

Summary

It is the various aspects of the traditional Irish narrative - that is of a mythology or a folktale - such as old traditions of the peoples and various motifs which can be identified as the traits of the Irish literary canon that bear the greatest importance with regard to the national heritage of the Irish. It is important to focus upon that issue and analyze it more profoundly through the works of the earliest innovators in the genre. With regard to that, it must be said that the most striking significance can definitely be granted to the first representatives of the genre of mythology or a folktale who actively took part in the process called “Celtic” or “Gaelic Renaissance,” that means to William Butler Yeats, John Millington Synge and Lady Augusta Gregory. In the thesis their works are analyzed closely and the traditional motifs and other literary means of representing the national heritage of the Irish are revealed. In this respect, the following works of theirs are in question: *Deirdre* by W. B. Yeats, *Deirdre of the Sorrows* by J. M. Synge and a chapter from *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, “Fate of the Sons of Usnach,” by Lady Gregory.

Before the actual analysis of the concrete works several key terms are explained as well, to enable the reader to recognize the context and to acquaint themselves with the most important events that happened or were happening at the era of late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Among others, the term “Celtic Renaissance,” the impact of the language and cultural politics or the possible importance of peasantry are discussed.

In the rest of the thesis various folktale traditions and the traditional ways of folk telling that are employed by the authors are revealed through a close examination of their works. The core argument and the reason of the whole process is that while the mythological or folktale motifs in the tales may not vary in content because there is actually only a specific amount of

the most important traditions and ways of folk telling in the Irish culture and reiteration happens every now and then, they are definitely distinguishable through the means of their presentation. Each of the authors examined the traditional motifs differently and the similarities and differences are analyzed in the thesis, with an addition of how they correspond to each other. It is important to mention, though, that while the authors adopted their own specific ways how to process the information, the base stays the same and their final goal – to make the reader familiar with the unknown, to rework the known according to the authors' beliefs and to enable them to enjoy the reading – does so as well. Additionally, the methods employed by the authors with regard to the readers' perception are to be introduced as well.

Last but not least, it is necessary to note that the choice of the authors was not a matter of coincidence; their contemporary contribution to the future development of the image of the traditional culture of Ireland in literature, covering various aspects of Celtic mysticism and other general traditional issues, is immense.

Key words: Gaelic traditions, Irish revival, Celtic Renaissance, modern Irish drama, folk culture, theatre, language, cultural politics