

Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích
Pedagogická fakulta
Katedra anglistiky

Bakalářská práce
Legenda o Deirdre v irské literatuře
The Deirdre Legend in Irish Fiction

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Rok odevzdání práce: 2012

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Poděkování

Ráda bych poděkovala panu PhDr. Christopheru Koyovi, M.A., Ph.D. za jeho rady, připomínky, trpělivost a podporu.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank to PhDr. Christopher Koy, M.A., Ph.D. for his advice, comments, patience and support.

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the research of available annals and manuscripts that contain the “Deirdre Legend”, both in the early medieval or late medieval version. The work deals with the comparison of the legend to the three different works of Irish literature: a poem by Samuel Ferguson, a drama by John Millington Synge and a novel by James Stephens. The research is focused on analysis of subject, genre and factual changes which distinguish these three works from the original version of the legend.

Anotace

Náplní této bakalářské práce bude průzkum dostupných pramenů a manuskriptů, které obsahují „Legendu o Deirdre“, ať už v její raně středověké nebo pozdně středověké podobě. Práce se soustředí na porovnání této legendy s třemi žánrově odlišnými díly irské literatury: s básní od Samuela Fergusona, dramatem Johna Millingtona Synge a románem Jamese Stephense. Výzkum se bude zabývat porovnáním obsahových, žánrových a věcných změn, kterými se odlišují tato tři díla od původní verze legendy.

Contents

Preface	6
I. Introduction	7
1. 1. The Definition of Mythology and Modern Mythological Approaches	7
1. 2. The Importance of Myths and their Impact	9
1. 3. Basic Sources of Irish Myths	10
1. 4. The Impact of Mythological Inheritance	11
1. 5. The Fame of Deirdre Legend	12
II. The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu – Longes mac n-Uislenn	13
2. 1. Manuscripts	13
2. 1. 1. Earlier Version	13
2. 1. 2. Later Version	14
2. 2. Available Texts	15
2. 3. The Issue of the Title and Names	16
3. 1. Story and Plot	16
3. 1. 1. Story in the Early Version	16
3. 1. 2. Story in the Later Version	20
4. 1. Text Structure	21
III. Deirdre's Lament for the Sons of Usnach	23
IV. Deirdre of the Sorrow	28
V. Deirdre	34
VI. Conclusion	38
VII. Summary	40
VIII. Bibliography	42
8. 1. Primary Literature	42
8. 2. Secondary Literature	42
8. 3. Internet Sources	43

Preface

Few books influence our lives, though we remember the feeling we had when reading them and the message they passed on us. I discovered the fantasy genre with the masterpieces of Tolkien, and from his work it was just a step to the fascinating world of myths and legends. By means of symbols, the myths are inexhaustible source of imagination. They possess the possibility of grasping the ideas and mentality of the people in the respective times. They reveal their way of seeing the world and partially uncover everyday reality. Many authors of fantasy literature gained ideas from national myths and legends, much like the writers whose works are under study in this bachelor thesis.

I. Introduction

1. 1 The Definition of Mythology and Modern Mythological Approaches

What did these Irish authors draw to use the theme of the Deirdre legend? What attract us to the old stories of our ancient past? The answer is not easy.

We have to define what we are looking for, because with more points of view we can investigate these myths and mythology. We can for example look at the symbolic meaning. Symbols can lead us to the question of the psychological impact, either conscious or uncounscious. In the light of a psychological approach, myths might appear to be a sytem of moral patterns. Likewise myths have origins in the oral tradion, thus have an impact on the specification as the literary genre. Another large area for the discussion is possibility of occurence of historical facts and the description of real rituals. Mythology is a science dealing with the study of myths, in subsequent meaning this word is also used as a term for the system of myths. Literally it means "to tell a story" (cf. Puhvel 1997). Myth is a symbolic story expressing the faith in fullness and wholeness of a timeless order. In a literary sense, myth means fabulous, traditional, usually in the form of an epic work, which gives answers without seeking the questions.

(cf. Mocná, Peterka 2004) Does this mean that we should see the myth as a mere allegory?

The scholarly way of accepting and understanding myths and mythology has developed over centuries. Nowadays several scholarly approaches can be employed. After a long period, when a Catholic doctrine of creation did not allow for doubt and suppressed the existence of other creation myths, at the beginning of the 19th century,

a new school called a comparative mythology developed. This new school was inseparably bound with comparative linguistics. At the beginning of 20th the two different approaches became dominant: myth-ritual theory and psychoanalysis. (cf. Puhvel 1997) A search for universally-usable archetypes is also typical for the sociological and structuralist approach.

The myth-ritual theory was propounded by James Frazer and Jane E. An anthropologist and ethnologist, Frazer was influenced by positivism. He concentrated his research on religion, mythology, rituals and magic. According to Frazer, magic was a predecessor of religion and science. Jane Harrison was a founder of modern studies in Greek mythology. Her revolutionary notion is founded on a very simple definition: "the myth is nothing else than the verbalization of a ritual."¹ The myth and a ritual are different sides of the same coin. Without ritual, myth cannot exist, even though over the time a ritual might vanish while only the myth survived. (cf. Puhvel 1997)

The school of psychoanalysis approach is also concerned with archetypes. On the other hand, psychoanalytic theory claims that myths are neither historical events nor rituals, but substances from the area of imagination. As the essence of our ego, they tell us about the indestructible principles that we should know. Myths maintain these narrations and their images are the messages coming to conscious mind from the depths of our unconscious inner ego. (cf. Campbell 1998)

Jungion theory sets out that the myth exists to connect us with these areas of psyche. The mythological images and symbols help to revive inner strength and wisdom. They help us to deal with deep horizons of

¹ PUHVEL, J. *Srovnávací mythologie*. Přel. Václav Pelíšek. Praha : Lidové noviny, 1997. ISBN 80-7106-177-8. s. 28.

the inner ego. (cf. Campbell 1998) This Jungism branch of the psychoanalytic movement is characterized by an original approach to mysticism and occultism. (cf. Puhvel 1997) One of the main representative of the psychoanalytic movement is Joseph Campbell. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1948) is considered to be his most distinguished work.

1. 2. The Importance of Myths and their Impact

As a literary genre, myth also has a specific character. It is distinguished by a rather pessimistic mood and the ending is mostly tragic. An interesting comparison is provided by Bruno Bettelheim who compared the character of myth with the character of a fairy tale. If we look closer, these two genres have much in common.

Although the same exemplary figures and situations are found in both and equally miraculous events occur in both, there is a crucial difference in the way these are communicated. Put simply, the dominant feeling a myth conveys is: this is absolutely unique; it could not have happened to any other person, or in any other setting; such events are grandiose, awe-inspiring, and could not possibly happen to an ordinary mortal like you or me.²

Beside the scholarly approach to mythology, some scholars think that mythology cannot be viewed in light of science. They are represented by numerous groups of laymen and supporters of Celtic past and Celtic heritage. They draw inspiration from Celtic legends, fairy tales and philosophy. Some of them seek ideas in original manuscripts just like scholars. Even a few directly live according to the pre-Cristian Celtic tradition with nature and apply magic ritual and they try to understand the theory of pervading worlds. This practical approach and an

² BETTELHEIM, B. *The Uses of Enchantment. The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tale*. New York : Random House, 1976. ISBN 0-679-72393-5. s. 37.

application of rituals move their lives closer to the Celtic philosophy. These laymen bring experiences of penetration in the essence of myths undergone on own skin. Laymen question whether comparative mythology has the right to use scientific methods on something as unscientific as myths are. Scholars of this discipline examine mythology from the outside, rather as the objects of research than the living rituals that can be brought in practice. However, both of these approaches should be considered as equal, because both bring contributions in different areas.

1. 3. Basic Sources of Irish Myths

The basis sources to Irish mythology were spread through the various medieval and early medieval manuscripts. Many of these manuscripts were copied in late 15th century from earlier entries. Different versions of the same legend appeared as a consequence, as they were copied in a different period and by different authors in different language translations and dialects of Irish. The most important part of Irish mythology can be found mainly in *The Book of Invasions* (originally in Irish as *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*), *The Battle of Magh Tuireadh* (*Cath Maige Tuired*) and also in *Dindsenchas*. The most important source for my research is *The Annals of Ulster* (*Annála Uladh*). These annals contain entries from the years between AD 431 to AD 1540. It is probable that the entries up to AD 1489 were copied in the late 15th century by Ruaidhrí Ó Luinín and later entries were added by others. *The Book of Leinster* (*Lebar na Núachongbála* in Irish) can be integrated among *The Annals of Ulster*. In this book there can be found a version of *The Legend of Deirdre* (*Longes mac n-Uislenn*).³

³ JONES, Mary. The Celtic Literature Collective: Irish Texts [online]. c 2011, last revision 11th January 2011[cit. 2011-11-01]. <http://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/index_irish.html>.

1. 4. The Impact of Mythological Inheritance

A lot of nations possess great legends to add to the lustre to their origin which they relate to the heroes and gods. By this way they let their own real existence blend into the supernatural world. The Irish are not the exception. In fact the existence of mythology corresponds to the beginning of the existence of mankind.

The Celts on the British Isles and especially those on the Irish Isles remained relatively untouched by the influences of other cultures much longer than their European relatives. Thank to this fact, the British and Irish Celts preserved their traditions for a longer time.⁴

With trust we can listen to the legends of the Irish and to what they tell us about the world of Celts. "The basic condition of myth's creation is mythological thinking, some nations, e. g. the Romans, understand their myths historically while the Irish understand their history mythologically."⁵ With the mythological archetypes the stories unfold both in a symbolic and cultural way. The narration is always halfway in the supernatural world. The frequent presence of gods in the form of animals or superhumans is in no way extraordinary. Perhaps more than other nations, the Celts looked up at the supernatural world which was the source of wisdom and the place where gods dwelled. A close study of the Irish legend indicates that the idea of the supernatural world lies near the borders of the phenomenal world. People in the legends considered themselves to be present in all the spheres of this obvious world and the supernatural and found it easy to travel within them. The supernatural world is not something "above or outside" the real world, but it is rather a part of every form of being. If we accept this theory, legends and myths will have then several layers, operating on the

⁴ MATHEWS, C. *Keltské duchovní tradice*. Přel. Milan Hencl, Ivar Tichý. Praha : Alternativa, 1996. ISBN 80-85993-13-9. s. 7.

⁵ Tamtéž, s. 12.

conscious as well as on the uncounscious level. From the psychological point of view, myths bear of deep meaning and they play important role in our lives. For many civilizations, the interpretation of mythological symbols represents the cornerstone of morals, cohesiveness and creative energy.

1. 5. The Fame of Deirdre Legend

The Legend of Deirdre is undoubtedly a strong story with many layers. This legend was one of the most popular stories in the oral tradition in both Ireland and Scotland.

Within the Ulster Cycle Deirdre is not simply tragic and beautiful but is also a catalyst, an occasion of misfortune, bringing vengeance and misfortune on the nobility and warriors of the province.⁶

The many adaptations and retellings of Deirdre's story have made her the best-known character from Celtic mythology in the world, e. g. A. de Vere, *Sons of Usnach* (1882); W. Sharp, *House of Usna* (1900); H. Trench, *Deirdre Wedded* (1901); Lady Gregory, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902); George Russell, *Deirdre* (1906); John Coulter, *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1944).

⁶ Deirdre Facts, information, pictures | Encyclopedia.com articles about Deirdre [online]. c 2011, last revision 11th January [cit. 2011-11-01]. <<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Deirdre.aspx>>.

II. The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu – Longes mac n-Uislenn

2. Manuscripts

2. 1. 1. Earlier Versions

The legend of Deidre has several variations, though the thief division among them can be placed between early version and later versions. The early version of this legend is found in three manuscripts. The first two are in the possession of Trinity College in Dublin and the third one is a part of the collections of the British Museum. The oldest of these manuscript is *The Book of Leinster (Leabhar Laighneach or Lebor Laighech*, formerly also known as *Lebor na Nuachongbála*) which is dated about 1160 A.D. The story lacks a title, but the colophon reads: *Longas mac Usnig in-sin longas Fergus aided mac n-Uisnig Drerdrend*, which means: “That (is) the exile of the Sons of Usnech and the exile of Fergus and the violent death of the Sons of Uisnech and of Derdriu”. The second manuscript, where the Deirdre legend is found, is *The Yellow Book of Lecan (Leabhar Buidhe Leacain)*, this manuscript was probably compiled at the very end of the fourteenth century. Luckily the story is entitled with *Longes Mac N-Uislenn longes Fergus aided Derdrinne*, which translates as: “The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu and the exile of Fergus and the violent death of Derdriu”. This copy contains numerous erasures, corrections and also marks of division between words. The youngest manuscript that holds the earlier version of the legend is designated Egerton 1782, and is preserved in the British Museum. It was written approximately in 1517 A.D. The story of Deirdre also lacks title in this manuscript, but the colophon reads: *Luingius Mac N-Uislenn ann-sin fochunn luingsi Ferguso aged Derdrinne*, that is: “That (is) the exile of the Sons of Uisliu and the cause of the exile of Fergus and the violent death of Derdriu”. Of the two transcripts of the story of Deirdre from this manuscript, the first one was made by Aodh

Ó'Dálaigh in 1746 A.D., it is in the possession of Trinity College in Dublin. The second one is designated *G 138* (also formerly *17089*) and is a part of the Phillipps Collection of Irish Manuscripts and now is held in the National Library of Ireland. The author of the transcript is unknown but it was compiled at the end of the eighteenth century.

2. 1. 2. Later Versions

Later versions of the Deirdre legend exist in numerous variants (approximately fifteen) and are more extended in the text and some of them radically changed the story. The text mostly provides a larger space for the utterances of characters. It overflows with synonyms and lacks the emotional restraint. Also the ending of the story employs most of the variations. The range of time differs from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth century. The most frequent names of the story are *Oided Mac N-Uisnig* or *Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach*, or: "The Violent Death of the Sons (or Children) of Uisneach".

The list of the later versions:

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh — Adv. Libr. 53, pp. ... [15th C.]

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh — Adv. Libr. 48, pp. ... [16th C.]

Keating, FFE, pp. [1629]

British Museum — Sloane 3154 [1715]

Andrew Mac Curtin, [1740]

Royal Irish Academy, Dublin — 23 A 32, pp. 109-122 [1758]

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh — Adv. Libr. 56, pp. ... [18th C.]

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh — Adv. Libr. 62, pp. ... [18th C.] (poem)

Royal Irish Academy, Dublin — 23 D 15, pp. 67-98 [18th C.]

Royal Irish Academy, Dublin — 23 B 22, pp. 184-209 [1824] *BÁS DEIRDREN*

Royal Irish Academy, Dublin — 23 K 45, pp. 6-28 [19th C.]

Royal Irish Academy, Dublin — Stowe 867, f. 186a [19th C.]⁷

⁷ Scéla – catalogue [online]. c1998, last revision 25th of April 1999 [cit. 2012-04-24]. <<http://www.volny.cz/enelen/sc-index.htm>>.

2. 2. Available texts

I have at my disposal various English texts of “The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu”. They differ in the original texts from which they were translated. I consider the best edition to be *Longes Mac N-Uislenn*⁸ edited by Vernam Hull. This edition contains the original Irish text of the Deirdre legend with all the variations of all the three earlier versions (*Book of Leinster*, *Yellow Book of Lecan* and *Egerton 1782*). It also contains an appropriate English translation. The next text taken into consideration is *The Story of Deidre* in *A Celtic Miscellani*. This text proved to be the shortened version of the English translation that appears in Hull’s edition. The third text worked with in this thesis is translated by Thomas Kinsella. It consists of the two poems of Deirdriu which are a part of the Exile of the Sons of Uisliu. The original Irish text is found in the prose epic *The Great Cattle-Raid (Táin Bó Cúailnge)* that is located in the *Book of Leinster*.

The change of the character of the text and story of the two later versions will be briefly demonstrated, though they will not be compared to the three analysed works, because of the large extent it would require. One of the later version of Deirdre legend appears in the Keating manuscript⁹ that is dated 1629. Geoffrey Keating (his Irish name was Seathrún Céitinn) was an Irish Roman Catholic priest born in County Tipperary, Ireland. He was also a poet and a historian. Keating’s major work *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (usually translated as *History of Ireland*) contains the “history” of Ireland from the creation of the world to the invasion of the Normans in the 12th century and is based on the native historical traditions, historical poetry, annals and ecclesiastical records. The text is written in early modern Irish. A text

⁸ HULL, V. (ed.). *Longes mac n-Uislenn. The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*. New York/London : The Modern Language Association of America, 1949.

⁹ translated by David Comyn and Patrick S. Dinneen

one century older (dated 1740) was written by Andrew Mac Curtin of Corcomroe, who was a learned Irish scholar and a bard to O'Briens of Thomond.¹⁰

2. 3. The Issue of the Title and Names

As mentioned, only the story of Deirdre is entitled in *Yellow Book of Lecan*, other texts are recognized mainly thank to the colophons that tell what story will follow. Also the ortography of the names of the main heroes differs, though the root words remain the same. There can be found several forms of the word Uislenn in the titles and colophons, e. g. Uislinn, Usnig, Uislinne also Usnech or Uisneach. Such a wide range of forms is believed to be the outcome of transcription mistakes or nonuniform transcription standards. The name of the main heroine takes forms of Derdriu, Deirdriu and Deirdre. The first two form appears rather in earlier version, while the last form Deirdre is more modern and is used nowadays in modern Irish. The king's name ranges from Conchobor, Conchobhar, Conchubhar to the shortened form Conor. Deirdre's lover is called Noisiu in earlier version, in some case the form Naisi can be found, while the later version follows the form Naoise. In spite of missing titles and difference in names, this legend can be traced in various manuscripts according to the main plot of the story.

3. 1. Story and Plot

3. 1. 1. Story in the Early Version

All the three texts in fact correspond to each other, however, they vary in extent, a part of the legend they embrace and prosaic form they use. If the pieces of the puzzle are put together, the story will unfold as follows.

¹⁰ O'Briens were an old royal and noble dynasty of Ireland. Their house was founded in the 10th century by Brian Boru. The dynasty lost its sovereignty under Henry VIII becoming instead the Earls of Thomond.

During a merry feast in the house of Feidlimid mac Daill, who is said to be a story-teller of Conchobor, a strange event happens. The wife of Feidlimid is pregnant and she takes part in the feast. Suddenly when passing across the middle of the house the baby in her womb produces a terrifying scream that can be heard by all the men participating in the assembly. Everyone is aroused and terrified. There is a search for the source of the noise. The pregnant woman is brought to the present druid called Cathbad so that he would explain the meaning of baby's shout. Cathbad soothsays a birth of a very beautiful woman:

...of yellow hair with yellow curls,
With comely, grey-blue irised eyes.
Her Purplish-pink cheeks are like foxglove;
To the color of snow I compare
The spotless treasure of her set of teeth.¹¹

Then the druid puts his hand on the woman's belly and confirms that the baby is a girl and gives her a name Derdriu. Cathbad also predicts unfortunate events that will take place in Ireland because of Deirdre. "A woman for whom there will be many slaughters. Among the chariot-fighters of Ulster."¹²

He even foretells the death of Fiachna mac Conchobair, who is a son of the king Conchobor. Furthermore, there is a stanza in the poem that proclaims the future fame of the legend.

You will perform a horrible, fierce deed
For anger against the king of the noble Ulstermen.
Your little grave will be everywhere.
It will be a famous tale, O Derdriu.¹³

¹¹ HULL, V. (ed.). *Longes mac n-Uislenn. The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*. New York/London : The Modern Language Association of America, 1949. s. 61.

¹² Tamtéž, s. 61.

All of the present warriors want the girl to be murdered, but the king Conchobor bans it and decides to have Deirdre brought up in seclusion, at least until the time she can become his wife. Deirdre grows up into the most beautiful woman in Ireland. One wintry day she is watching her foster father skinning a calf that shall be prepared for dinner. A raven lands on the snow to drink the blood of the calf and Deirdre says to Leborcham:

Beloved would be the man on whom might be yonder
three colors – that is, hair like the raven, and a cheek
like blood, and a body like snow.¹⁴

Leborcham tells her that the man she wants is not far away and his name is Noisiu, a son of Uisliu. Deirdre feels restless and is determined to find Noisiu. Noisiu is described as brave, skilful in fighting and a handsome man. He possesses all the good virtues of that age, also additionally a beautiful voice. One day Deirdre steals out to him as if to go past him. At first Noisiu does not recognise her and compliments her about her beauty. In fact he compares Deirdre to a young heifer. Then he realises who she is, and that she belongs to the king Conchobor. However, Deirdre says she would choose Noisiu if she could choose between he and Conchobor. Noisiu fears of the Cathbad's prophecy and rejects Deirdre's proposal.

This enrages her so she leaps at him and grasps both
his ears. "These are two ears of shame and of
derision," she said, "unless you take me away with
you."¹⁵

¹³ HULL, V. (ed.). *Longes mac n-Uislenn. The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*. New York/London : The Modern Language Association of America, 1949. s. 62.

¹⁴ Tamtéž, s. 62.

¹⁵ Tamtéž, s. 63.

Noisiu is angry and humiliated, tells his brothers what has happened to him and all three agree that they must leave Ireland and take Deirdre with them, because by no means should Noisiu live here under such disgrace. Noisiu, Arddan, Aindle, Deirdre, one hundred and fifty warriors, women, dogs and servants set out on journey to Alba. At the beginning, they hunt for a living, but when hunting is not enough for them to survive, they assume a mecenary service with the king of Scotland. Once a king's servant catches sight of Deirdre sleeping next to Noisiu, he immediately goes back to the king and tells him about Deirdre's astonishing beauty. The king of Scotland wants Deirdre for himself and when all the beseeching fails, he decides to kill Noisiu and all his people. Deirdre persuades Noisiu to leave to an unknown Irish island in the sea. Meanwhile the Ulstermen are sad about the destiny of the Sons of Uisliu and they beg Conchobor to allow them to return to Ireland. Conchobor agrees and as sureties sends Fergus, Dubthach and Cormac mac Conchobuir. Noisiu, Deirdre and all their people return to Ireland, but after their arrival, Fergus has to stay for the feast, therefore they continue to Emain. In Emain Noisiu and his brothers are killed. Noisiu himself is killed by Eogan mac Durthacht by a spear. The son of Fergus tried to save him and places himself between Eogan and Noisiu, but the spear goes deeply through him and Noisiu is dead. In handcuffs, Deirdre is brought in front of Conchobor.

A mass murdering takes place. Fergus kills a son and a daughter of Conchobor. Thereafter sixteen years of fighting follow.

Deirdre is living for a year with Conchobor, she is only a mere shadow of the woman she used to be and she neither smiles, nor laughs. One day Conchobor asks her:

“What do you see that you hate most?”

“You, to be sure,” she said, “and Eogan mac Durthacht!”

“You shall be, indeed, a year with Eogan,” said Conchobor.¹⁶

She is sent to Eogan. The following day it happens that Deirdre is in the charriot, Eogan is in front of her and Conchobor behind her.

She has promised that she would not see her two companions on earth on the same occasion. “Well, O Derdriu,” said Conchobor, “it is a sheep’s eye between two rams that you make between me and Eogan.”¹⁷

Hearing these words Deirdre leaps from the chariot and dashes her head against the stone and is dead.

3. 1. 2. Story in the Later Version

In Andrew Mc Curtin manuscript the story is lengthened the original legend, the main plot is held, but a lot of various elements are employed. The change of the style is apparent right from the beginning. The story of Deirdre’s birth and Catbath’s prophecy is briefly summarized as if for the reader it would be well known and as if there would be no need to give details. A romance is employed in the relation between Deirdre and Noisiu, when according to the text the reader learns about Deirdre’s “great affection” for Noisiu and her direct plea to Noisiu for taking her away from Conchobor.

The main storyline begins after this short introduction. Conchobor clearly states his intention to murder Noisiu and his brother, which is not present in the ealier texts; and looks for a man to perform this deed. A hint of Conchobor’s jealousy and a fear stemming from his political

¹⁶ HULL, V. (ed.). *Longes mac n-Uislenn. The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*. New York/London : The Modern Language Association of America, 1949. s. 69.

¹⁷ Tamtéž, s. 69.

status can emanate from the text, because Noisiu is presented as an holder of a half of Alba. A major change is introduced in the role of Deirdre and Noisiu. Whereas in older texts their role is rather passive, in the Mac Curtin manuscript Deirdre has several visions about their future and recites them in verses. She also plays a role as Noisiu's companion and advisor. Noisiu is given a part as well in the form of poems.

The author mainly concentrates on the description of tough a battle that flares up between Conchobor's followers and people of Noisiu. The reader learns about heroic deeds, an amount of killed enemies and tough fights among main heroes. In the end, Noisiu is not killed in an act of treachery, but with a help of druid's magic. He is executed together with his two brothers by one stroke of sword. After the battle, even a mythical hero Cuchulainn appears. Deirdre recites her final lamentation over Noisiu's death and dies immediately in his grave.

The Keating manuscript does not digress so much from the original storyline as the previous one. However it also employs the motif of Deirdre's deep love to Noisiu. The text is brief and the story fast moving. The author seems to have an intention to emphasize family relations and the fame of Ferghus' dynasty by narrating about a birth of his three heroic sons. The end contains an original form of Deirdre's death.

4. 1. Text Structure

The medieval Irish legends and tales are usually composed of the three elements, it is prose, rhetoric, and poetry. In the analysed, texts the prose is the main element, rhetoric can be found in e.g. Hull's version and a text translated by Thomas Kinsella contains only poetry. Of these

three means of expression, the prose is obviously the oldest. It is the most natural way of narration. At first the prose is brief, unadorned and often only a summary or outline of the basis. Later on it gains more adornments, affected and ornate expressions. (cf. Hull 1949) This difference can be clearly seen when compared the Deirdre's story in Hull and the Deirdre's story in Andrew Mac Curtin's manuscript.

Irish tales also use rhetoric. Its occurrence is usually marked in the margins of the manuscripts by the letter "r". It is not possible to give an exact definition of Irish rhetoric, but mostly it was used at the beginnings to make prophetic statements and it often consists of obscure words or common words in unusual senses. (cf. Hull 1949)

The last element of the text is a poetry. Unfortunately the Irish poetry by the English translation loses a lot of the melodic figures, alliteration and in some cases hidden or multiple meanings.

III. Deirdre's Lament for the Sons of Usnach

There is nothing more vivid than poetry. It can be active and diverse; that is possibly a reason why Ferguson chose verses to express his patriotism and preoccupation with Irish mythology – both pagan and Christian.

Sir Samuel Ferguson is considered to be one of the greatest Irish poets of the 19th century and unquestionably influenced the literary history of Ireland. He belongs among the forerunners of the Irish Literary Revival. His rich literary life was entirely dedicated to Irish national heritage.

Ferguson's *Deirdre's Lament for the Sons of Usnach* is short, but very demonstrative. Its text is included below for easier clarity and because of my intention to refer to particular stanzas in my analysis.

Deirdre's Lament for the Sons of Usnach (From the Irish)

The lions of the hill are gone,
And I am left alone – alone –
Dig the grave both wide and deep,
For I am sick, and fain would sleep!

The falcons of the wood are flown,
And I am left alone – alone-
Dig the grave both deep and wide,
And let us slumber side by side.

The dragons of the rock are sleeping,
Sleep that wakes not for our weeping:
Dig the grave and make it ready;
Lay me on my true Love's body.

Lay their spears and bucklers bright
By the warriors' sides aright;

Many a day the Three before me
On their linked bucklers bore me.

Lay upon the low grave floor,
'Neath each head, the blue claymore;
Many a time the noble Three
Redden'd those blue blades for me.

Lay the collars, as is meet,
Of their greyhounds at their feet;
Many a time for me have they
Brought the tall red deer to bay.

Oh! to hear my true Love singing,
Sweet as sound of trumpets ringing:
Like the sway of ocean swelling
Roll'd his deep voice round our dwelling.

Oh! to hear the echoes pealing
Round our green and fairy sheeling,
When the Three, with soaring chorus,
Pass'd the silent skylark o'er us.

Echo now, sleep, morn an even-
Lark alone enchant the heaven!-
Ardan's lips are scant of breath,-
Neesa's tongue is cold in death.

Stag, exult on glen and mountain-
Salmon, leap from loch to fountain-
Heron, in the free air warm ye-
Usanach's Sons no more will harm ye!

Erin's stay no more you are,
Rulers of the ridge of war;
Never more 'twill be you fate
To keep the beam of battle straight.

Woe is me by fraud and wrong-
Traitors false and tyrants strong-
Fell Clan Usnach, bought and sold,
For Barach's feast and Conor's gold!

Woe to Eman, roof and wall!-
Woe to Red Branch, hearth and hall!-
Tenfold woe and black dishonour
To the false and foul Clan Conor!

Dig the grave both wide and deep,
Sick I am, and fain would sleep!
Dig the grave and make it ready,
Lay me on my true Love's body.

Ferguson concentrated only on the part of the legend where Deirdre is lamenting over the death of her beloved Noisiu and his two brothers. He did not need the whole extent of the story to express its strength. The poem succeeds in making a powerful impression simply by a return of ancient saga's style of narration, repetition of key verses and the employment of typical symbols of pagan poetry, such as the ocean, dragon, spear, falcon and claymore.

In the first stanza of the second verse, Deirdre expresses desperation over her destiny, by twice repeating word "alone" as the author would want to emphasize she is left at the mercy of fate. Also by the repetition of the word it is reached the echo that resounds over the poem. In the connection with the first line, where the word "lions" may substitute the word "kings" or "heroes", both verses may have additional meanings, as not only Deirdre, but also the whole Ireland, would be forsaken, without good kings and brave heroes. This meaning becomes clearer in the eleventh stanza, where a term "Erin" is used, which is an ancient name for Ireland. From this perspective there could also be sensed the air of a forthcoming wave of Irish nationalism.

The second stanza is an alternation of the first one. Third line is the same as the third line of the first stanza, but by reversal of the words "wide and deep", it gains a more terrifying touch. "Deep" implicates

death, sleep or oblivion and “wide” as the word may express the magnitude of sorrow which is so enormous that the grave needs to be very “wide”.

Though Deirdre’s legend lacks a reference to the funeral of the Sons of Uisliu, Ferguson mentions their grave several times. In the fourth and sixth stanza the pagan tradition of burying with parts of weaponry or favourite subjects takes place.

The tenth stanza celebrates three brothers as skilful and feared hunters. This motif is in concordance with the original legend where the brothers are described carrying hunting game.

The twelfth and thirteenth stanza introduces a diversion in a way of Deirdre’s curses addressed to Conor (Conchobor). Conor’s clan and Conor himself are called “false” and “foul”. Furthermore the third verse of thirteenth stanza reads: “Tenfold woe and black dishonour” which expresses strong hatred. The only reproach or accusation that Deirdre makes in Hull’s text is:

Fair Fergus has committed trespass against us
By bringing us over the great sea.
He has sold his honor for ale.
His great deeds have declined.¹⁸

In the last fourteenth stanza with the second line, a word order is changed and the word “sick” is placed at the first position. Furthermore, all the most important verses are repeated there to intensify the atmosphere of this poem.

¹⁸ HULL, V. (ed.). *Longes mac n-Uislenn. The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*. New York/London : The Modern Language Association of America, 1949. s. 69.

Original part of Deirdre's lamentation mentions all the Sons of Uisliu, but Noisiu is the one to whom is paid the greatest attention. Ferguson mentions Noisiu's name only once (in the ninth stanza), whereby it takes the form of Neesa. The author may have intended to highlight that the brothers were exactly three. As the word "Three" is written always with a capital letter, it could indicate the Holy Trinity. It would be the element completely absent from the original legend.

From the whole poem it is apparent that Deirdre is dying from grief, so she is prepared to die and sees relief in death, whereas in the original version her coldness and inanimateness is present throughout the text, whereby her death may be interpreted as a result of an impulsive act.

To sum up, both genre texts celebrate the Sons of Uisliu as great heroes of Ireland, but in Ferguson's verses they are personified by powerful and noble creatures such as dragons, lions and falcons. Without any doubt *Deirdre's Lament for the Sons of Usnach* appears more abstract, very emotive, with the intention to communicate a feeling of deep hardship and the atmosphere of sorrow. At a closed look, the original legend gives the reader the sensation of awe over the greatness of wonderful weapons, heroism of the warriors and their noble appearance.

IV. Deirdre of the Sorrows

In the late 19th and early 20th century a formation of the literary movement was related to a rising interest in Ireland's Gaelic heritage and folklore. Also the middle of the 19th century is connected with the growth of Irish nationalism. John Millington Synge, one of the key figures of the Irish Literary Revival (also called the Irish Literary Renaissance or Celtic Twilight), engaged in the literary life of his age by writing poems, plays and collecting tales of Irish folklore. In 1904 Synge helped to found the Abbey Theatre (in Irish *Amharclann na Mainistreach*), which is also known as National Theatre of Ireland (in Irish *Amharclann Náisiúnta na hÉireann*). A lot of his plays were performed in this theatre for the first time.

Deirdre of the Sorrows is Synge's last play containing three acts. The work was finished by William Butler Yeats and Molly Allgood, because the author died before he could complete it. The premiere took place at the Abbey Theatre in 1910.

The drama introduces all the important characters mentioned in the original text of the legend. Two new characters are presented in the roles of "Owen", Conchobor's attendant and spy, and an "Old Woman" who occupies a role of Lavarcham's servant, but these two minor characters do not interfere with the play extensively. More important is a transformation of the main heroes. The Deirdre's and Noisiu's (Naisi in the play) characters are the most completely drawn. Synge introduces two human beings that struggle with an unfortunate fate facing all human doubts and fears, though a certain stylization remains.

Synge chose three key moments from Deirdre's legend upon which he built up the play. Each of the three events corresponds with one act.

The first act takes place in Lavarcham's house on Slieve Fuadh, where Deirdre lives in isolation. The story begins with the arrival of Conchobor, who refuses to wait more years and plans to take Deirdre with him on the second day to Emain, where he intends to make her his wife and the queen of Ulster. The birth of Deirdre and the unfortunate prophecy is not described in the play. Only through the dialogues can the reader or the audience learn the content of the prophecy. However, Synge definitely assumed the audience possessed knowledge of the original legend. The first deviation from the original can be seen in the description of king Conchobor (in the text Conchubor), who is depicted as an old man with "an age coming to him". It is far too clear that Deirdre will not wish to marry such a man.

The play is based rather on dialogues, frequently only among four eyes, and a quick action and fight takes place in the third act. Deirdre's character develops mainly through the utterances she pronounces. At first she is drawn as a stubborn woman with little interest in the events happening outside of her hillside world. The audience see a woman that wishes to live happily in the countryside of her childhood. The situation changes at the moment of her danger of being deported to Emain and becoming Conchobor's wife. Suddenly, with the entrance of Noisiu to the scene Deirdre transforms in a strong, determined woman with royal behaviour who intends to decide about her own destiny. Where in Hull's version one act is done whereby just one sentence is said:

Therewith she made a leap to him and grasped both ears on his head.
"These are two ears of shame and of derision," she said, "unless you take me with you."¹⁹

¹⁹ HULL, V. (ed.). *Longes mac n-Uislenn. The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*. New York/London : The Modern Language Association of America, 1949. s. 63.

in Synge's drama a sequence of utterances and acts follow. Deirdre proves to be absolutely ignorant of the foretold events. She intentionally seduces Noisiu with a beautifully decorated dress, jewels and appearance. The whole room is decorated with marvelous mats, hangings and silver skillets at her command. Such a planned and intentional seduction was never a part of the original legend. Deirdre and Noisiu (Naisi) are left alone on the scene. Noisiu, though amazed and enamoured, is aware of the grave situation before him. He is aware of the bloody fight that would come with Deirdre's departure with him. For this reason, Deirdre decides to focus on Noisiu's youth, pride and ego:

...for it's a sweet life you and I could have, Naisi. ...It should be a sweet thing to have what is best and richest, if it's for a short space only. Isn't it a small thing is foretold about the ruin of ourselves, Naisi, when all men have age coming ruin in the end?²⁰

When Noisiu finally decides to take her with him to an unknown environment and towards an uncertain future, Deirdre loses partially her determination and regrets to be forced to leave a beloved home. At the end of the act one, Deirdre even goes so far to lay the blame for any possible future tragic events to Conchobor. Before the curtain falls, Ainnle (Noisiu's brother) holds an improvised wedding and marries Noisiu to Deirdre whereas in the original legend's text there is no wedding scene for Deirdre and Noisiu.

Synge brilliantly opens the story with a dialogue of the main heroes expressing their attitudes, fears and doubts. He also adds a precise amount of romance into a relationship between Deirdre and Noisiu to arouse a larger interest. Meanwhile, the legend lacks any relationship

²⁰ SYNGE, J. M., *Plays*. Deirdre of the Sorrows. Leipzig : Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1922. s. 239.

status of the main couple in the beginning part. The audience attentively observe what will follow.

The second act introduces the most extensive changes to the original story. It takes place in "Alban" (Scotland) early in the morning in the beginning of winter. The scene is set outside the tent of Deirdre and Noisiu.

In the original legend, the lovers flee to Scotland with a large amount of followers, then engage in the service of the Scottish king and in the end escape to an unspecified island near Ireland's coast. In fact, in the second act the close dialogues between Fergus and Noisiu, Deirdre and Lavarcham, and between Deirdre and Noisiu deals with whether the lovers should accept Fergus' proposal to return back to Ireland or not. In the Hull's text only one sentence appears on the theme: "They went and gave them accompaniment from the sea."²¹

Also the audience learns about their seven-year life full of hardship that is described among the lines of the dialogues. The dialogues in the second act develop the motifs that appeared in the end of the first act. By this means, some kind of continuity is provided. At first Deirdre and Noisiu are determined to stay in Scotland together and get old there. Even though a shining moments of happiness blink through the reality of misery, the reader can clearly sense an everyday fight for survival. The strongest moment of the act arrives when Deirdre overhears conversation between Noisiu and Fergus. Noisiu says: "...that I've a dread upon me a day'd come I'd weary of her voice, and Deirdre'd see I'd wearied."²²

²¹ HULL, V. (ed.). *Longes mac n-Uislenn. The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*. New York/London : The Modern Language Association of America, 1949. s. 65.

²² SYNGE, J. M., *Plays. Deirdre of the Sorrows*. Leipzig : Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1922. s. 251.

A social aspect, a desire for a quiet and secured old age clearly rise from the text, together with a homesickness and a longing for a return of lawful place of kings that belongs to the Sons of Uisliu. At the end of the act it is again Deirdre who has the last word and decides to return to Ireland. In comparison with the original legend, Noisiu's character is more developed in Synge's play. While in Hull's text Noisiu pronounces barely five sentences, in *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, his character is given space to perform a man that is cheerful, light-hearted and carefree (in the first act), though brave. He matures in the second act and becomes more responsible and realistic. However his character still remains under the tow of Deirdre's decisions, who of course ranks higher than him on the social scale.

The ending prefigures the unavoidable events. Deirdre's final utterance shows conciliation with death.

It's seven years we've had a life was joy only, and this
day we're going west, this day we're facing death,
maybe, and death should be a poor, untidy thing,
though it's a queen that dies.²³

The last act is set in Ireland, specifically below Emain in front of a tent with shabby skins and benches. Unlike the second act, which was rather conversational and gloomy, the third act brings action, fight and thrill. That is common for both story endings, Synge's *Deirdre of the Sorrow* and Hull's *The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*. Most of the texts of the original legend concentrate in this part on naming of the brave warriors that were killed. Sometimes even the texts become unclear in the flood of family relations and an amount of Irish names. Synge focuses a great deal of attention on the character of Conchobor, who also appears as first in the scene of the third act. If Conchobor's years

²³ SYNGE, J. M., *Plays*. Deirdre of the Sorrows. Leipzig : Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1922. s. 259.

are counted according to the clues that are given in the text, he might be a man facing his sixty. While Conchobor could possess knowledge and wisdom of old age, on the other hand his behaviour expresses an obsession with Deirdre. He is absolutely willing to sacrifice not only the lives of Noisiu and his two brothers, but also the lives of his warriors and the great splendour of Emain which is later burnt to ashes. It might not be apparent at first look, but in the Hull's text, Conchobor acts in the same way as well. The original text does not preserve much of his utterances, but what Synge's Conchobor states in words, the former Conchobor proves with acts.

Another motif that echoes throughout the third act is the presence of a freshly dug grave that can be seen by the audience. The grave successfully induces an atmosphere of terror and anticipation about upcoming terrifying events.

The end of the act is dedicated to Deirdre's and Noisiu's final exchange of words before death, which is clearly a fictional addendum from Synge. Noisiu is killed behind the scene, so the audience does not know who and how he was killed. Deirdre proclaims her desperation over Noisiu's dead body and stabs herself with a dagger that belonged to Noisiu. Conchobor leaves the scene with Lavarcham as a broken old man.

In conclusion, every act emphasizes one of the three key characters. The play does not change the Deirdre's legend radically, but most of the utterances, places and events are based on Synge's imagination. They constitute a pleasant replenishment of the original story.

V. Deirdre

The date of birth of James Stephens varies, for some sources claim he was born on the ninth of February 1880, but Stephens himself set his birthday on the second of February 1882. In spite of being of modest origin and poor education, Stephens managed to become one of the most remarkable writers of Irish literature. He made acquaintance with names such as James Joyce, George William Russell or Padraic Colum.

The novel *Deirdre* was published in 1923 and is considered to be one of Stephens' masterpieces. The novel is not so long and consists of two books. The author knew Irish mythology very well, for this novel counts among those few works that retell the entire story of Deirdre.

At the beginning of the first book, a detailed biography of Conchobor (in the book Conachúr mac Nessa) is given to the reader. However, while some facts are known about a mythological king of Ulster Conchobor from other annals, the Deirdre legend itself does not contain them. Stephens' Conchobor is depicted as a great man, good king and a hero who is speculated to have gods' blood in veins.

He knew all, he attended to all; everything he touched was bettered, and men said that until that year Ulster had never known prosperity, or peace, or justice, but only the imitation of these. Conachúr was every man's friend, and in a short time every man was his.²⁴

As the story proceeds Conchobor's character is spoilt by a treacherous and evil woman that happens to be his second wife. After her escape he becomes bitter, suspicious and treacherous. This is the moment when he meets Deirdre. Conchobor is astonished by Deirdre's beauty

²⁴ STEPHENS, J. *Deirdre*. New York : Signet Classics, 1962. s. 13.

and desires to possess her immediately. He is stopped by Lavarcham, who serving as the king's woman for conversation, advises him to hold a proper wedding. One of the most significant changes in the novel is applied to the character of Lavarcham. The Hull's text does not give this character much space, but in Stephens' novel, Lavarcham's character is transformed into a tricky woman, and such as this king's spy and a plotter that knows all the court's intrigues. It is Lavarcham that plans Conchobor's meeting with Deirdre and their wedding. The text of the novel is full of lyrical descriptions and thoughtful reflections. The language returns to the ancient symbols of Irish legends, the text lacks their austerity and brevity.

Stephens' Deirdre is also held in isolation, but she frequently manages to break from the castle without anyone noticing. One night she meets Noisiu (in the text Naoise) and falls in love with him. Although Noisiu's hair is raven-like, his cheeks like blood and a body like snow, nowhere does the raven appear drinking calf's blood on the snow as in the original legend. Deirdre, Noisiu and his two brothers flee to Scotland to prevent Deirdre's wedding with Conchobor. From this point of the story until the very end, in accordance with Andrew Mac Curtin's manuscript from the year 1740, it is more than apparent. Without any doubts Stephens read Mac Curtin's work and found there a lot of inspiration. In some parts of his novel the *Deirdre's* author even stole verses from Mac Curtin's manuscript, e. g.:

"A vision saw I last night," says Deirdre, "that is, three birds to come to us from Eamhain Macha and three sips of honey in their beaks, and they left them with us, and took three sips of our blood with them."²⁵

²⁵ MAC CURTIN, A. *The Fate of the Children of Uisneach*. Dublin : M. H. Gill and Son, Ltd., 1914. s. 56.

These sentences can be found almost without a change on the page 101. What I find surprising about the novel is a frequent usage of the words of endearment and the question of loyalty that is ascertained and expressed by a question: "Do you love me?" This query is often pronounced by Conchobor when he tests the loyalty of his court men. The king also uses expressions such as: "my heart, my sweet lad, my pulse, my pet, young puppy, my pulse and best or sweetheart". Most of these endearments are said in the moment of Conchobor's treacherous acts, however their appearance in the texts of the original Deirdre's legend, both earlier or later versions, is inconceivable.

In Scotland the four heroes lead a life of outcasts, being hunt by a Scottish king who also demands Deirdre as his wife. The first impulse to their return comes from Conchobor himself, unlike the Hull's text, where forgiveness for the four outcasts is requested by king's court men.

The journey to Ireland and from Irish coast to Emain nearly replicates the events in Mac Curtin's manuscript. On the other hand in Stephens' interpretation an opus description of the bloody battle for the fortress Red Branch follows right after the feast. An utterly mad desire to possess Deirdre Conchobor comes about and causes the war turmoil. The reader is witness of the king's madness in which he orders the burning of the great and famous fortress of Red Branch. When in Hull's version Conchobor orders "only" to kill the Sons of Uisliu, in Stephens' novel a king out of his senses subordinates everything to own desires. By this picture, Conchobor's character becomes more complex and terrifying.

In the end of the novel the three brothers are killed by Maine Rough-Hand and Eogan, son of Durthacht, after the acceptance of the defeat.

Desperate Deirdre ends her life in the same way as in the Mac Curtin's manuscript.

In conclusion, Stephens attempted to merge three genres in *Deirdre*, the myth, the novel and the lyric. According to my opinion he succeeded in his effort.

VI. Conclusion

All of the three analysed works represent a distinctive view of the old Irish Deirdre's legend. Each author worked with the theme according to his own conception and intention.

Ferguson presents a heroine that mirrors the deepest human sorrow over the death of a beloved person. Loneliness and despair expressed in verses can gain countless meanings and interpretations. *Deirdre's Lament for the Sons of Usnach* deals with a part of the story that might not be rich in action or worth remembering at the first sight, but encounters the feelings that are close to every human being. That might be the reason why the poem possesses such an extraordinary attraction. Unlike two other analyzed pieces Ferguson's poem approaches the most to express a similar sense of the tragic fate of Deirdre in the original legend.

While Ferguson's poem does not include a picture of all the main heroes, Synge's three-act drama *Deirdre's of the Sorrows* brings a vivid image of natures of the all important characters. A possibility to see the play acted on stage would be a great experience, but even without this experience, all the stage notes written and added by Synge provide the reader a chance to be immersed completely into the story. By a transmission to the form of drama, the characters gain a space to develop the action through the dialogues, which contrasts to Stephens' novel *Deirdre*, where the dialogues play a rather minor role. The plot, even if being modified because of the genre, has not changed the original story radically. Instead of just repeating or retelling the legend, Synge uses the gaps in the storyline and creates scenes built upon his imagination combined with his knowledge of the language of the folk living on the Aran Islands. The freshness of his work shows in the way

it can express everyday reality and routine that embraced the main characters in the second act. By this means the story is brought to a more understandable level to the modern audience.

On the other hand Synge's drama does not employ the rather romantic scenery and lyric depiction that are present in Stephens' novel *Deirdre*. Stephens seems to take the opposite approach to the Deirdre's legend. Unlike Synge, who did not retell the story, Stephens repeated it in all detail and furthermore added vast detailed extensions. One example is the biography of Conchobor that opens the novel. *Deirdre* also excels in the layer that is not present in any of the two other modernized versions, nor in the original legend. This layer introduces the direct view on the author's opinions and thoughts. The detailed and lyric descriptions of nature show the author's romantic approach to the Deirdre theme.

In my opinion all these three works will belong among the masterpieces of Irish literature and will be a constant inspiration for the other authors.

VII. Summary

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na porovnání tří žánrově odlišných děl irské literatury s původní verzí *Legendy o Deirdre*, z níž všechna tato díla čerpají svůj námět. Záměrem práce je mnohostranná analýza, která mapuje proměny této legendy.

Úvodní kapitola se věnuje vymezení pojmů mytologie, mýtus a legenda. Stručně pojednává o vývoji mytologie jako vědní disciplíny a nahlíží na nejrozšířenější vědecké přístupy a jejich odlišné chápání mýtu. Snaží se odhalit proč jsou mýty a legendy důležité pro náš život a jakým způsobem ho ovlivňují. Úvodní kapitola také obsahuje základní rozdělení irských análů a mytologických celků, které jsou zdrojem pro bádání. Nejdůležitějším pramenem pro tuto práci je *The Book of Leinster*, ve kterém se dochovala nejcelistvější verze *Legendy o Deirdre*. V závěru první kapitoly jsou zmíněna ostatní díla, jejichž námětem nebo inspirací se stala tato legenda.

Druhá kapitola se velmi podrobně zabývá lokalizací původního textu legendy a jeho identifikací v jednotlivých manuskriptech. Po podrobné analýze dostupných manuskriptů se vyčleňuje šest textů, které lze rozdělit na texty obsahující ranou verzi legendy, tj. od dvanáctého až do šestnáctého století, a texty obsahující pozdější verzi, tj. od sedmnáctého století až do století osmnáctého. Následuje shrnutí dějové linie obou verzí a rozbor textové struktury.

Druhá kapitola stručně charakterizuje Samuela Fergusona, jeho důležitost a zařazení v rámci irské literatury. Pro větší přehlednost je zařazena Fergusonova báseň *Deirdre's Lament for the Sons of Usnach*, která je podrobena obsahovému a významovému rozboru.

Důležité aspekty a motivy z jednotlivých slok básně jsou analyzovány a kontrastovány s původní verzí legendy.

Třetí kapitola zmiňuje situaci konce devatenáctého a začátku dvacátého století v Irsku a také stručně pojednává o vzniku *Irish National Revival* a irského nacionalismu. John Millington Synge je popsán jako jedna z klíčových postav *Irish National Revival*. V kapitole je krátce zmíněn Syngův zájem pro sbírání ústně předávaných příběhů a irské mytologie. Následuje rozbor *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, který se zaměřuje především na dějové rozdíly tohoto dramatu od rané verze *Legendy o Deirdre*. Také jsou zde podrobeny analýze charakteru hlavních postav.

Čtvrtá kapitola opět začíná zařazením autora, Jamese Stephense, do literárních souvislostí. Při bližším zkoumání Stephensnova románu se ukázala jeho velká shoda s manuskriptem Andrewa Mac Curtina, který je ale datován roku 1740. Jedná se tedy o pozdější verzi legendy. Kapitola se proto pokouší obsáhnout porovnání s oběma verzemi.

Náplní závěrečné kapitoly je srovnání všech tří analyzovaných děl mezi sebou. Závěr práce upozorňuje na obohacení, které v rámci svého žánru jednotlivá díla poskytla původní legendě.

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