

Cigán, Michal

## Terminology

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### 3 TERMINOLOGY

In this section are presented further theoretical conceptions with emphasis on their key technical terms. The postulated terminology takes into account the aforementioned fact, that myths examined by IECM generally are the literary preservations of texts produced by folklore narrative tradition. For this reason mainly the folkloristic and socio-anthropological moments discussed above are contemplated.

- a. *folklore*: process of contagious communication of variant and commonly shared information (Ben-Amos 1971)
- b. *tradition*: process of intergenerational transmission of psychologically salient and socially interacted information (Boyer 1990)
- c. *narration*: complex structured information presented by means of any media; painted, written, spoken etc.
- d. *narrative*: complex structured information preformed orally during the formalized storytelling occasion
- e. *motif*: *ad hoc* and *ex post* chosen segment of the story organized around a character, item, event, action etc. (for instance *hero throws his weapon into waters*)
- f. *theme*: *ad hoc* and *ex post* chosen chain of mutually related motives forming a semantic unit (for instance *hero 's supernatural death*)
- g. *sujet*: linearly structured chain of motives or themes of narration
- h. *myth*: traditional narration of elites
- i. *mythos*: myth focused on acts of supernatural agents, primarily concerning the themes of cosmology and ontology, origin and meaning of physical and social reality etc.

- j. *epos*: myth focused on acts of human agents, primary concerning themes of power and politics as well as martial and military matters

### 3.1 Text, Texture and Context

In this work the creatively modified analytical conception of text, texture and context is used. It was developed by A. Dundes (1980) in order to define and analyze any folklore genre.

- a. *text*: an information transmitted by folklore item; in the case of oral folklore the information content of utterance (the story of tale, the content of spoken proverb etc.)
- b. *texture*: a form of folklore item; in the case of oral folklore language of utterance, its specific linguistic features and tools (poetic figures, meter, stress, pitch, tone etc.)
- c. *context*: the specific situation in which folklore item is actually employed; in the case of oral folklore it is the characteristics of performer, audience, circumstances of utterance
- d. *function*: statement of analyst about the purpose of the existence of a given folklore item

For the reasons mentioned above, analytical emphasis is placed on the area of context, since it fundamentally determines not only the text (and to some extent texture) of narration but also, as Dundes pointed out (1980:23-24), consideration of its social function.

Due to the philological nature of IECM, I decided to divide Dundes' category of text in order to avoid collision of its meaning (text: content of narration) with possible philological connotations (text: literary transmitted information). While in the first case the original form *text* is preserved, denoting the information content of narrative, the latter is labeled as *literary text*.

In order to take into consideration both the situational as well as textual background of myth, a further subdivision of category of context is made in the following manner:

- a. *context of situation*: social and historical setting in which certain narration is enacted
- b. *context of sujet*: set of textual segments, especially motives and themes of sujet, in which a certain textual segment is enacted

## Theoretical Background

- c. *context of tradition*: set of textual segments, especially motives, themes or whole sujets, of certain tradition, in which a certain textual segment is enacted

For comprehensive reflection of all the aspects of myth's complex context the subdivision is introduced in the category of *context of situation* by means of a three-segmented *contextual analytical axis*. It is inspired by the concept of macro-, mezzo- and micro-segment of A. Sørensen (2011).

- a. *micro-context* – unique situational and personal background of storytelling occasion; specific personality and social relationships of narrator, specific characteristics of audience and storytelling occasion etc.
- b. *mezzo-context* – general social background of storytelling tradition; universal or general social and cognitive processes: hierarchies and relations in society, mechanism of resource distribution etc.
- c. *macro-context* – arbitrary ecological and historical background of storytelling tradition; local natural conditions, military conflicts, migrations, exchange of ruling dynasties etc.

Factors, by which is affected the context of situation are of two basic types and overall it can be called *ontological analytical axis*.

- a. *genetic impact* – genetic predestination of physical and mental features of AMH, which are manifested by statistically observable tendencies of its individual and collective behavior
- b. *historical impact* – arbitrary historical and ecological stimuli, by which are modified genetically predestined features of AMH

Both analytical axes are intertwined, addressing the same problem from different viewpoints. By the contextual one the attention is drawn to different levels of situational impact on analyzed text. By the ontological one is underlined the fact, that all those three contextual levels, and thus also their texts, are affected by two fundamentally different kinds of stimuli. To put it differently, both aspects of the ontological axis affect all the three segments of contextual axis. However, macro-context is related mostly to the category of historical impact, whereas mezzo-context is more or less governed by inherited genetics and its local realizations.

Parallel maintenance of both analytical viewpoints helps to overcome the above-mentioned methodological clash of cultural universality and cultural exclusivity. Are the events and processes responsible for constitution of certain myth determined by universal biology of AMH or are they rather a product of local cultural

and historical development? Do they occur universally, in every human society, or do they seem to represent an exclusive property of single and time-space limited culture? Or more precisely; to what extent and which of the layers or segments of certain culture can be considered culturally exclusive? And conversely, for which aspect of analyzed myths it is necessary to admit its universal occurrence?

Questions of this kind, necessitating the paralleled maintenance of both viewpoints, arise especially in the field of IECM. Here it is typically assumed the cultural exclusivity of the examined matter. And just this assumption is most often and most seriously questioned by critics of IECM. They often point out, that many motives and themes treated in IECM are observed also in non-IE cultural traditions. It implies, according to their opinion, that there should exist nothing like a distinct field of IE mythology.

However, it is just this approach of two viewpoints, by which this kind of critique can be inhibited. It allows the IE mythologist to identify culturally endemic as well as culturally universal textual parts or layers of analyzed myth. And more, it allows him or her to make suggestions about the causes of this segmentation.

All the outlined above implies that analysis and further interpretation of IE myth should emphasize mezzo-context with serious concern to related macro-context. Text of myth should be examined in terms of possible relationship to universally distributed cognitive biases of AMH and related basic social structures and processes /mezzo-context/, often appearing cross-culturally. At the same time it is necessary to consider the fact that the final forms of all these processes, although rooted in the universality of AMH, are shaped by endemic historical and ecological factors /macro-context/ and therefore they potentially converge to cultural uniqueness. In addition, because the discipline of IECM deals with texts produced by elites, the reconstruction and further analysis of mezzo- and macro-contextual background of myth should be oriented just on the elite segment of society.

If the information about micro-context is at hand, naturally it is appropriate to use it. Nonetheless, this kind of data is rarely available and moreover, to some extent it seems to be analytically redundant. Dealing with politically selected and literary institutionalized myths of narrators and audiences long since dead naturally reduces the importance of this factor for the analysis of (P)IE myth.

The essential principles of folklore communication as well as process of its literarization discussed above, with related terms of proposed terminology, summarize the scheme in Figure 1.

Theoretical Background

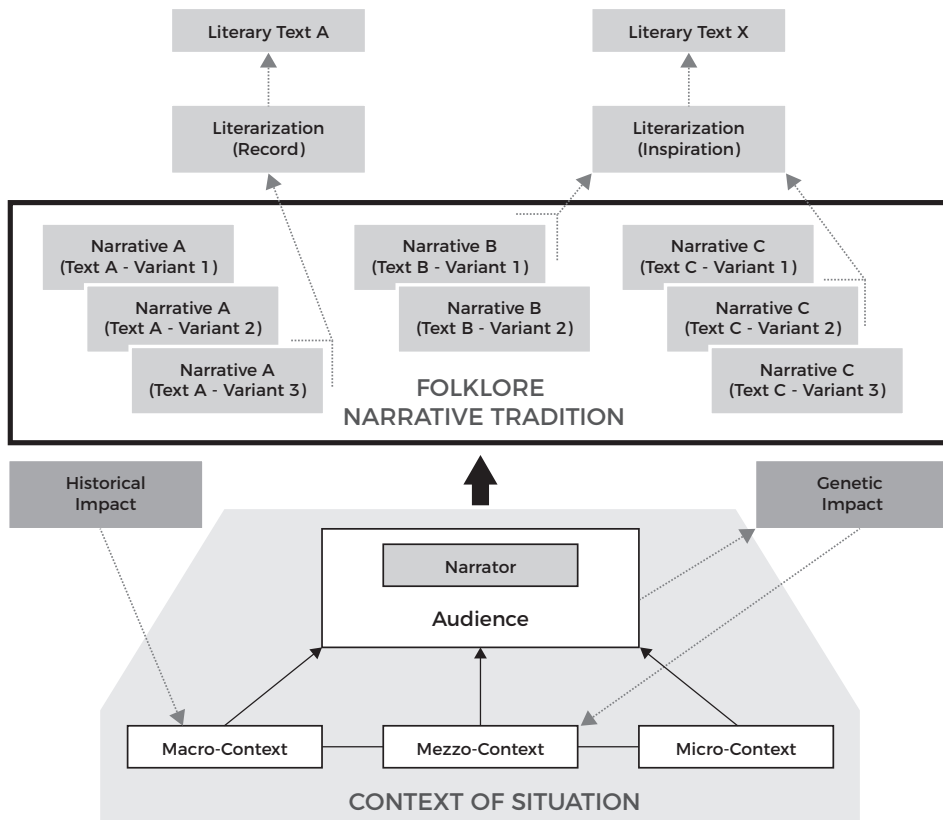


Figure 1