

## **The Wooing of Choice**

### **Prosimetric reconstruction of the female journey in Irish mythology**

In this thesis, I examine the representation of female characters in Irish mythological tales where the woman chooses her lover in contravention of social expectations. In the traditional versions, the woman recedes into the background as the narrative develops around the male hero. I ask what happens to the discourse of the narrative when it is subverted so that the focus is placed upon the female experience. This is explored through a creative component, called 'Meet Me in My World', a prosimetric reconstruction of three Irish tales in which the woman chooses her lover and compels him to follow her. The three tales are: *Aislinge Óengusso (The Dream of Óengus)*; *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne (The Pursuit of Diarmaid and Gráinne)*; and *Longes mac nUislenn (The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu)*.

The exegetical component, comprising 50% of the thesis, is composed of two sections. In the first, I examine theories of feminist writing and remythologizing, and develop a new model for feminist reconstruction, which I apply to the creative product. In the second section, I explore the relationship between narrative and poetry, from medieval prosimetric translations to contemporary hybrid texts, and consider which form provides the best framework for my female-centred narrative and the verse. This exploration includes consideration of the traditions of Irish poetics and Irish women's poetry, the principles of which are then incorporated into the poetic mythography that is 'Meet Me in My World'.