early as the 14th century.⁴¹ Carney thinks that the composition of OCL “cannot be very much anterior to this date [1526]”⁴² but this formulation is open to interpretation. Carney illustrates his argument with “Note for instance, the peculiar rime *Oide : gaoithe* (Sceilg, p 54)”⁴³ but does not offer a broader explanation of this argument that, in my opinion, is needed to fully understand his way of thought. Previous to this argument, Carney argues that OCL is an imitation in style, themes and narrative of a 12th-century version of the Wild Man tale *Buile Suibhne*.⁴⁴ Thus, I would suggest that Carney means to say that OCL is in any case later than the 12th century, but due to its ‘peculiar rime’ probably closer to the 15th century. According to Breatnach, OCL is written in Early Modern Irish (13th – 16th century) and shows significant linguistic and thematic similarities to 15th-century religious texts. The OCL texts show no evidence that the language and style of the text derives from an Old or Middle Irish original⁴⁵, however this does not exclude the possibility that an earlier version has exist. In short, the form in which it appears in the earliest sources seems to fit the language and style of other texts composed in the 13th – 15th centuries. Nevertheless, earlier and now lost written examples of OCL could have existed and it remains impossible to say with certainty when OCL was first formed as tale, either in oral and written form.

With this overview of the origin of the tale, a basis is laid on which we start the comparison of the earliest translation to the children’s adaptations.

⁴⁰ Interestingly, Jacobs, Gregory and the authors of the five 1990’s-2000’s versions do not place OCL together with either OCU or OCT. Some of them, such as Jacobs, do mention the triad, but they all treat it as a separate tale. (Jacobs 1895: 220)

⁴¹ Carney 1955: 158

⁴² Carney 1955: 158 f. 3

⁴³ Carney 1955: 158 f. 3.

⁴⁴ Carney 1955: 153-7

⁴⁵ Breatnach 1999: 2; He also mentions that OCL has thematic and linguistic similarities to 15th-century medicinal text.

Comparison

Hunt points out that children's literature contributes to the development of the child's understanding of cultural values⁴⁶ and I believe that the stories and texts we choose to transmit to our children are chosen for a reason, either consciously or unconsciously. Therefore, I make the assumption that this reason is that the chosen stories and texts reflect the social and cultural systems and values we want to pass on to the next generation.

The concept of childhood and children's literature as a separate subject from adult literature is a rather modern one, as it did not exist before the 18th century.⁴⁷ In the modern and contemporary society it goes without saying that the adult writer and the adult reader approach children's literature differently than the child does. The narratives for children are often shorter,⁴⁸ cover different content, and omit certain themes, such as violence, death, fear and sex or approach these themes differently.⁴⁹ The stories place more emphasis on the irrational side of human consciousness, such as intuition, emotions and feelings.⁵⁰ One might think that children's books are by definition cruelty-free, but this is not necessarily the case, see for example the 19th-century German stories, such as *Struwwelpeter*, that were meant to be quite horrifying for children in order to keep them well-mannered.⁵¹ Dark themes such as jealousy, suffering and death are omnipresent in OCL, as they lie at the base of the tale.⁵² The children lose their beloved mother and are cursed by their evil stepmother even though they did not deserve this punishment.⁵³ They are forced into exile and have to endure great hardship and at the end of their suffering their salvation is death.⁵⁴

When retelling older stories, such as OCL, the adaptator can choose to omit or change certain themes that are, in the 21st century, considered inappropriate for children. The themes mentioned above are vital to the tale and omitting them completely would make up a whole different narrative. I found that the writers of the adaptations for children approach this 'problem' differently. For example, the theme

⁴⁶ Hunt 1991: 19

⁴⁷ Hunt 1991: 59

⁴⁸ Hunt 1991: 57

⁴⁹ Hunt 1991: 57

⁵⁰ Hunt 1991: 6

⁵¹ O'Sullivan 2010: 127-8

⁵² For example Lir's jealousy over Bodhbh Dearg's kingship (see *Oide* 1908: 40) and the death of Lir's unnamed wife (see *Oide* 1908: 41).

⁵³ *Oide* 1908: 44-9

⁵⁴ *Oide* 1908: 47-9 and 54-78

of **death**: In (Old) Irish narratives the (violent) death of primary characters is a common theme; see for example the *Death tales of the Ulster Heroes*⁵⁵. The motif of death is prominent in the 19th-century versions of OCL.

The death of Aobh, foster-daughter of Bodhbh Dearg and mother of the four children, in the beginning of the tale, is an emotional happening. O'Curry translates: "And that [Aobh's death] preyed greatly upon Lir; and were it not the greatness [of love] with which his mind rested upon his four children, he would almost have died of grief."⁵⁶ Gregory and Jacobs use different words but their passages are very similar to O'Curry's translation.⁵⁷ Bodhbh Dearg accounts the grief for Aobh, nevertheless he goes right into action and offers Lir his other foster-daughter, Aoifé, in order to maintain his friendship with Lir, a political move.⁵⁸ Thus in O'Curry's, Gregory's and Jacobs' versions, the emotions accompanied by Aobh's death are described from the perspective of Lir and the emotions of the children are nowhere to be found.

One of the five children's adaptations, Coats's, does not mention their point of view either and keeps it rather factual: "But Evva died having Conn and Fiachra, and so Lir married Ayfa her sister instead."⁵⁹ The other four (Biggs, Doyle, Leavy, MacGill-Callahan) do shift the perspective to the children, as we can see in Biggs adaptation for instance:

"Their mother, the queen, was dead and the children missed her terribly. They missed the stories she used to tell them, the games she used to play, and the songs she sang at bedtime as she hugged them to sleep. The king saw that his children were sad and needed a mother, so he decided to marry again."⁶⁰

Doyle and Leavy use a very similar approach,⁶¹ describing the loss the children feel and the decision of Lir to remarry for the sake of the children he believes to be in need of a mother. MacGill-Callahan writes that King Lir marries Aoife in order to ease the loneliness of the children.⁶² The writers might think that the child readership

⁵⁵ Cross and Slover 1969: 333-346

⁵⁶ *Oide* 1908: 43

⁵⁷ Gregory writes: "And that [Aobh's death] weighed very heavy on Lir, and only for the way his mind was set on his four children he would have gone near to die of grief." (1904: 141)

Jacobs writes: "[...] and Lir mourned bitterly for her [Ove/Aoife], and but for his great love for his children he would have died of his grief; [...]" (1895: 2)

⁵⁸ *Oide* 1908: 43; Jacobs 1895: 2; Gregory 1904: 142; Political aspects will be further discussed below.

⁵⁹ Coats 2007: 118

⁶⁰ Biggs 2014: 56

⁶¹ Doyle 2000: 6-7 and Leavy 1996: 44

⁶² MacGill-Callahan 1993: 3-4 (1997 paperback ed. original 1993)

identify, and therefore empathize more easily, with their peers,⁶³ so consider it important to give room to the emotions of the children.

The other, perhaps most significant, death is the one of the main characters, the four children, themselves. In O'Curry's, Gregory's and Jacobs's versions, the swans transform back into old humans, who did not stop aging through the nine-hundred-year-long exile, so die of old age almost immediately.⁶⁴ The tone in which their death is narrated in O'Curry's and Gregory's versions, is sorrowful: Fionnghuala says to Mochaomhóg: "[...] and it is certain that you do not think worse of parting with us than we do at parting with you,"⁶⁵ (In Jacobs' version this sentence is omitted). Fionnghuala describes that she and her brothers grieve their parting from Mochaomhóg, and following their death, the burial and lamentation rites took place.⁶⁶ Because Fionnghuala requested baptism from the cleric, their souls went to heaven.⁶⁷ In O'Curry's version the cleric grieved over their death after the burial rite took place but this is not written in Gregory's and Jacobs versions.⁶⁸ As seen above, Jacobs also omits Fionnghuala's lament of parting with the cleric. Thus, the sorrowful tone is most prominent in O'Curry's translation, still there but a bit less in Gregory's version and Jacobs omits the most emotional passages from his version. Lack of space could have prevented Jacobs to include these passages but it could also be his choice to keep the description of their deaths rather factual and not too emotionally laden, in order to make the death of the main characters easier for his young audience.

The sorrowful tone that is found in Gregory's version and, even more in, O'Curry's translation⁶⁹ is softened in all five 1990's-2000's adaptations. Coats and MacGill-Callahan omit their death completely: In Coats' version: "[...] and out stepped four beautiful children, dressed in white. And what happened to them after, no one can say."⁷⁰ MacGill-Callahan writes: "King Lir's children lived long and happy lives, and they never lost the gift of song."⁷¹ Not only is their death omitted, the swans turn back into children, instead of 900-hundred-year old humans, as well. The others soften the tone in which they describe the death, making it a more peaceful

⁶³ McDowell 1973: 57

⁶⁴ *Oide* 1908: 77-8; Gregory 1904: 157-8; Jacobs 1895: 10

⁶⁵ *Oide* 1908: 76; Gregory 1904: 158.

⁶⁶ *Oide* 1908: 77-8; Gregory 1904: 158; Jacobs 1895: 10 (only the description of the burial).

⁶⁷ *Oide* 1908: 76-8; Gregory 1904: 158; Jacobs 1895: 10

⁶⁸ *Oide* 1908: 77-8 and Gregory 1904: 158

⁶⁹ Because of mentioning of the grieving cleric.

⁷⁰ Coats 2007: 121

⁷¹ MacGill-Callahan 1993: 31

experience. In Leavy's, Doyle's and Biggs' adaptations the swans transform into nine-hundred-year-old humans. Doyle writes: "But they were over nine hundred years old, and so they died."⁷² Mentioning their age might make accepting their death easier for a child, for it is natural that old people die. Leavy writes that the holy man buries the children "tenderly"⁷³ and Doyle describes that the grave of the four characters is "close to his [the monk's] little church"⁷⁴, making sure that the reader knows that the four are taken care of.

To make the death even more peaceful, all three writers mention that the children are now re-united with their father (and mother). Leavy writes: "That night five stars swooped across the glittering sky. He knew then that Lir and his children were together again, in some beautiful, far-off place..."⁷⁵. She makes the new destination a mysterious one, so that the reader can envision one for him/herself. Doyle writes: "At last they were together again, King Lir, his good wife and their four children."⁷⁶ Biggs writes: "That night he [Caomhóg⁷⁷, the holy man] dreamed he saw four swans flying up through the clouds and he knew that the children of Lir were at last on their way to heaven to be with their mother and father again."⁷⁸ So instead of ending on a sorrowful note, as happens in O'Curry's and Gregory's version, these three adaptors create a happy ending despite the deaths of the main characters. The other two, who omit the death, create a more mysterious ending (Coats) and a happy ending, where father and children are alive and together (MacGill-Callahan). In conclusion, Jacobs altered O'Curry's emotional laden the description of the deaths of the children, into a less emotional one, albeit significantly less drastically than the authors of the 1990's-2000's versions, who soften the tone even more or omit their deaths completely.

The death of the children is in O'Curry's, Lady Gregory's, Jacobs's⁷⁹ and in four of the five children's versions⁸⁰ connected with **Christianity**, in some more explicitly than others. Caoimhín Breatnach broadly demonstrates the religious

⁷² Doyle 2000: 15

⁷³ Leavy 1996: 54

⁷⁴ Doyle 2000: 15

⁷⁵ Leavy 1996: 54

⁷⁶ Doyle 2000: 15

⁷⁷ Caomhóg is the name of the holy man in Biggs' version.

⁷⁸ Biggs 2014: 62

⁷⁹ *Oide* 1908: 77-8; Gregory 1904: 157-8; Jacobs 1895: 10

⁸⁰ Coats is the exception, as she omits all references to Christianity.

significance of OCL.⁸¹ His main point is that the children endure a temporary, secular suffering in preparation for an eternal and blissful afterlife in heaven.⁸² During one of the harshest nights at sea that the children have to go through, they show devotion to God. This immediately grants them relief and for the rest of their exile they do not suffer anymore.⁸³ Carney writes that it is rather strange that the innocent children are forced into suffering and die almost immediately after their curse is lifted instead of returning to the happy lives they lived before the curse.⁸⁴ Breatnach responds with the suggestion that the children are actually given the “ultimate eternal state of happiness in heaven”.⁸⁵ This interpretation is applicable to the children’s adaptations as well, for it is a soft and tender way of portraying the theme of death, as can be read in the examples above.⁸⁶ Ní Bhroin pointed out that Irish tales that are concerned with the transition from pagan to Christian religion, such as OCL, are most often chosen to adapt for children, in comparison to other Irish tales.⁸⁷

Religion in general is a great unifier (and divider) of people and shapes (national) identities.⁸⁸ Particularly in Ireland, religion remained a great influence in society in the 20th century, whereas the rest of the Western European countries became more secularised.⁸⁹ The Christian, and especially the Catholic, faith cultivated a ‘strong communal identity’⁹⁰ within the majority of the Irish population, which was very helpful to create a feeling of nationhood and give a foundation to the establishment of the Irish Free State.⁹¹ The Christian faith is, in the 21st century, still a big part of the Irish society,⁹² thus it is quite understandable that the Christian element was and is very prominent in the 19th, 20th and 21st adaptations.

⁸¹ See Breatnach 1999: 1-40

⁸² Breatnach 1999: 38-9

⁸³ *Oide* 1908: 69-70 According to Breatnach this theme, i.e. relief of suffering by giving devotion to God, is common in the Early Modern Irish period, and happens often in Saints’ Lives. (Breatnach 1999: 10)

⁸⁴ Carney 1955: 156 f.2

⁸⁵ Breatnach 1999: 30

⁸⁶ See pages 11-2.

⁸⁷ Ní Bhroin 2011: 8

⁸⁸ Inglis 2005: 59-60

⁸⁹ Inglis 2005: 59

⁹⁰ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 50

⁹¹ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 50

⁹² Inglis 2005: 64, 74; The Catholic fate in the Republic in Ireland and the Protestant fate in Northern Ireland is a great cultural divider between the two societies, despite both being Christian faiths. (Inglis 2005: 61)

Next to religion stands another significant cultural identifier: **language**. The relation between the Irish people and the Irish language is complex.⁹³ The number of Irish speakers has been declining due to foreign invasions over time, with the Act of Union in 1800 as a milestone in Ireland's history.⁹⁴ By the end of the 18th century, the language shift from Irish to English as the vernacular was already well established.⁹⁵ Due to the Great Famine in the middle of the 19th century, the number of Irish speakers decreased massively.⁹⁶ By that time, the English language was seen as the language of opportunity, growth and success, diminishing Irish to the language of the poor and the past.⁹⁷ As contradictory as it may seem, during this shift the elite showed a growing interest in the Gaelic culture and language from an antiquarian and scholarly perspective, partly due to the Romantic Movement seen throughout Europe. This led to the founding of the Royal Irish Academy in 1785 and the connection of the Irish language with cultural identity and political nationalism.⁹⁸ In the last decades of the 19th century the Celtic Revival is at its peak, and the 'decolonisation' was a prominent subject of propaganda.⁹⁹ During this time the preservation of the Irish language was a central issue, as the establishment of Douglas Hyde's Gaelic League shows,¹⁰⁰ but the Irish nationalists used the English language for their propaganda, for example the newspaper *The Nation*.¹⁰¹ The editions and translations of O'Curry, Gregory and Jacobs are examples of the growth in scholarly and artistic interest in during the Celtic Revival.

Ikeda¹⁰² suggests that the theme of exile in OCL is a metaphor for the suppression of the Irish by the invaders, most of all the English. The suppression of a culture is easily linked to the suppression of language and Ikeda suggests that the tale sets out to celebrate the Irish language.¹⁰³ In Lady Gregory's and O'Curry's translations there is, indeed, an emphasis found on the fact that the swans get to keep their ability to speak, specifically, the Irish language. For example, when Aoife grants

⁹³ Ó'hIfearnáin 2009: 539

⁹⁴ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 42

⁹⁵ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 42

⁹⁶ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 43

⁹⁷ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 42; Ó'hIfearnáin 2009: 539-40

⁹⁸ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 43

⁹⁹ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 46

¹⁰⁰ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 46

¹⁰¹ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 44; It was the English speaking audience that needed to be convinced about the importance of the Irish culture and language. 'Preaching' in Irish would have made no sense.

¹⁰² Ikeda 2006: 50

¹⁰³ Ikeda 2006: 50

the children their ability to speak: O'Curry's translation (and Gregory's is very similar): "[...], with the stammering Gaedhilg [i.e. but half articulate]."¹⁰⁴ And later in the tale when Fionnghuala speaks with her father, the emphasis on the Irish language re-occurs: "[...] but we have our own language, the Gaedhilge [...]"¹⁰⁵ O'Curry's and Gregory's translations are, obviously, made for an English-speaking audience. The Irish language stands in opposition to the language of the translation, English. I would suggest that the mention and emphasis on the ability of the children to speak Irish brings more attention to the 'Irishness', or even 'Celticness'¹⁰⁶ of the tale and distances itself more from the English culture.

In the 1895 children's version made by Joseph Jacobs, less explicit emphasis is laid on the Irish speech: "This only I will grant to you: that you retain your own speech, [...]"¹⁰⁷. The interpretation of the use of the word 'own' is debatable. It could reflect on the children's 'own' human ability to speak, but it is possible that it is a subtle reference to the Irish language. Jacobs' works are specifically meant and altered for the English child, rather than a scholarly audience.¹⁰⁸ He took the liberty of simplifying and changing the language and stylistic elements, in order to make the tales even more 'characteristically Celtic'¹⁰⁹.

Looking at the children's adaptations from 1990 to 2014 the emphasis on the Irish language is nowhere to be found. For example, Doyle gives: "You shall keep the power of speech and thought' answered the cruel queen [Aoife]".¹¹⁰ In Leavy's adaptation Aoife does not even grant the children their voices, for she intended to destroy these as well, but her magic failed to do that. "Then one of the swans began to speak, for Aoife's magic had failed to destroy their voices."¹¹¹ In Biggs version there is not even a specific mention that the children keep their voice let alone that it is Irish. And Coats lets Aoife only mention that the children get to keep their singing ability: "Swans you shall be except for your song."¹¹² So again there is no mention of the speech and this being the Irish tongue. These contemporary adaptators do not

¹⁰⁴ Lady Gregory's translation: "[...]with your stammering Irish" (Gregory 1904: 144).

¹⁰⁵ *Oide* 1908: 52 Irish version: "act atá ár n-urlabra Gaoidilge fém againn, [...]" (*Oide* 1908: 12); Lady Gregory's translation: "[...] but we have our own language, the Irish, [...]" (Gregory 1904: 146)

¹⁰⁶ During the 19th century the terms 'Irish' and 'Celtic' are used interchangeably. The term Celtic becomes a term referring to a vague 'ancient Ireland' (Koch 2006: 1531)

¹⁰⁷ Jacobs 1895: 4

¹⁰⁸ Jacobs 1892: ix

¹⁰⁹ Jacobs 1892: viii-ix

¹¹⁰ Doyle 2000: 8

¹¹¹ Leavy 1996: 48

¹¹² Coats 2007: 118

emphasize or mention the speech of the swans being Irish. I would say that this change is a reflection of the contemporary (Irish) attitude towards the Irish culture and language. Language is most often seen as one of the cornerstones of national and cultural identity¹¹³, but in Ireland this matter is still highly complex, as it was in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Irish government has taken action to revive the language, but the Irish language still struggles. For example, the Irish language became a mandatory subject in schools in 1922,¹¹⁴ however only 2% of the population uses it on a daily basis.¹¹⁵

When Ireland became independent in 1922 a shift occurred: “A new identity that was not English, but would probably be English-speaking, [...]”¹¹⁶ The establishment of the Irish Free State disconnected Ireland officially from the British Empire, and the Irish citizenship became enough to distinguish the Irish from the English identity.¹¹⁷ By the 1950’s there was a substantial growth of bilinguals, due to the education system, but nevertheless the Irish-speaking communities declined rapidly.¹¹⁸ The Irish government loosened its grip in the 1970’s when it decided that Irish was no longer a requirement for state examinations, but at the same time there was an increase in pressure from citizens and language activists.¹¹⁹ It seems that the feeling of necessity to revive the Irish language as a vital part of the national identity became more of a burden for the government, as the English language is dominant in terms of globalization and the Internet.¹²⁰ The English-speaking citizens reinforced a demand for English translations of Irish texts, so they would be able to learn and understand the (literary) culture of their ancestors, which seemed to them as at the point of disappearing.¹²¹

By joining the European Union in 1973, Ireland gained confidence as the international interest in Irish culture and literature grew, alongside the economical growth. Language might be seen more as a symbolic part of the national identity.¹²² This shift in attitude makes it possible to explain the lack of necessity for the

¹¹³ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 48

¹¹⁴ O’Rourke and Walsh 2014: 64

¹¹⁵ Ó hIfearnáin 2009: 542 (Based on a study published in 2003)

¹¹⁶ Day 2012: 28

¹¹⁷ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 51; Compare the identity issue in Northern Ireland, where the debate of Irish identity and language is even more vital (Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 57)

¹¹⁸ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 50

¹¹⁹ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 54

¹²⁰ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 51

¹²¹ Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 51

¹²² Ó Tuathaigh 2005: 50, 57

adaptators to mention the Irish language in the retellings, because the Irish language is quite pessimistically seen as a merely symbolic characteristic of ‘Irishness’, but its decline and eventual death might be seen as inevitable by a significant part of the Irish society.

Another way of explaining the omission of references to the Irish language in the contemporary retellings is because of its political connotation. Opinions about the added value of the Irish language to the Irish culture can vary among (sub) groups. For example, the language ideologies can differ significantly between (native) speakers of Irish and non-Irish speaking Irish citizens, but also the English audience.¹²³ The adaptators might avoid the chance that the reader is affronted, so they omit the politically loaded subject.

The mention of the Irish language is not the only **political theme** that is omitted. In O’Curry’s, Gregory’s and Jacobs’ versions, the king Bodhbh Dearg has a vital role in the development of the tale and is the driving force behind the two marriages of Lir. He is the one that offers his foster-daughters to Lir, in order to keep and maintain good relations with him. O’Curry: “And Bodhbh Dearg said: “We grieve for that girl, on account of the good man to whom we gave her, because we are grateful for his friendship and its constancy; however, our friendship for each other shall not be rent asunder, for I shall give him her other sister as a wife, namely, Aoifé.””¹²⁴ Here, Bodhbh Dearg shows sympathy for Lir and grieves for him, instead for Aobh herself, and immediately comes up with a solution in order to keep Lir’s friendship. Jacobs keeps close to O’Curry’s translation¹²⁵, but Gregory makes a change: “[...] Bodhbh Dearg said: “It is a fret to us our daughter to have died, for her own sake and for the sake of the good man to whom we gave her to, [...]”” and Bodhbh Dearg gives Lir Aoife.¹²⁶ In contrast to O’Curry and Jacobs, Gregory lets Bodhbh Dearg grieve for Aobh herself, instead only for the sake of Lir. I can only speculate about the reason why Gregory made this choice, but I suggest that she

¹²³ See Irish language ideology for example: Armstrong, Timothy Currie, ‘Establishing new norms of language use: the circulation of linguistic ideology in three new Irish-language communities’ in *Language Policy* 11/2 (2012) pp. 145-168.

¹²⁴ *Oide* 1908: 43

¹²⁵ “And Dearg the king grieved for Lir and sent to him and said: “We grieve for Ove for their sake; but, that our friendship may not be rent asunder, I will give you unto thee her sister, Oifa, for a wife.”” (Jacobs 1895: 2)

¹²⁶ Gregory 1904: 142

wanted to make Bodhbh Dearg's words subtler and thoughtful, perhaps even more 'romantic'.

The role of Bodhbh Dearg survives in Coats adaptation but does not mention his name: "So when the king offered to find him a new wife, he agreed, and he chose Evva, daughter of king Aran. [...] But Evva died having Conn and Fiachra, and so Lir married Ayfa her sister instead."¹²⁷ The other four, Leavy, Doyle, MacGill-Callahan and Biggs, do not mention him. In Doyle's version for example, Lir is already married to the mother of the children at the beginning of the tale, and Aoife enters the tale as 'a stranger to those parts'¹²⁸ i.e. not blood-related to the mother and not sent for political reasons. Jacobs keeps close to his original, O'Curry's translation, but alters the tone slightly to a more sensitive one when Bodhbh Dearg gives his reasons to arrange a marriage between his foster-daughters and Lir: "Rather let us bind him to us by the bonds of kinship, so that peace may dwell in the land."¹²⁹ Bodhbh Dearg's wish is to accomplish peace in the land, which is positive and serves the greater good. Compare O'Curry's translation: "Bodhbh Dearg said: "If Lir chose," said he, "my assistance and my friendship would be useful to him, [...]"¹³⁰. The tone of O'Curry's version is rather strategic than friendly. Jacobs could have might have chosen to alter the tone for the sake of the young audience his version is aimed towards.

The fact that the political aspects of the tale are cut out of these retellings does reflect our culture today and what we want to communicate to our children. The decisions in the tale are primarily based on feelings and emotions, instead of rational and political aspects arguments.¹³¹ In our modern Western society the status quo is that people should marry out of love, and not as a political service¹³², and from the perspective of gender equality the woman is autonomous in regards to whom she marries. This makes it understandable that the adaptators chose to omit those parts in the tale. There is no room to explain why in older times these arranged marriages were considered normal and the young readership might not even be able to comprehend or be interested in this element. Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that this approach to children's literature is not timeless. In the 19th century for example, children's literature was of highly didactic nature and its main purpose was to "mould

¹²⁷ Coats 2007: 118

¹²⁸ Doyle 2000: 6-7

¹²⁹ Jacobs 1895: 2

¹³⁰ *Oide* 1908: 41

¹³¹ See page 8

¹³² Although this does not mean that it does not happen.

children intellectually and politically”¹³³ This is reflected in the 19th-century sources that we have discussed above, where political standpoints are carried out in literature. Jacobs writes in his preface of *Celtic Fairy Tales*:

“Yet both he [Mr. J. D. Batten, Illustrator] and I have striven to give Celtic things as they appear to, and attract, the English mind, rather than attempt the hopeless task of representing them as they are to Celts. [...] The present volume attempts to begin the pleasant captivity from the earliest years. If it could succeed in giving a common fund of imaginative wealth to the Celtic and the Saxon children of these isles, it might do more for a true union of hearts than all your politics.”¹³⁴

Two things are striking this paragraph. Firstly, he makes a division between how the English mind perceives ‘Celtic things’ and how these same ‘things’ actually are to the ‘Celts’ themselves. Jacobs creates a great gap between the two cultures, which might be alien to each other. The ‘Celt’ and his ‘Celtic things’ are made into exotic phenomena, which are not totally understandable to the outsider, the English. Secondly, he wants to unify the Saxon and Celtic children through the sharing of their imagination and literature. He uses children as the key element of this endeavour, in contrast to the adults, who are tangled in their complex ‘politics’, which apparently has not done anything beneficial to the ‘noble savage Celt’. Jacobs might see the innocent and openhearted child, who is not influenced by political games, as the answer to any ‘problems’ between the two cultures. Contrastingly, in the 1990’s-2000’s sources the enforcement of a political standpoint is avoided, possibly to retain a greater and international audience.

The Irish language and political structures are features that clearly belong to the Irish culture, but there are more features in OCL that can be considered characteristic for Irish literature. For example, in O’Curry’s, Gregory’s and Jacobs’ versions the swans are, just before they transform back into humans, paired with **silver chains** between them by the cleric Mochaomhóg.¹³⁵ Deoch, the daughter of the King of Munster, hears of the birds and orders Lairgnen, king of Connacht to bring them to her. When Lairgnen touches them they transform back into humans.¹³⁶

¹³³ Hunt 1991: 28

¹³⁴ Jacobs 1892: xii

¹³⁵ *Oide* 1908: 75; Gregory 1904: 157; Jacobs 1895: 9-10

¹³⁶ *Oide* 1908: 75-6; Gregory 1904: 157-8; Jacobs 1895: 10

The connection of birds by a chain is a symbol of the supernatural. The motif is found in the ‘Conception of Cuchulainn’, ‘The Sickbed of Cuchulainn’ and ‘The Dream of Angus’, as Jacobs has pointed out.¹³⁷ The *Motif-index of folk-literature* by Thompson mentions only Irish sources for the motif *Magic birds chained in couples* (B172.7)¹³⁸, but Jacobs writes that this motif is also found in the French tale ‘Swan Knight’.¹³⁹ It is possible that this motif occurs predominantly more in Irish than Continental sources.

In the children’s adaptations the chain motif is only included by one of the five authors, i.e. Coats. Coats mentions that Kemog (a druid) binds the white swans in silver chains. Kemog does this at the request of a warrior-prince, (probably Lairgnen in O’Curry’s version), who was in his turn ordered by the woman he wants to marry, (probably Deoch in O’Curry’s version).¹⁴⁰ The other four (Doyle, Leavy, MacGillan-Callahan) do not include this motif that might be seen as a typical Irish one. I can only speculate why the majority of the children’s retelling omits this motif. The most plausible explanation seems, to me, that the adaptators wanted to keep the tale as simple as possible. The authors that do include the chain motif also include the characters Lairgnen and Deoch, because there is certain causality between these two elements.¹⁴¹ The shortness of the re-tellings¹⁴² does not offer room for motifs and characters that might not been seen as vital to the bare plot of the narrative.

The motif of the silver chains is not the only motif that is gets ‘lost in translation’ in the contemporary adaptations for children. In O’Curry’s and Gregory’s versions Aoife grants the swans the ability to sing beautiful **music** that has the power to put listeners to sleep. O’Curry: “[...]; and you shall sing plaintive music, at which the men of the Earth would sleep,”¹⁴³ “and everyone who used to hear that music slept

¹³⁷ Jacobs 1895: 222-3

¹³⁸ Thompson 1955 part 1: 389

¹³⁹ Jacobs 1895: 222-3; One could have influenced the other. This paper does not offer enough room for me to expand on this issue.

¹⁴⁰ Coats 2007: 121

¹⁴¹ There is, indeed, causality between the silver chains and the pursuit of the swans by Lairgnen and Deoch. Deoch recognizes the special birds in her dream after the cleric has put the silver chains, a sign of the supernatural, around the necks of the swans. This sets the chain of action in motion which leads to the unification of the ‘North’ (Lairgnen) and the ‘South’ (Deoch), and therefore the transformation of the swans back into humans. (*Oide* 1908: 47-8, 75-8; Gregory 1905: 144, 157-8; Jacobs 1895: 4, 10)

¹⁴² For example: Biggs version is only five, short pages.

¹⁴³ *Oide* 1908: 48; Gregory’s version: “[...] and you will be singing sweet music of the Sidhe, that would put the men of the earth to sleep, [...]” (1904: 144); “So Lir and his people stopped there listening to the music of the swans, and they slept there quietly that night.” (1904: 146)

soundly and easily, not matter what disease or long illness might be upon him;”¹⁴⁴ The motif occurs also in *The Cattle Raid of Fróech*¹⁴⁵ where there are three harpers, Goltrade, Gentrade and Súantrade¹⁴⁶, who are respectively named after three kinds of music, weeping music (*goltraige*), laughing music (*geantraige*) and sleeping music (*suantraige*).¹⁴⁷ Thompson ascribes the motif *Magic bird’s song brings sleep* (B 172.2.1)¹⁴⁸ to the Irish literary tradition, thus on account of this I would suggest that this motif is characteristic to Irish literature.

In all five contemporary adaptations for children and Jacobs’¹⁴⁹ version the singing of the swans does not have the power to bring listeners into a peaceful sleep or the singing is completely omitted. Leavy does not mention that the swans can sing and in Biggs version the swans neither talk nor sing at all.¹⁵⁰ In Coats version the swans do sing to their father in order to explain what Aoife did to them,¹⁵¹ but nothing extra-ordinary is ascribed to this singing. MacGill-Callahan does ascribe special power to the music, for they ‘will be hunted as treasures for the sweetness of their song.’¹⁵² And Doyle writes: “[...] and all who heard their music were cured of their illness, pain and sorrow.”¹⁵³ The 19th-century version of Jacobs, who keeps close to O’Curry’s original most of the times, also omits the music’s ability to provoke sleep but writes that “there shall be no music in the world equal to yours, the plaintive music you shall sing.”¹⁵⁴ Thus, some of the adaptators do ascribe special abilities to the singing, but none of the children’s versions credit it with the most outspokenly ‘Irish’ motif: *suantraige*.

The elements that remain in the tale, such as the cruel stepmother, the transformation of humans to swans, a long exile and a grieving father, are common international motifs. The cruel stepmother (S31)¹⁵⁵ occurs for example in German,

¹⁴⁴ Oide 1908: 54-5

¹⁴⁵ Gantz 1981: 113-126

¹⁴⁶ Gantz 1981: 117

¹⁴⁷ Buckley 2000: 166

¹⁴⁸ Thompson 1931 (part 1): 389

¹⁴⁹ Jacobs 1895: 6

¹⁵⁰ Biggs 2014: 61

¹⁵¹ Coats 2007: 120

¹⁵² MacGill-Callahan 1993: 7

¹⁵³ Doyle 2000: 11

¹⁵⁴ Jacobs 1895: 4

¹⁵⁵ Thompson 1955 part 5: 300

Greek, Hindu and Indian literature, and the transformation of humans into swans (D.161.1)¹⁵⁶ in Greek, Icelandic and English literature.

The omitting of sleeping music, the silver chains and the mention of the Irish language indicates that most of the typically Irish motifs are lost in the newer adaptations. The contemporary tales characterize and market themselves primarily by their Irish origin, for example, in the use of the words ‘Irish’ and ‘Ireland’ in the titles of the books. However, it seems as though the ‘Irishness’ of the tales fades away and a more international commutable tale remains. The (international) audience is more familiar with the motifs that occur in multiple literary traditions across the globe and the characteristic Irish components might be harder to explain or will confuse the audience.

Conclusion

This paper started with the notion that OCL is, in the 21st century, one of the best known-tales that has come out the Irish literature tradition. But how much is actually known about the tale? To the non-scholarly public it is incorrectly presented as an ‘ancient tale’, perhaps even 2000 years old,¹⁵⁷ but even scholars have not agreed on a decisive answer. The evidence, being surviving manuscripts, tells us that the earliest mention of a version of the title of OCL is in the 1500’s and that the earliest version of the tale is found in a 17th-century manuscript. The combining of OCL with OCT and OCU to make the triad TTS happens, according to the evidence, in the 18th century. There is no proof that the tale is older than the 1500’s but it is very possible that it has an oral background, as most folktales tended to have before they were written down.

The main question of this paper was: How did the tale *Oidheadh Cloinne Lir* evolve from a (late) medieval Irish tale to a popular contemporary tale often aimed towards children throughout the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries in terms of narrative, themes and motifs, and can this evolution be explained by looking at the cultural environment of these times?

Firstly, the division between adult and children’s literature did not start to develop before the 18th century. However, when it happened, folktales were considered more appropriate for children than for adults. They cover fantastic,

¹⁵⁶ Thompson 1955 part 2: 22

¹⁵⁷ Leavy 1996: 94

imaginative and, in some opinions, unserious content, something children adapt to more easily than adults. Secondly, during the Celtic Revival, i.e. 19th to early 20th century, there was a significant longing to create a national identity and this was implemented by reviving the ‘old Irish culture’ and its language. The imaginative, but simple narrative of OCL was popular amongst 19th-century scholars, such as O’Curry and Lady Gregory, who wanted to bring attention to the ‘wealth’ of the Irish (literary) culture to the non-Irish speaking Irish and English citizens. Jacobs goal was to bring the Irish tales to the young English public in order to create ‘union’ between the two cultures. His book was explicitly meant for (English) children and in order to be more suitable this audience he altered, omitted and softened certain elements and motifs of the tale, but stayed, in terms of characters and narrative, considerably close to his original, i.e. O’Curry’s translation. Thus, the versions written in the period of the Celtic Revival, reflect the wish to distinguish the Irish (culture) from the English (culture) as they kept (most of) the elements in OCL that distinguish the Irish (literary) culture from the English.

In the decades after the establishment of Irish Free State, in 1922, the attitude of the Irish society was not the same as it had been during the Celtic Revival. The sought after distinction appears to be realized for a great part by the official independence from the United Kingdom, and need to distinguish themselves through cultural differences, such as language and literature, becomes less urgent. This is reflected in the 1990’s-2000’s versions as motifs that occur predominantly in Irish literature, such as the silver chains and the *suatraige*, are not seen as vital parts of the tale and are omitted by the authors.

Moreover, Ireland became in the second half of the 20th-century internationally more prominent than it had before. Ireland began to profile itself towards this international audience that showed a growing interest and demand in the Irish culture and literature. This resulted in products, such as the children’s books examined in this paper, that characterize themselves in their titles as ‘Irish’. Ironically, the content of these books has become more internationally interchangeable as the story-elements and motifs that remain occur in multiple international literary traditions. Although most readers will be more familiar with these motifs and the tale becomes more accessible to the international audience, OCL has become less of a reflection of the (old) Irish literary culture and style as it once had been.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Biggs, Fiona, *Pocket Irish Legends* (Dublin 2014) 56-63

Coats, Lucy, *Coll the Storyteller's Tales of Enchantment* (London 2007) 117-121

Doyle, Malachy, *Tales from Old Ireland* (Oxford 2000) 6-15

Gregory, Isabella Augusta, *Gods and fighting men: the story of the Tuatha de Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland* (London 1904 (reprint 1905)) 140-158

Jacobs, Joseph, *More Celtic Fairy Tales* (1895; republication New York 1968) 1-10

Leavy, Una, *The O'Brien book of Irish fairy tales & legends* (London 1996) 44-54

MacGill-Callahan, Sheila, *The Children of Lir* (New York 1993)

Oide cloinne lir – the fate of the children of Lir, published for the Society for the Preservation of the Irish language (Dublin 1908)

Southern, Henry and Nicolas, Nicholas Harris (ed.), *The Retrospective Review, and historical and antiquarian Magazine vol 1* (London 1827)

The Earls of Kildare, and their ancestors from 1057 to 1773 by Marquis of Kildare
Fourth edition (Dublin 1864)

Secondary sources

Breatnach, Caoimhín, 'The Religious Significance of Oidheadh Chloinne Lir' in *Ériu*
Vol. 50, (1999) 1-40

Brillenburg, Kiene & Rigney, Ann, *Het leven van teksten* (Amsterdam 2006)

Buckley, Ann, 'Music and musicians in medieval Irish society', in *Early Music*, Vol. 28, No. 2, *Early Music of Ireland* (Oxford 2000) 165-176+178-182+185-190

Byrne, Aisling, 'The earls of Kildare and their books at the end of the middle ages' in *The Library*, 7th series vol. 14 no. 2 (Oxford June 2013) 129-153

Carney, James *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin 1955)

Day, Rosemary, 'Voice of a Nation: The development of Radio in Ireland' in *Radio in Small Nations: Production, Programmes, Audiences* ed. Richard J. Hand and Mary Traynor (Cardiff 2012) 27-39

Gantz, Jeffrey, *Early Irish myths and sagas* (Suffolk 1981)

Grider, Sylvia Ann, 'The study of Children's folklore' in *Western Folklore* Vol. 39, No.3, *Children's Folklore* (Jul, 1980) 159-169

Hunt, Peter, *Criticism theory, & Children's Literature* (Worcester 1991)

Ikeda, Hiroko, "Beyond the Borders of Ireland: Ní Dhomhnaill, Jenkinson and "The Tragedy of the Children of Lir" in *Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. 21, (2006) 49-59

Inglis, Tom, 'Religion, identity, state and society' in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* ed. Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (Cambridge 2005) 59-77

Jacobs, Joseph *Celtic Fairy Tales* (1892)

McDowell, Myles, 'Fiction for children and adults: Some essential differences', in *Children's literature in education* vol 4, issue 1 (1973) 50-63

Murphy, Gerald, *The Ossianic lore and romantic tales of medieval Ireland* (Dublin 1955 revised ed. 1971)

Ní Bhroin, Ciara, 'Mythologizing Ireland' in *Irish Children's literature and culture New perspectives on contemporary writing* (ed.) Coghlan, Valerie and O'Sullivan, Keith (New York 2011) 7-28

Ó hIfearnáin, Tadhg, 'Irish-speaking society and the state', in *The Celtic Languages 2nd edition* ed. Martin J. Ball and Nicole Müller (London and New York 2009) 539-586

O'Rourke, Bernadette and Walsh, John, 'New speakers of Irish: shifting boundaries across time and space' in *International journal of the sociology of language* Vol. 2015, issue 231, ed. by Joshua A. Fishman and Ofelia Garcia Otheguy (December 2014) 63-83

O'Sullivan, Emer, *Historical Dictionary of Children's Literature* (Lanham 2010)

O'Sullivan, Sean, *Legends from Ireland* (London 1977)

Ó Tuathaigh, Gearóid, 'Language, ideology and national identity' in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* ed. Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (Cambridge 2005) 42-58

Thompson, Stith, *Motif-index of folk-literature: a classification of narrative elements in folk-tales, ballads, myths, fables, mediaeval romances, exempla, fabliaux, jest-books, and local legends* (Copenhagen 1955-1958) part 1-6

Thompson, Stith, *The Folktale* (New York 1977)

Thurneysen, *Die Irische Helden und Königsage* (Halle (Saale) 1921)

Welch, Robert *The concise Oxford companion to Irish literature* (Oxford 2000; online edition 2003)

Williams, E. Caerwyn and Ford, Patrick K., *The Irish literary tradition* (Cardiff 1992)

Appendix

Overview of the manuscripts¹⁵⁸

- British Library MS Harley 3756 (The Kildare Rental)¹⁵⁹ (Reference the title of the tale “The History of Clane Lyre”).

-Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS 72.1.38 (17th century), not together with *Oidheadh chloinne hUisneach* and *Oidheadh cloinne Tuireann*. The manuscript itself is dated to the beginning of the 17th century, but according to Black OCL is written down by Charles O’Conor of Belanagare who lived from 1710–91.¹⁶⁰

-Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS 72.2.6 (18th century) together with *Oidheadh chloinne hUisneach* and *Oidheadh cloinne Tuireann*.

-London, British Library, MS Egerton 164 (Date ?)¹⁶¹

-Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 24 A 13 (19th century)¹⁶²

-Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS E vi 4 (19th century)¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Breatnach mentioned that OCL is found in approximately 70 manuscripts, but does not provide a list or reference to them. (Breatnach 1999: 2)

¹⁵⁹ Byrne 2013: 129

¹⁶⁰ <<http://www.isos.dias.ie> > s.v. National Library of Scotland and s.v. Adv. MS. 72.1.38 (last accessed on 06-04-15)

¹⁶¹ <<http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/> > s.v. ‘Egerton 164’, this gives no results. (last accessed on 06-04-15)

¹⁶² <<http://cats.ria.ie/manuadvanced.html> > s.v. manuscript/catalogue number ‘24 A 13’ (last accessed on 06-04-15)

¹⁶³ <<http://cats.ria.ie/manuadvanced.html> > s.v. manuscript/catalogue number ‘E vi 4’ (last accessed on 06-04-15)