

A Structural Study of Narrative in Irish Myths and Folktales

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ABSTRACT

Understanding how collections of various stories without a sole writer or narrator have come to be can seem very intriguing. Jeremiah Curtin collected numerous tales and stories as he traveled throughout Ireland and listened to citizens tell him stories which he compiled in three volumes, two of which, *Hero-Tales of Ireland*, and *Myths and Folktales of Ireland*, this study intends to investigate. They contain 44 stories of Irish myths and folktales altogether, from various cycles of Irish mythology; theories of Vladimir Propp help this article examine the narration and the narrative functions of the selected stories. The links between folklore and literature, history, reality, and time are also discussed; moreover, the Structuralist approach reveals much about the storytelling art rooted in the Irish culture has 38 narrative functions, as opposed to Propp's 31 functions, are found within these stories which always follow the same order, whether they are active or not. Furthermore, the role of the narrators and their presence, the characters they use, and the motifs of each cycle of Irish mythology are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Being one of the main forming communities of ancient Europe, the Celts heavily influenced this continent and its culture. They rose throughout Europe and fell as the Roman Empire began to grow, and other powerful enemies appeared. Nevertheless, through their art and culture, they maintained their traditions, their ancient idealism, and their view of life, even after the advent of Christianity and centuries after that. Their mythology is one of the resources that kept the Celts' culture alive through all this time. Their stories have survived the test of time through oral transition, and a variety of versions have emerged to be present today, which surprisingly, work to the advantage of this analysis, despite the fact that we usually see works with different versions as problematic. The question is not what, but rather how a narrator forms a story he or she might not have heard correctly, using a myriad of elements to weave the specific version he or she presents. That is the question this study aims to answer, using Structuralism, and more specifically, narratology. And to that end, Irish folktales with different iterations have been selected.

Jeremiah Curtin, a Smithsonian ethnographer, collected many folktales and myths during his time in different coun-

tries, and one of these countries was Ireland. The collection he made of Irish tales, came to be in three volumes: *Hero-Tales of Ireland*, *Tales of the Fairies and the Ghost World*, and *Myths and Folk-lore of Ireland*. These collections contain many versions of Irish folktales and myths which were written down by Curtin as he listened to his narrators and transcribed the stories. Douglas Hyde in his introduction of *Beside the Fire*, his book of Irish and Celtic tales, criticizes Curtin for his shortcomings in translation yet he claims Curtin is the only one closest to the "fountain-head" in his collection of Irish myths (Hyde xv). The tales are usually heroic, full of kings, druids, princes and princesses, giants and witches, and many other recurring characters that are there to assist the narrator tell his or her story one way or another. The heroes go through impossible challenges to prove their greatness to their enemies. They go to realms under the ground or over the seas, meet magical creatures and fairies who usually help the hero succeed in his task, or they hold the hero back from his journey, which almost always results in their ruin, as the hero eventually dominates every enemy he fights.

Naturally, the symbolism and the structures used in these tales are both similar to and also different from the ones seen in other mythologies. Curtin recorded these tales and now

we have a great window of access to the culture and mind of 19th century Ireland, though many of these tales are much older. Still, not only the 19th-century Irish culture but the culture that had formed before it and after the 19th century are present in the tales as the narrators always change the stories for the stories to meet their current criteria and needs. They use these tales to instruct the young minds about the world and their way of life as well as entertain them. This is generally true about mythology since the human mind uses myth in order to wander off and amuse, and to justify the incomprehensible through the myth (Price 8). We are dealing with mythology as one of the instruments of human perception. These tales with their supernatural elements fulfill these tasks to a certain point: while they are very entertaining, the listeners are not on their guard, and through this entertainment, the rationalization takes place in their worldview.

This article chooses the Irish tales collected by Curtin as its object of study since they have no sole writer and that they rise out of a certain community which as mentioned before is 19th century Ireland. Although some of the stories are centuries older than the others, they have reached us through oral transition, a feature that is very common among mythology and also folklore; the significance of this tradition is that each tale is a version of many others that tell the same story with slight differences. One might see this as a destructive outcome, but this article is looking for the ways a community tells a story, rather than a mythical one, and having two narrators telling the same story in their unique ways presents us with a better opportunity for their analysis. The main question then stands as to how a collection of mythology comes to be, and in what ways do the people behind the creation of that collection bring about their myth and share it with the world.

To study the narrative structures, the theories of Vladimir Propp are fitting as he analyzed the Russian folktale and its narrative functions. He dedicated his life to the study of folktale and the development of a branch of study that solely dealt with the narrative of folktale. Although he studied ritual as well, it was his theories in myth and folktale that paved the way for future Structuralist thinkers and their innovative readings, such as those of A.J. Greimas. Furthermore, he believes that every myth should be studied based on its cycles, and concerning the layers of that community's past. Every collection of mythology has its own cycles. These cycles are either divided by time or place. They typically enable the reader to comprehend the tales readily, although the cycles of mythology are artificial and elements like time and origin help the readers of the myths to organize them to suit their needs. This classification in turn causes each cycle to have distinctive features. Nevertheless, characters of one cycle always appear in others.

The importance of this study is first seen as a study of the Irish myth and possible cultural and traditional roots. Clearly, being the surviving culture of one of the oldest civilizations in Europe is a cardinal reason for this article to focus on Irish myth and folktale. Most importantly this article has chosen a group of tales which were directly taken from Irish narrators.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Out of the three collections that Curtin compiled with the Irish myth and folktales, this article selects *Hero-Tales of Ireland* (hence referred to as *Hero-Tales*) and *Myths and Folklore of Ireland* (hence referred to as *Myths and Folklore*) and not *Tales of the Fairies and of the Ghost World*. This is so since the stories in the latter tend more to the side of folktale than myth; the other two volumes which are selected for this article contain stories of the major Irish mythical characters such as Fin MacCool and the Fenians, or Oisín and many other heroes from other cycles such as Cúchulín or Lugh, although there are stories in these tales which include a hero without a name. *Hero-Tales* contains 24 stories, and *Myths and Folklore* 20 stories; a list of the name of the stories can be found in the Notes section. Since for ease of access, this article refers to the stories according to their numerical order, not their full name.

The main source behind the theory then is *Theory and History of Folklore* where Propp develops and elaborates his view on folklore and wondertale, and their relation to literature, history, and reality. However, the narrative functions which he extracted from the Russian folktales are not present in this book completely, hence an excerpt from his book *Morphology of the Folk Tale* which is translated by The American Folklore Society and Indiana University helps us to clarify how he manages to form a single narrative function out of a series of tales.

FOLKLORE AND LITERATURE

Starting with the difference between folklore and literature, Propp states that the first difference is that folklore has no author and is created by people (Propp 6). In addition, he compares folklore to language, which has no sole creator but a group of people as its origin, and goes on to claim that the origin of folklore is in rites and rituals that have been diminished, but the folklore of that certain rite has lived a life of its own after the disappearance of the rites (7). Moreover, his comparison includes literature and literary works; folklore again like language, unlike literature, has no mediator or manuscript. In other words, both literature and folklore have two agents at work for them to function. For literature, the agents are the author and the reader, and the mediator is the text, but for folklore, there is no text, and the agents are the performer and the listener (7-8).

This leads to another point of comparison between folklore and literature, since the performer of folklore is not performing his own poetry or tale, but the tale that has been created by people (8). This is important since the performer's version will become another variant of the composition of the tale, while literature is recorded as is written and is established on paper. Propp adds that the listener/reader of literature and folklore are different in the sense that the one who listens to folklore is "a potential performer" in the future (ibid). All of these features again point to the instability of folklore, which is one of its main characteristics. A question may be asked as to when one can see a text as literature, or as folklore. The deciding factor is having variants. In other

words, when a poem or tale begins to find different versions and variants, it becomes folklore, and of course, there may be differences between the folklore originated from the people of a certain community, and the folklore originated from a literary work (9). Having been created by people and turning into variants by them, folklore cannot be studied without those certain people. This is where ethnography comes into play. Propp claims that folklore cannot be studied with disregard to historical, economic, and social issues of their creation (11). This may be one of the weaknesses of Propp's theories but yet the critics' major concern was comparing him to Lévi-Strauss, since to them Propp's study seemed only a syntagmatic study of narrative functions, and Claude Lévi-Strauss's paradigmatic study was opposed to Propp's theories. This matter will be explained further on. For now, let us concentrate on the relation of folklore with history and also reality.

HISTORY, REALITY AND TIME

To turn to the historical aspect of folklore, Propp believes that for each historical stage, there must be a poetics to study the folklore of those strata of a people's history (13). Under this method, the old socio-historical conditions which he believes are preserved in folklore are compared with the new ones, and their relation is demonstrated; in other words, whether they are in opposition or not. The reworking of the old into the new does not diminish the creative process of folklore, since folklore is conducted by the rules and nature of its own (ibid), and this leads him to bring these laws to light. He finds out the compositional laws that were put to work in the creation of the folktales. Comparing folklore and literature again in terms of stage study, he claims that literature formed through folklore but it "abandons the mother" (14) and becomes the art of the individual as opposed to the unconscious and collective art of folklore (ibid). In folklore, characters are types rather than individual characters depicted in novels, and from time to time they even do not have a name or a physical description (27) (which we will discuss later on). This is where the archetypal study of the human mind comes to be important, not in terms of ethnography, but in this sense that the collective human mind has a structure of its unconscious for creating stories, tales, and myths.

Having the rules of its own, folklore is far from reality, or one can claim that in folklore reality is twisted and depicted in an unusual way, and this is what makes folklore interesting and attractive. As Propp states, there are gestures and intonations about the vilest deeds being done in the tale (Propp 20) that bring laughter to the listener. In addition, this gives the listener the idea that this is a folktale, and not reality. Having said that, he also states that folklore is the ancestor of today's realistic literature (ibid) which again emphasizes his claim that folklore paved the way for literature.

Another feature of folklore in its relation to reality is what Propp calls "exceptional dynamics of action" (21). He continues by explaining that in folklore details of the appearance of the dramatis personae are absent, and the same can be said about the landscape (ibid). The function

of this absence is that it pushes the action to the foreground, and only the events in the tale are of importance. This leads Propp to clarify why only the characters that contribute to the progress of the narrative are present, as the result of this certain feature. (22). Hence the tales always revolve around one hero and his actions in the peculiar space and time of folklore. What is different about space in folklore and literature, is that space in folklore is limited to the space around the hero and his actions as well (ibid). In other words, in the tales that have more than one hero in their narrative, the narrator follows only one of them, or in other cases only one of the heroes is active, and the rest remain inactive, waiting for the narrator to turn to their story (23). As stated above, the reality is twisted through the filter of folklore.

The point of view follows the character that is active, mobile, and on the road rather than the one that has been abducted and is passive (24) since the active actions of the hero are the ones that are crucial to the progress of the narrative and the entering of other characters who either help the hero or are obstacles in his/her way. The same can be said about the concept of time in folklore. Both time and space are empirical; time is not measured by hours or any other way that we use to measure it in our life but is measured by the hero's actions (25). Since the narrator follows the actions that help the progress of the narrative, without any kind of logic that conforms to the logic of reality. In a way, folklore has a logic of its own (26), and the appearance of the characters and their actions are only motivated by the development of the narrative. Hence as Propp explains, when the hero of a tale is a fool, it means that not only is he foolish, but what he does in the tale does not conform to the social norms of that certain society which produced that certain tale (ibid). Characters are only good, or bad, and they have different types, for example, a type of hero is the thieving trickster (28) and Finn McCool himself is a good example in *Hero-Tales*.

To summarize the different relations of folklore and reality, Propp offers three general relations: Firstly, Folklore is engendered by reality but does not contain any direct traces of the concrete reality or the era that has engendered it. Secondly, the relation of folklore to reality presupposes a fictitious plot that contains obvious traces of peoples' lives. Thirdly, the performer intends to describe reality (49). Propp then goes on to state that to study folklore, one must study the history of folklore, and to do that the genre is "the primary unity" with which one must start its study (ibid). Hence the morphology of folklore becomes important. To start with the morphology of the wondertale, first, we need to have the necessary concepts of linguistics and Structuralism in mind.

STRUCTURALISM AND NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS

Anatoly Liberman gives a fairly detailed introduction to Propp and his theories, his academic life, and the differences and similarities he sees between Propp and other critics, and Lévi-Strauss is the milestone among them. Beginning with Propp's life, he continues to the theories of linguistics and Structuralism; he demonstrates five fundamental points to the 20th-century linguist, which are summarized as: First,

language is a self-regulating system; Second, the distinction between langue and parole; third, language as a system structured on distinctions; fourth, language as a system of signs: the signifier and the signified; fifth, language should be studied both diachronically and synchronically (Propp xx). These points were available to the critics and theorists thanks to the ground-breaking work of linguists such as Saussure. Liberman continues to state that though Structuralist theories and their application are two different issues (xxi), the work of the Structuralist theorist is divided into 3 steps. The first step is “the segmentation of an indiscrete current into discrete units” (xxii) which essentially means finding invariant units throughout the system. The second step is characterizing those units by their distinctive features (ibid), and the third step is figuring out the variants of the invariant units and decoding them in the phonic system of language.

As Liberman claims, finding distinctive features for the phonemes is a very difficult task, hence the Structuralists are satisfied with binary oppositions and differences instead of certain defining characteristics, and the reason for it is that finding the oppositions and differences is much easier than finding individual features (xxv). In addition to that, each Structuralist has a variety of Structuralism of his/her own (xxvi). Let us examine that of Propp.

Propp’s theory essentially rests on the actions performed by various characters that develop the narrative. These actions are then classified as narrative functions, which are the invariant units of Propp’s systematic structures. His sub-genre of folklore is the “wondertale”, and not any type of folktale. He defines it as below:

In my book, the genre of the wondertale is defined in precise terms. A wondertale begins with some harm or villainy done to someone (for example, abduction or banishment) or with a desire to have something (a king sends his son in quest of the firebird), and develops through the hero’s departure from home and encounters with the donor, who provides him with a magic agent that helps the hero find the object of the search. Further along, the tale includes combat with an adversary (the most important form is slaying a dragon), a return, and a pursuit. Often this structure is more complicated, for example, when the hero is on his way home and his brothers throw him into a pit. Later he escapes, is subjected to a trial by difficult tasks, and becomes king and marries, either in his own kingdom or in that of his father-in-law. This is the compositional core of many plots in a brief outline. (102)

The tales that Propp examined are limited to the collection designed under Aarne–Thompson tale type index, numbers 300 to 749 (169). As is clearly stated by Propp, the title of his book contained the term “wondertale” but due to his editors’ choice, it then changed to “folktale”. To have clarified the matter once again, Propp’s invariant units are the actions performed by the various characters who have their role demonstrated by him, and he calls these units narrative functions.

The narrative functions developed by Propp from these wondertales are both associative and functional. By associative, it is meant that a common part is repeated; the repetition of this common part allows the segmentation of the unit/function

(bit, fit, pit, etc.). Also, it is functional since the unit helps the progress of the narrative (xxix). What he does in his syntagmatic study of the wondertales is that he provides a minimal unit of composition for all of their narratives (xxx). The term “composition” is preferred by Propp, instead of the term “morphology” since he states that “composition” is more accurate than “morphology” (Propp 73). He further explains that he observed that similar actions were performed by different characters or similar actions were performed in different ways. The result, therefore, is the observation of both the constants and the variants that are present in the composition of the tale (ibid). The crucial issue to this matter is that these functions are always in the same order; some may not be performed but the order stays the same in all of the tales. A few of the functions make a pair and usually appear together. This issue will be explained further on with a list of the number of functions.

The functions brought here, are taken from an excerpt of *Morphology of Folktale* translated by The American Folklore Society and Indiana University in 1968. Before any of the functions begin, we have the initial situation, signed as α ; and after that begins the 31 functions each having credited with a sign by Propp:

- I. One of the members of a family absents himself from home. (Definition: absentation. Designation: β)
- II. An interdiction is addressed to the hero. (Definition: interdiction. Designation: γ)
- III. The interdiction is violated (Definition: violation. Designation: δ .)
- IV. The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance. (Definition: reconnaissance. Designation: ϵ .)
- V. The villain receives information about his victim. (Definition: delivery. Designation: (ζ .)
- VI. The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or of his belongings. (Definition: trickery. Designation: η .)
- VII. The victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy. (Definition: complicity. Designation: θ)
- VIII. The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family. (Definition: *villainy*. Designation: A.)
- VIII. One member of a family either lacks something or desires to have something. (Definition: lack. Designation: α .)
- IX. Misfortune or lack is made known; the hero is approached with a request or command; he is allowed to go or he is dispatched. (Definition: mediation, the connective incident. Designation: B.)
- X. The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction. (Definition: beginning counteraction. Designation: C.)
- XI. The hero leaves home. (Definition: departure. Designation: \uparrow .)
- XII. The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked etc., which prepares the way for receiving either a magical agent or helper. (Definition: the first function of the donor. Designation: D.)
- XIII. The hero reacts to the actions of the future donor. (Definition: the hero’s reaction. Designation: E.) In the majority of instances, the reaction is either positive or negative.

- XIV. The hero acquires the use of a magical agent. (Definition: provision or receipt of a magical agent. Designation: F.)
- XV. The hero is transferred, delivered or led to the whereabouts of an object of search. (Definition: spatial transference between two kingdoms, guidance. Designation: G.)
- XVI. The hero and the villain join in direct combat. (Definition: struggle. Designation: H.)
- XVII. The hero is branded. (Definition: branding, marking. Designation: J.)
- XVIII. The villain is defeated. (Definition: victory. Designation: I.)
- XIX. The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated. (Designation: K.) This function, together with villainy (A), constitutes a pair. The narrative reaches its peak in this function.
- XX. The hero returns. (Definition: return. Designation: J)
- XXI. The hero is pursued. (Definition: pursuit, chase. Designation: Pr.)
- XXII. Rescue of the hero from the pursuit. (Definition: rescue. Designation: Rs.)
- XXIII. The hero unrecognized, arrives home or in another country. (Definition: unrecognized arrival. Designation: o.)
- XXIV. A false hero presents the unfounded claims. (Definition: unfounded claims. Designation: L.)
- XXV. A difficult task is proposed to the hero. (Definition: difficult task. Designation: M.)
- XXVI. The task is resolved. (Definition: solution. Designation: N.)
- XXVII. The hero is recognized. (Definition: recognition. Designation: Q.)
- XXVIII. The false hero or villain is exposed. (Definition: exposure. Designation: Ex.)
- XXIX. The hero is given a new appearance. (Definition: transfiguration. Designation: T.)
- XXX. The villain is punished. (Definition: punishment. Designation: U.)
- XXXI. The hero is married and ascends the throne. (Definition: wedding. Designation: W.)

Functions II and III are paired functions, so are IV and V. as Propp explains, the paired functions can still exist with one part missing. Variations are several and if necessary will be clarified.

LÉVI-STRAUSS

What critics like Lévi-Strauss saw as a weakness in Propp's narrative functions was that Propp did not look for binary oppositions in the functions, and rather made a syntagmatic study of the tales. For example, John Sturrock sees Propp as more of a formalist rather than a Structuralist, and this is in comparison with Lévi-Strauss who is the more Structuralist of the two (Sturrock 109). Alan Dundes quotes Lévi-Strauss that the only function of myth is to mediate between two oppositions and that he sees the syntagmatic study as the superficial one in opposition to the paradigmatic study which he claims to have done (Dundes 40). In response to

Lévi-Strauss's criticism of the functions' missing binary oppositions, Propp states that Lévi-Strauss wants to reduce binaries to one, but the actions are acted out by two different characters and that Lévi-Strauss, instead of discovering the natural sequential order of the functions, wants to find the logical one (Propp 75). Dundes explains the term "order" is an obstacle for Lévi-Strauss in his findings on myth and folklore (Dundes 40). The argument of both parties are valid to a certain point, yet they are short of effective persuasion since they both study myth and folklore for a different reason with different views in mind.

THE IRISH MYTHS AND FOLKTALES

As is necessary for the progress of this study from Propp's perspective, the first step is to lay out a grammatical pattern of the stories, as Propp did with the Russian folk wondertale. The functions are examined and then the paired functions are demonstrated. The next step is to study the characters and the roles which repeat themselves in the tales. Furthermore, the narrators of the tales are studied in terms of their influence on the tales. After the narrators and their presence in the tales are discussed, another comparison will begin with the stories relating to each cycle as the objects of comparison. This comparison looks for possible similarities and differences between the tales; the reader must know that there are four different cycles in Irish mythology and that these cycles are not separated by their time of production, but by the region, type, and the characters related to those stories. It should be noted that this division fails to hold the characters of the cycles from crossing over to stories related to other cycles.

The four major cycles are Cycles of Kings, the Fenian Cycle, the Mythological Cycle, and the Ulster Cycle. The tales belong to six major types: Adventures, Cattle Raids, Destructions, Visions, Voyages, and Wooings (Matson and Roberts 104). Many of the stories are a mixture of these types, yet they belong to one cycle. Another point to be made is that not all of these stories are recorded in books studying Irish mythology. These books have many stories in common, yet some of the stories are not to be found anywhere else than *Hero-Tales* or *Myths and Folk-lore*. In addition, many of the tales that are commonly known by academics, are twisted versions of the recorded ones; for example, Story 1 of *Hero-Tales* "Elin Gow, The Swordsmith from Erin, and the Cow Glas Gainach" is another version of "Balor of the Evil Eye, and Lui Lavada, his Grandson" of *Hero-Tales* and they all belong to *The Book of Invasions*. Story 1 has many new elements added to the main narrative and many parts of the recorded story are missing, and many others that are not related to this story are incorporated into the story. This is the result of the oral tradition of the folktales and myths, yet they cannot be abandoned. Hence this study takes the stories as tales narrated by 19th-century Irish individuals and compares them with the other versions recorded in reference books such as *Celtic Mythology A to Z* by Matson and Roberts and *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Mythology and Folklore* by Monaghan, yet they remain as the main point of focus of this article with the goal of finding out narrative functions used and recycled by these individuals.

NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS

For finding the functions, Propp's method is used, so that only those actions that contribute to the narrative will be counted. We have an initial situation, where we are told about the situation and conditions before the journey or the adventure begins. Then after that, the functions are as follows:

- I. A member of the family is absent (this function usually happens when the father or a brother leaves, or a sister or another female character is taken away.)
- II. The villain attempts reconnaissance.
- III. The villain gathers information about the Hero.
 - a. The villain has someone else gather the information for him/her
- IV. An interdiction is made by the hero's helper or donor, usually when the villain invites the hero to the game for the third time.
- V. The interdiction is violated.
- VI. The villain commits an act of villainy
 - a. This act has many forms, as in: deceiving the hero which may be accompanied by a game of chess or cards, which in turn leads to stealing an item or kidnapping a person, putting the hero under a sentence, etc.
- VII. The hero sets out on an adventure.
 - a. The adventure is caused by the lack of an item or a person, either missing, kidnapped, or stolen.
 - b. The adventure is begun by the hero, for the sake of making one.
 - c. The adventure is caused by a sentence that is put on the hero by the villain (sometimes, after a game).
 - d. The hero is banished by his father.
- VIII. The hero puts the villain under a sentence
- IX. The hero travels to find the item or person.
 - a. The hero knows where the item or person is/he is guided by a parent figure/he is guided by a druid.
 - b. The hero does not know the location of the item/person.
- X. The hero meets a (magical) helper on his/her way.
 - a. The hero rescues the helper from enchantment.
 - b. The helper might be a magical animal that will take the hero to the other realm or kingdom that he needs to go to.
- XI. The helper tests the hero.
 - a. The helper tests the hero in disguise.
- XII. The hero succeeds in the helper's test.
- XIII. The helper guides the hero for his mission.
 - a. The helper gives a magical item to the hero.
 - b. The magical animal takes the hero to his destination
- XIV. The hero travels to another kingdom or realm
- XV. The hero's opponent puts obstacles in his way.
- XVI. The hero is faced with tests and trials, set by the owner or the father or kidnapper of the person (these tests usually include fighting with hundreds of warriors, hunting dangerous animals, stealing magical items from supernatural beings, or bringing an account of someone).
- XVII. The hero succeeds in the trials.
 - a. The hero's helpers help him with the tests and trials.
- XVIII. The hero is killed/mortally injured by his opponent.
- XIX. The hero is revived by a helper.
- XX. The hero or his helper asks the villain how he can be killed.
- XXI. The villain answers.
 - a. The villain's answer was false, but eventually, after later inquiries, he will tell the hero or his helper how he can be killed.
- XXII. The hero fights the owner of the item or the father or the kidnapper or the supernatural beings.
 - a. The hero kills his opponent.
 - b. The hero spares the opponent, where he becomes an ally.
 - c. The opponent gives a magical item to the hero.
 1. The hero spares the opponent, who turns into an ally.
 2. The hero kills the opponent after obtaining the item, or a confession.
- XXIII. The hero/his helpers kill the supernatural being guarding the missing item or the missing person.
- XXIV. The hero wins the item/reunites with or rescues the person.
- XXV. The hero is chased.
 - a. The hero is chased by the owner of the item or the father or the kidnapper
 - b. The hero is chased by his wife with the hero's child.
- XXVI. The hero escapes/tricks/kills his chaser.
 - a. The hero reunites with his wife.
- XXVII. The tricksters/false heroes commit an act of villainy.
 - a. The tricksters kill the hero's companions.
 - b. The tricksters steal the hero's magical items/wife.
 - c. Hero's helper or companion who are the false heroes steals the item or kidnaps his wife (which leads to another adventure, but much shorter than the original one, with helpers and elements of its own).
- XXVIII. The hero kills the tricksters and/or retrieves the item and/or rescues his wife.
 - a. The hero's helper rescues him from the tricksters.
- XXIX. The hero returns home.
 - a. The hero returns home in disguise, to the wedding of the false hero and the kidnapped person, and reunites with her
- XXX. The false hero (and his mother) is revealed and shamed through a test, by the rescued person or a helper
- XXXI. The hero passes the tests and his disguise is revealed.
- XXXII. The false hero is punished
- XXXIII. The villain is killed or punished.
 - a. Usually, the villain who dispatched the hero on his adventure dies as the hero refuses to give him or her the item he was sent for since he was bound to bring it, and not to give it to the villain
- XXXIV. The hero returns the item to its rightful owner.
- XXXV. The magical item is lost or the person leaves the hero.

XXXVI. The magical helper disappears.

XXXVII. The hero marries and becomes a king

- a. The hero marries the princess
- b. The hero marries the daughter of his helper

XXXVIII. The hero leaves.

- a. He plays a game with a supernatural being and is taken away.
- b. The hero leaves with his wife to the land where he met her.

As the reader can see, these are the general functions of these tales, and like those demonstrated by Propp for the Russian wondertale, these functions are all related to the actions repeated in these stories that contribute to the progress of the stories. The order of the functions is always the same, while some are not used by the narrator, which does not cancel the order of the functions, and the other functions that are present follow the same order. The reader must know that the repetition of a certain function is due to the fact that since a story might include more than one quest and hero, new sets of functions are available to be used again and they might carry an already used function once more. In other words, there is a smaller quest within the main story, and that quest starts from the beginning of the narrative functions and goes to the end; nevertheless, the functions of the chief story follow the main order demonstrated above.

The functions start similarly to the ones of the Russian wondertale yet there are differences further in the nature or order of the functions. First, interdictions and their violations are used differently. In the Russian wondertale the violation of the interdiction might be the reason the villain enters the story, where we have the interdiction usually for a game, and it is made by the hero's wife or druid, etc. to stop him from playing with the villain for the third time; but the hero who had won the last two games ignores this warning and plays the game anyway, which leads to his loss to the villain who puts the hero under a sentence. The next difference between the Irish folktale and Russian wondertale functions is Reconnaissance; Reconnaissance is not a common function in the tales, since the villain usually commits an act of villainy, and we are not told that he or she had gathered information before the act. Yet there are few examples like story 7 in *Myths and Folk-lore* where the evil stepmother has the cowherd gather information about the hero for her. The reverse form of this function is rather more common, as the hero or his helper asks the villain about the way that he can be killed. This questioning and answering are paired functions since one cannot be without the other.

Other differences are found in the order of the functions. There are more functions found in these collections than the Russian wondertale, and there are functions that are missing in these tales, and vice versa. As an example the hero is never killed and revived in the Russian wondertale; or that there is no function of Branding in the Irish folktales of these collections.

THE PAIRED FUNCTIONS

As was in the Russian wondertale, some of the functions are paired, and the first function cannot take place without the

second one, and vice versa. For example, being put under a sentence after a game of cards or chess always follows the hero putting his villain under a very difficult sentence which sometimes makes the villain regret his/her choice (functions VII and VIII). Other paired functions are the interdiction which is always violated (functions IV and V). The questioning the villain about his weakness, which is followed by the answer of how the villain can be killed is another pair of functions (functions XX and XXI). The next pair involves the function of the tests whether by the helper or by the king or the father/owner of the item, and the paired function is the hero's success in the tests, usually after three times - the number which is most probably sacred in all myths (functions XVI and XVII). The injury or death of the hero and his revival by his companions are also paired together (functions XVIII and XIX). Except for "The Battle of Ventry" - which is very different from the rest of the tales in its context and functions - the heroes are always revived or healed.

Being chased and getting rid of the chaser is another pair of functions (functions XXV and XXVI). Sometimes the chaser is the wife of the hero, and she follows his steps in order to find out who was the great warrior that stole the magical item from her. At other times, it is the father figure to the hero's wife who is not happy about their marriage and follows the hero. There are cases where the owner of the magical item follows the hero, like Balor who follows Art in Story 15; one of the most exciting chases in these tales is found in Story 8 of *Myths and Folk-lore* where the Fisherman's Son turns himself into an eel and cannot be caught since "he was so slippery" (Curtin, *Myths and Folk-lore* 151) and then follows many chases and many transformations into various animals by the Son and the Gruagach of Tricks and his sons.

The last pair of functions is the one with the trickster or the false heroes that steal the magical item or the rescued person from the hero, and are always revealed in the end, with the reunion of the item/person with the hero, or in other forms, we have the false hero and his or her shameful truth revealed (functions XXVII and XXXII).

CHARACTERS AND THEIR ROLES

Although the functions of these tales are different from the functions Propp drew from the Russian wondertale, the character roles are similar, though there are often slight differences in their way of action. Propp divided the roles of the characters of the tales into seven roles: 1. The Hero 2. The Donor 3. The Helper 4. The Dispatcher 5. The Villain 6. The False Hero 7. The Princess (missing person) and her father. In the last case, we can divide them into two roles as 7. The princess/item(s) and 8. The father/the owner/kidnapper. Some of these roles can be merged; for example, a character can be the helper and the donor of the tale. The difference is that the donor gives an item to the hero, and the helper helps the hero with his journey and solves problems for him and sometimes revives him; the dispatcher and the villain can also have their character in common, since the dispatcher is the person that sends the hero on his journey, and as we see in the stories often the dispatcher is the villain as well who

tricks the hero or simply puts him under a sentence to send him for a magical item.

In terms of repeating characters and animals, we have heroes, kings, and queens, princesses, animals - which are usually cows, shaggy old mares, cats, dogs, wolves, swans and other birds, serpents, boars and pigs, seals - stepmothers, druids and henwives, giants, witches, *gruagachs* (brownies), knights, champions, dwarves or small men, old hags, old men, and wizards. The repeating characters mentioned here may have different roles in the stories. As an example, a stepmother can be a villain in one story or can be a helper to the hero in another, and guide him in his journey. So is the case for other characters. Henwives are usually the female equivalent of druids, though we have druidesses in the stories as well, and both of these characters can be helpers to the hero or they can be helpers to the hero's opponent or the villain. Sometimes this difference and change of role is demonstrated in a single story, where for example a *gruagach* turns out to be the hero's helper after being defeated and spared by the hero.

Animals in these stories are depicted with supernatural features. Some of them are depicted as sacred or with a very positive effect on the hero's quest, which is because of two reasons; the first one being that it was believed that they were another form of their deities, or a servant of the gods and goddesses (Monaghan 18), and the other reason is the belief of each clan that they had their descentance from a certain animal, with their family names carrying the evidence to show this ancestral connection. Hence, for each clan, a certain animal was forbidden to eat, for being their kin, and if any of them did eat that certain animal, severe punishment was to be followed (19). Among these animals, cows and cattle are the most important, and as examples, in Story 13 of *Hero-Tales* we have the cow Glas Gavlen as the enchanted step-sister of the smith, and the stealing of this cow is the first step to the demise of the giant, Balor of the Evil Eye by grandson Lui Lavada in the stories of this collection. Cows were the sign of wealth and abundance, a magical animal that brought butter, and also power.

The other repeating animal is the shaggy old mare, which contrary to the expectation of the hero turns out to be a swift horse, with the power of running on the sea and sometimes even flying, as in Story 7 of *Hero-Tales* where the mare turns out to be the enchanted wife of the Scolog, who outruns her husband in the chase. Other types of animals that are shown to be helping the hero are swans and other birds, and dogs. The swans are usually shown to be another shape of the daughters of a giant or another character who is to be one of the villains of the story, as in the story mentioned above. Dogs (hounds) are mentioned by name, and are usually helpers to the hero; the birds have supernatural features which enable them to talk to the hero and guide them on their journey.

Cats are the most dangerous animals, which are always tricksters and are looking for a way to bring harm to the hero or their companions, and are sometimes successful in doing so. The best examples of this animal are in Story 2 of *Hero-Tales*, where Mor's sons play a game with a cat, and

then are kidnapped; Story 4 of the same collection is another example, where the Black Thief tells of his encounter with 13 cats, and also in Story 22 of the same collection, Fin's son Faolan meets many malicious cats as well. The only example of a cat that is not mischievous is Story 9 of the mentioned collection, where the Cat of Fermalys turns out to be Cud's wife in another form

Of these animals, the wolf or the hound, the boar, and the serpent are sometimes used as an opponent or a challenge for the hero. They are one of the tests that the hero must overcome in order for the king to accept him as superior and to give up on testing the hero. Whereas a cow is thought to be a sacred animal, bull or ox is usually placed as one of the challenges the hero must survive, as in Story 22 of *Hero-Tales*.

THE NARRATOR

There are elements that reveal the presence of the narrator to the reader in the form of confessions, and these confessions if present, are sometimes located in the beginning and always in the end. The narrator usually talks about the effects of the story in real life, as in the locations related to the name of the characters, their burial site, or sayings taken from the plot of the story, as in Story 2 of *Hero-Tales* "Mor's Son and the Herder from Under the Sea" which the narrator claims a saying to say "May your children go from you as Mor's sons went with the enchanted cat!" (Curtin, *Hero-Tales* 57), or the saying that "All lived happily and well; and if they did not, may we!" (92) where the narrator and the reader presumably are addressed by the pronoun "we".

At other times it is the pronoun "I" that gives the narrator away, deliberately, to give the reader the idea that the narrator had actually been present with the characters of his story. There are two examples that the death of a certain character, either a villain or a hero has led to the name of a certain place, like Fail Mahisht in Story 20 (437), and Caoil Cuan (Coal's Harbor) in Story 24 (546) of *Hero-Tales*. What these confessions do is that they put the narrators of these stories - whose names Curtin has recorded in the Notes section of the book - next to the heroes and the warriors of the Irish folktale and mythology. This in turn renders the stories closer to reality and gives this feeling to the reader that the heroes have lived among ordinary people, and performed all those unbelievable actions, and have disappeared in the far magical land in which they chose to spend the rest of their lives.

Another function of the co-presence of the narrator with the hero is that it adds emphasis to the exaggeration of reality. We have heroes performing extraordinary actions in their tales, such as jumping from land to their boats, killing or having magical animals, metamorphoses, etc. whose effects are doubled if the narrator is confessing his or her presence at the time of the performance of the actions. We even have the encounter of the hero with a historical or pseudo-historical character like Story 20 in *Myths and Folk-lore*, where Oisín comes back hundred of years later from Tir Na N-Og, the land of youth, and meets Saint Patrick which leads to a few adventures.

Another point regarding the presence of the performer/narrator of the tales is that they invoke the reader/listeners as

future performers. The fact that in *Hero-Tales*, there are three different narrators, each giving three different accounts of the story of Balor of the Evil Eye, and the magical Cow, and his grandson Lui Lavada (Lugh Lámfhota) who is destined to kill him proves how much folklore is indeed unstable and dynamic - another example within this story is the death of Cian, father of Lui, who had shape-shifting abilities, and so did the brothers who turned him into stone in Story 1 and in other versions Cian turns himself into a pig to avoid the brothers and they, in turn, become dogs who will hunt him down and kill him. One of the best examples of the instability of folklore is "Dyeermud Alta and the King in South Erin" where one of the villains is killed with a silver bullet. This is a modern element that the performer has added to the tale which as mentioned before does not diminish the value of folklore, but shows how the old conditions can be written in terms of new ones (Propp 13), or the story "Blaiman Son of Apple" which could be another performance of the story "King Of Ireland's Son" - where the hero looks for a bride with certain colors, red and black and instead of having supernatural animals as helpers, he has characters like the Green Man (the Green Knight) and other characters playing the role of his helpers.

This dynamism goes through all the details, and an example is the recurring May Day motif in the stories, where the hero needs to bring an account of a knight or gruagach and his sons who follow an animal, which insults them, into a cave only to be invited by witches to a trick dinner and also games which lead to the knight or gruagach's sons to be murdered in front of him, cooked and then force-fed to him, and his eye knocked out by the villain, and all of these events occur on the May Day, in other words, May 1st; the insulting animal then comes every year on this day to remind him of his pain and the loss of his sons. In the hero's story, the animal returns, and this time the hero with the knight or gruagach follows the animal, and the same events and games repeat, but this time the hero wins in every one of the games and forces the witches to revive the knight or gruagach's sons and give his eye back. This motif is used by different performers in their stories as a challenge for the hero, yet they all remain faithful to the overall structure of the story. Although this motif is the same, yet the hero who resolves it and the story is very much different than the other story which carries this same motif. This dynamism as we have seen causes the variations of the stories, yet it cannot escape the repeating elements that all these stories share in their narrative aspect.

CYCLES, STORY TYPES, AND MOTIFS

As far as the cycles are concerned, three cycles of Irish mythology are involved in the stories in this collection. We have four stories from the Mythological Cycle, three stories that the hero is taken out of the Ulster Cycle, and another sixteen from the Fenian Cycle. The stories taken from Mythological Cycle are:

Stories from the Mythological Cycle are:

- Story 1: "Elin Gow, the Swordsman from Erin, and the Cow Glas Gainach"

- Story 13: "Balor on Tory Island"
- Story 14: "Balor of the Evil Eye and Lui Lavada, His Grand Son"
- Story 15: "Art, the King's Son, and Balor Beimenach, the Two Sons-In-law of King Under the Wave"

Stories from the Ulster Cycle are:

- Story 3: "Saudan Og and the Daughter of the King of Spain; Young Conal and the Yellow King's Daughter"
- Story 4: "The Black Thief and King Conal's Three Horses"

And from Myths and Folk-lore:

- Story 19: "Cuculin"

Stories from the Fenian cycle are:

- Story 6: "The Amadan Mor and the Gruagach of the Castle of Gold"
- Story 8: "Dyeermud Ulta and the King in South Erin"
- Story 19: "Fin MacCool, and the Daughter of the King of the White Nation"
- Story 20: "Fin MacCool, the Three Giants, and the Small Men"
- Story 21: "Fin MacCool, Ceadach Og, and the Fish Hag"
- Story 22: "Fin MacCool, Faolan, and the Mountain of Happiness"
- Story 23: "Fin MacCool, the Hard Gilla, and the High King"
- Story 24: "The Battle of Ventry"

And from Myths and Folk-lore:

- Story 12: "Birth of Fin MacCumhail"
- Story 13: "Fin MacCumhail and the Fenians of Erin in the Castle of Fear Dubh"
- Story 14: "Fin MacCumhail and the knight of the Full Axe"
- Story 15: "Gilla na Grakin and Fin MacCumhail"
- Story 16: "Fin MacCumhail and the Seven Brothers and the King of France"
- Story 17: "Black, Brown, and Gray"
- Story 18: "Fin MacCumhail and the Son of the King of Alba"
- Story 20: "Oisin in Tir na N-Og"

(It should be noted that Stories 1 and 21, 3 and 15, 19 and 20 of *Hero-Tale* have the same narrator.)

The first thing that comes to mind is the type of stories. As explained before, there are six types of stories in Irish myth and folktale and they are Adventure, Cattle Raids, Destructions, Visions, Voyages, and Wooings. As was explained earlier cows were really important animals, and also associated with supernatural powers. Both the Ulster Cycle and the Mythological Cycle share this type of story, as we have Cattle Raid in stories involving Balor and Cian and the cow Glas Gainach in Mythological stories - the story of the magical is a part of a much larger story involving Lugh Lavada, one of the greatest Irish gods - or the magical horses of King Conal in Story 4.

Stories from the Mythological Cycle involve characters that belong to the Danann, one of the few races that invaded and dominated Ireland, according to *The Book of Invasions* which gives an account of Irish creation myth. Characters

like Elin Gow or Cian are god-like characters that belong to this race and are capable of shape-shifting and many other magical abilities. Balor is one of the villains in their stories as he is one of the Fomori kings; Fomori is a race of giants that live under the sea, hence the name that is given to Balor in Story 1 is King Under the Sea.

A common story type in the Ulster Cycle is Cattle Raid. As explained above in Story 4 the Black Thief helps the three sons of a king in Erin in their unsuccessful attempt to steal King Conal's magical horses as their stepmother put them under the sentence to do so. Another common Story type of these tales is Wooings, as both Conal and Cuculin, who is seen as one of the biggest heroes of Ulster Cycle (Grantz 25), go through adventures in order to marry a certain princess. Similarly, both of the stories share a common motif which is the seven lines of defense through which the hero passes to reach the castle of the villain of the story. Story 19 depicts the thrilling battles of Cuculin through the seven lines, as does Story 3 for Young Conal.

Most of the stories in the Fenian cycle, in comparison with the other cycles, have a common type. The Fenian Cycle usually involves Journey Type/Adventure Type stories, where the hero performs acts of heroism, often with his companion hero. This is another common point in the Fenian stories; they usually include more than one hero in comparison to other cycles. Story 22 of *Hero-Tales* is one of the examples of Fenian stories with two heroes, Faolan being the hero and Dyeermud the "secondary hero". The reader might count the other heroes in the Fenian Cycle stories as helpers, but this article sees them as heroes since the amount of narration and detail dedicated to the companion heroes are considerably larger than the helpers in the other stories. This might be in light of the fact that these secondary heroes are not introduced halfway through the journey, as Cian is in Story 1. Relatively, the reader meets them at the starting part of the adventure, the result of which is instead of one character developing the story, there are two main characters performing the actions and building the functions. This leads to the "exceptional dynamics of action" in Propp's theory of wondertale, which is elaborated further ahead with more examples.

In the Fenian Cycle stories, there are certain repeating motifs that catch the reader's attention. The first one is the small men, or the group of (small) men with supernatural features, as in Stories 8, 20, and 23, who always help the hero in his adventure, usually one on the sea, to where one of the supernatural men can summon a great ship. The other motif which is again related to the sea and rivers is the boat with an only passenger or a character that arrives via the water, usually a lady. This passenger wants to play a game of chess or cards with the hero for a sentence, or asks for help, and offers service to the hero. Examples of this motif are Stories 8, 19, 20, 21, and 22. Although this motif repeats itself in stories that do not belong to the Fenian Cycle, yet the repetition of this motif is more often than in the other stories. Another common motif in the Fenian Cycle is the "May Day" motif as in Stories 19 and 21 of *Hero-Tales* and stories 6 and 15 of *Myths and Folk-lore*, and a summary of the story of this motif was given before.

Another common motif is the smith or the knight's daughter who has two men in love with her. Her father tells her to choose one of them, who are both great warriors. Yet this does not end the issue, the warrior who was not chosen by the daughter will take revenge on the other one, usually by killing him or harming him in some way. This motif is used in Story 21 of *Hero-Tales* and 15 of *Myths and Folk-lore*.

One of the common motifs in the Fenian cycles, and usually of those in *Myths and Folk-lore* is the Fenians getting trapped in the castle and getting stuck on their chair while they are sitting down at the table of their host who later is discovered to be their enemy. Another hero, which is likely to be one of Fin's sons or another hero, like Dyeermud, who hears the Fenians' call for help will come to their help, defeats the massive army of the villain and his brothers and also kills their mother who is an old hag with the ability to revive the whole army if the hero does not ambush her, kill her in time and use her blood to lift the curse of the castle that has trapped the Fenians. Conan Moal, the usual trouble maker of the Fenian who sits on the ground, or does not find an empty seat, loses the skin of his back which is replaced by sheepskin later with the help of his companions. This motif is used in stories 13, 17, 18. A similar motif happens in Story 12 where Fin has to fight three brothers, one after another who burn the castle of a king, and then their mother, the old hag, though there is not any curse to hold men on their chairs.

Conan Moal as was mentioned above is used as the trouble maker of the Fenians in another motif. At times he is shown as forcing Fin to send the new warrior in his service on very dangerous quests, in the false hope that the warrior will meet his death. But he is always proven wrong and pays dearly for his evil schemes by the skin of his back. There are also times where the new warrior, who Conan Moal is afraid will bring the Fenians to their death, is not revealed to be the villain, and is rather the main hero of the tale. Stories carrying this motif are of *Myths and Folk-lore* and they are stories 15 and 18 – which is very similar to Story 13 of *Hero-Tales*.

There are certain motifs which are generally used in the tales and do not necessarily belong to any of the cycles. The first one is the boy or man with red hair. The color red, along with the colors green and white are the colors associated with supernatural elements. The characters who have red hair are said to be descended from fairies (Monaghan 392) and the characters in this collection with red hair have superhuman powers compared to the heroes. Examples of the stories including the red-haired man are: stories 3, 11, and 16 of *Myths and Folk-lore*. What is more, another motif is used for the death of the villains, where the helper of the hero asks this villain how she or he can be killed, and the answer includes a tree and consequently three different animals that will start a chase in three parts. The hero is required to cut the tree, and use three other animals to catch the ones that will get away. This motif is used in stories like Story 18 of *Hero-Tales*, and 2 and 3 of *Myths and Folk-lore*.

As was stated above, the Fenian stories occasionally overlook the exceptional dynamics of action. Other stories remain strictly by this concept. In these stories, as in Story 1 or many others - even those that belong to Fenian Cycles like

Story 6 - the first hero is active and develops the narrative, and if there is a second hero (not secondary), the narrator follows him while the first hero becomes deactivated. Story 1 has Elin Gow as the first hero, and when he is out of the picture, Cian is introduced and he decides to look for the cow Glas Gainach. And when Cian becomes deactivated and is turned into stone by the three trickster brothers, his son who is the helper of the story, finds him and lifts the curse off his father. This story - which is formed of two similar journeys of two different characters - is taken as an example by this article since the reader can see the activation and the deactivation of heroes better than the rest of the stories which usually narrate the story of one hero. The rest of the stories which include one hero, follow only that hero from the start of the adventure to the end. This hero may or may not follow moral standards, which is the next point of analysis.

This hero may conform to social norms and be morally acceptable. The heroic deeds he performs are rather conventional, but there are examples of the heroes who are not really moral, they usually belong to the Fenian stories. For example, in Story 6, Amadan Mor steals food, as does Dyeermud (Diarmuid Duivne) in Story 19. Or even the most important character Fin MacCool is more of a trickster rather than a warrior. There are examples that show him in a very unacceptable state, as in Story 20, as he lies to all the giants, introducing himself as a shepherd, even to the giant that is sent to ask for his help. A very ironic statement is made by the narrator, in the last lines of this story that reveals him to be an unfaithful leader, since the narrator exposes his inner thoughts, about keeping the magical small men, rather than all the Fenians of Erin (Curtin, *Hero-Tales* 462). Except for the last example, the rest of these immoral actions are narrated as heroic deeds, giving their performer powerful traits of fighting and bravery.

Propp found 31 functions in the wondertales he examined, and this article has found 38. The amount of the functions is irrelevant to whether the stories of Irish folktales in these two collections can fit into the pattern of the Russian functions. The reason is that not all the functions are active in one story. Some are used by the narrator, some cannot be used since the functions that lead to another function are absent, and the reader will find that some of the narrators have missed the functions that might have added extra beauty and creativity to the narration of the stories. Certainly, there are stories in these collections that fit into the pattern Propp drew for the Russian wondertale.

Following the functions of the Russian wondertale the reader will automatically remember examples of most of the functions in *Hero-Tales* and *Myths and Folk-lore*. As an example, Story 3 of *Hero-Tales* "Saudan Og and the Daughter of the King of Spain; Young Conal and the Yellow King's Daughter" fits in the pattern of Russian wondertale; this story contains different adventures merged into one adventure of one hero. Yet it still sits in the arrangement of the Russian wondertale.

The tales have been studied from the point of view of Propp and the order of their functions, which is saved throughout the tales of these collections. All the narrative functions and the motifs found in these tales repeat and

return along with the characters and their roles in the stories in these two collections and also other stories found in other collections that were gathered by the contemporaries of Curtin. Nevertheless, this feature is not the only one that sets the tales in one collection related to Ireland and its culture. Moreover, it is the exceptional dynamics of action that adds the identity of the tales as myths and folktales, and their being Irish adds extra uniqueness as well.

CONCLUSION

As it was mentioned in the introduction, this analysis intended to look for the similarities and differences in the narratives of these tales in order to discover if there are narrative functions available in a group of tales recorded orally and separately. The concept of narrative function developed by Propp reduced the stories to their units of narrative. The stories were studied based on their relation to time and reality. The narrators of some of the stories were examined. They were compared to the Russian folk wondertale, a sub-genre of folktale that Propp studied critically. The next step was to look at the tales in terms of their recurring characters and their roles in each story. Cycles and the recurring motifs and functions were the next objects of study.

It can be concluded that there are 38 narrative functions that form the narratives of the tales, while Propp identified 31 functions in the Russian wondertales he studied. These functions formed the raw material of the narratives that the narrators used in order to develop the story of the hero. An important point about the narrative functions is that not all the 38 functions are available in one story although there are paired functions which means that these functions are codependent; in other words, one function of the pair cannot be in one story without the other. The most important issue about the narrative functions is that regardless of their availability in the tales, their order is always unchanged. As explained above not all the functions are always active in the tales, and the absence of one function does not disrupt the order of the narrative functions.

The next central feature of the stories is the characters and their roles, along with the narrator. Propp identified seven character roles. The last one contained the princess and her father in one role, but this thesis decided that this role can be divided into two roles. Role number seven concerned the princess or the item the hero was about to rescue or retrieve. Role number eight then included the father of the princess or the owner of the magical item. The recurring animals, their magical features, their influence on the hero's quest and their typical roles were also discussed.

The narrator's presence was studied in the tales. It was discussed that the narrators' confession in the tales had three primary effects on the tale. First, the reader felt that heroes lived and fought next to ordinary people and have now disappeared in their supernatural lands. The second function which is a continuance of the first one, emphasizes the exaggeration that is felt in the narration of the tales of the hero's actions. Moreover, the presence of the narrator also prompts the listener as the future performer and narrator of the tales which in turn leads to the dynamism of the tales and their variations.

In terms of cycles, first, it should be noted that out of the four cycles of Irish mythology, three of them were identified through the tales. Nonetheless, there are stories which do not fit in any of the cycles. The three cycles which were recognized are: Mythological Cycle, Ulster Cycle and Fenian Cycle which dedicated the majority of the stories to themselves. The stories from the Mythological Cycle deal with very powerful characters who belong to the few races that, according to the Irish creation myth in *The Book of Invasions*, invaded Ireland and the major plot involves the battle of these races. It was explained about the Ulster Cycle that the major story type of this cycle in *Hero-Tales* and *Myths and Folktales* are cattle raids as Story 4 was given as an example, although three of the stories of the Mythological Cycle are cattle raids as well. Furthermore, as the name of this cycle reveals, it is related to the heroes of Ulster, such as Cuchulín or Conal who are of the greatest heroes in Irish mythology.

The Fenian Cycle stories in these two collections counted to 16 stories. They sit in the description of Journey and Adventure types of Irish myth. The characters are usually Fin MacCool or a warrior in his Fianna. Such as Dyeermud. A peculiarity in the Fenian tales, in comparison to the other stories, is related to the number of the heroes that the narrator follows. Often the narrator follows one hero and his actions; in some of the Fenian stories though the narrator follows two heroes at the same time and gives equal detail about each one. This happens while in other stories one hero is active, and when he becomes inactive - for example, he is dead, injured, or under a spell - another hero is introduced to the reader and this hero continues the story on his own. There are also common motifs in the Fenian stories; the most prominent one is the May Day motif which is related to one of the four celebrations in Ireland that marked the passing of seasons.

END NOTES

The name of the stories taken from the books are as follows
Stories from *Hero-Tales* are:

- Story 1:** Elin Gow, the Swordsmith from Erin, and the Cow Glas Gainach
- Story 2:** Mor's Son and The Herder from Under the Sea
- Story 3:** Saudan Og and The Daughter of the King of Spain; Young Conal and The Yellow King's Daughter
- Story 4:** The Black Thief and King Conal's Three Horses
- Story 5:** The King's Son from Erin, The Sprisawn, And the Dark King
- Story 6:** The Amadan Mor and the Gruagach of the Castle of Gold
- Story 7:** The King's Son and The White-Bearded Scolog
- Story 8:** Dyeermud Ulta and the King in South Erin
- Story 9:** Cud, Cad, and Micad, Three Sons of the King of Urhu

Story 10: Cahal, Son of King Conor, And Bloom of Youth, Daughter of the King of Hathony

Story 11: Coldfeet and the Queen of Lonesome Island

Story 12: Lawn Dyarrig, Son of the King of Erin, And the Knight of Terrible Valley

Story 13: Balor on Tory Island

Story 14: Balor of the Evil Eye and Lui Lavada, His Grandson

Story 15: Art, The King's Son, And Balor Beimenach, Two Sons-In-Law of King Under the Wave

Story 16: Shawn MacBreogan and the King of the White Nation

Story 17: The Cotter's Son and the Half Slim Champion

Story 18: Blaiman, Son of Apple, In the Kingdom of White Strand

Story 19: Fin MacCool, And the Daughter of the King of White Nation

Story 20: Fin MacCool, the Three Giants, and the Small Men

Story 21: Fin MacCool, Ceadach Og, and the Fish-Hag

Story 22: Fin MacCool. Faolan, And the Mountain of Happiness

Story 23: Fin MacCool, the Hard Gilla, and the High King

Story 24: Battle of Ventry

Stories from Myths and Folk-lore are:

Story 1: The Son of the King of Erin and the Giant of Loch Lein

Story 2: The Three Daughters of King O'Hara

Story 3: The Weaver's Son and the Giant of the White Hill

Story 4: Fair, Brown and Trembling

Story 5: The King of Erin and the Queen of the Lonesome Island

Story 6: The Shee an Gannon and the Gruagach Gaire

Story 7: The Three Daughters of the King of the East and the Son of a King in Erin

Story 8: The Fisherman's Son and the Gruagach of Tricks

Story 9: The Thirteenth Son of the King of Erin

Story 10: Kil Arthur

Story 11: Shaking-Head

Story 12: Birth of Fin MacCumhail and the Origins of the Fenians of Erin

Story 13: Fin MacCumhail and the Fenians of Erin in the Castle of Fear Dubh

Story 14: Fin MacCumhail and the Knight of the Full Axe

Story 15: Gilla na Grakin and Fin MacCumhail

Story 16: Fin MacCumhail the Seven Brothers and the King of France

Story 17: Black, Brown and Gray

Story 18: Fin MacCumhail and the Son of the King of Alba

Story 19: Cuculin

Story 20: Oisín in Tir Na N-Og

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