

article "Schattenspiel in Kerala." Seltmann's material should now be taken in conjunction with the field studies of Chummar Choondal (1978: 39-47).

Seltmann does not mention the diversity of performance styles and texts among Kerala shadow puppeteers. He does call for preservation of the tradition, but does not seem to be aware that Kerala shadow puppetry is being preserved in a most unfortunate way, in the practice of one single puppeteer whose puppetry has assumed the status of a standard and excluded many other obscure bearers of alternative traditions.

Following Seltmann's contribution is an article by another well-known student of Indian puppetry, Mel Helstien, who offers a brief iconographic tour of India's shadow puppet traditions. Helstien is mainly concerned with the shapes and colors of the puppets, not the circumstances of performance. The final article is a puzzling inclusion by Meher Contractor. In her persona as President of UNIMA, the world puppetry organization, she writes on the many kinds of puppetry practiced in the world today. There is only scant mention of India.

It is unfair to criticize a 41 page pamphlet for deficiencies. Yet there are so few works on Indian puppetry either traditional or contemporary that this book should have provided more within its small compass. The title is Puppet Theater in India and the cover illustration shows marionettes but the main subject is shadow puppets. There is all but the slightest mention of rod and string puppets of Karnataka and Rajasthan. There is also no information about idiosyncratic puppetry such as the Pavakathakali of Kerala, in which large dolls are danced to the rhythms of Kathakali dance drama. It is time for the true richness of puppet performances in India to become better known. This pamphlet does little to accomplish that end.

The composition of the pamphlet reveals another regrettable inadequacy which a publication of this sort should at least attempt to remedy. The two articles by Indians deal with the hopes and prospects of puppetry today; the two by a European and an American deal with traditional (and flagging) forms of puppetry. The pamphlet itself is an image of the failure of these two approaches to form a rapprochement. The foreigner has a dilettante's fascination with little dolls; the Indian wonders how these old ignorant ways can be made to serve Gandhi's ideal of an India newly alive to its common heritage. Western precision and thoroughness might join with Indian compassion and purpose to create a better understanding and a stronger refashioning of (at least) Indian puppetry. That this has not come to pass is unfortunate for both. The puppets, and this little pamphlet about them, could help us to know better if only the limits were not so clearly marked.

REFERENCES CITED:

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Richard M. Swiderski
Bridgewater State College
Bridgewater, Massachusetts

HUNGARY

BALASSA, IVAN und GYULA ORTUTAY. *Ungarische Volkskunde*¹. Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 1982. 869 pp., 319 photographs, 21 color plates, bib-

liography, list of journals and yearbooks, subject index, index of place names. Cloth 600 Ft. ISBN 963-13-0980-0. (In German)

Hungary can look back upon almost hundred years of systematic folklore research. The high standards of that research have for years been made accessible beyond the limits of the Hungarian language by journals like "Acta Ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae." As a crown to this long standing effort the late Gyula Ortutay who was the first editor of the above mentioned journal has invested his experience and scholarship to help produce the present *Ungarische Volkskunde*. The result can indeed be called a *summa* of Hungarian folklore.

Ortutay, who also is the founder of the Institute of Ethnography at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, did not live to see the publication of this volume. He died in 1978, a year before the publication of its Hungarian edition. Ivan Balassa has established himself as an authority on the history of farming instruments. He organized the Archives housing farming instruments at the Hungarian Agricultural Museum. The folklorist Ortutay and the ethnologist Balassa have joined forces in order to produce a volume that endeavors to cover all major aspects of Hungarian folklore or folk culture. It is only natural that a book with such high aims and published under such prestigious names raises great expectations. I hasten to add that the expectations are not betrayed. When I read the book I wished repeatedly for even more detail, not because the authors would have withheld information, rather because they succeeded in arousing my appetite for more. Apart from occasional remarks about controversies, the authors stay clear from disputed points and concentrate on systematically presenting the accepted facts of modern Hungarian folklore scholarship. As they understand it the term "Hungarian" includes all groups that use the Hungarian language no matter where they live, with the exception of emigrants. This vast language area is divided into four ethnographic units: Western Hungary, Upper Hungary (branching out into Czechoslovakia), the Great Plain, and Transsylvania.

Each area is characterized at the outset, but this frame is referred to later on only occasionally. It always looms in the back of the discussions but it does not interfere in such a way that it would cut up the presentation which gives prominence to fundamental topics over regional variations. The fundamental topics are arranged into three larger areas, society or social culture, material culture, and finally non-material or spiritual culture. The presentation is then rounded off by a short discussion of the present and future of Hungarian folklore.

The first chapter discusses briefly the main features of social relationships and introduces the various groups that constitute the Hungarian traditional village. Much of what is said here is already history, but it is an important precondition for a proper understanding of the following chapters. In the second chapter the material frame of Hungarian culture is introduced: the house and settlement, farming and its resources, food and nutrition, folk costumes and finally decorative folk art. The third chapter deals then with music and oral traditions, popular customs and celebrations, and some of the main features of the world of belief.

It is utterly impossible to discuss all aspects of this veritable treasure grove in so little space. I shall therefore touch only a few points, selected for treatment for reasons of personal predilections, without the claim that they would be particularly representative. In general it can be said that this book does not only describe Hungarian folk culture of today or of the recent past. It seems to me that it is also a document representing the search of a people for its identity. The authors make much use of linguistic and historical material to trace certain features back to the time when

the Hungarians took possession of their present lands or even further back into their finno-ugric past, if I may put it that way. They also keep track of influences from neighboring cultures in order to determine the factors that shaped Hungarian folklore.

The first two chapters are mainly descriptive; facts go before theories. Yet they do not merely describe objects like houses and their furnishings or costumes without considering the activities of the people that made use of such things. As a consequence the text becomes very much alive and the reader gets the feeling of coming in touch with the real life that made all those things into what they are. The third chapter changes in tone, because here we find some discussions of theories and positions concerning the definition as well as the interpretation of oral traditions as e.g. folk ballad and folk songs. It is hardly a surprise that the discussion exposes the ideological viewpoint of the authors when they define the basic term "Volk" and describe the situation of the people that created these songs and stories. But even if one may not agree with some of the interpretation given, the authors do not try to impose their opinion. They succeed in underlining aspects of such traditions that are often overlooked, as e.g. the social situation of the storytellers themselves and of their audience.

When discussing the characteristics of Hungarian folk songs, the authors point out that the song are not only realistic descriptions of situations but also contain very strong dramatic elements and that it is this dramatic element that makes them especially appealing. Such an inclination to dramatic performance seems to be one of the fundamental aspects of Hungarian non-material culture, and perhaps of the Hungarian mind. In the description of customs and festivities like the wooing of a young woman as bride, the wedding ceremony or a funeral, to mention only a few, the role of drama is clearly visible. However the inclination towards drama also appears, if in a somewhat oblique way, in the telling of stories or Märchen. It is shown how the storytellers are very sensitive to the expectations of their audience and to the atmosphere of their particular situation of storytelling. A storyteller would therefore compose or recompose a story by adapting it to the situation in order to achieve the best results. Here I find the analysis especially intriguing and challenging. But in the whole it is difficult to single out any particular point for special recommendation, because the book regales the reader generously with material as well as with ideas in every part. It is therefore more than just a handbook where one looks for established facts and secure information. It invites one often to reconsider other materials from a standpoint that was not given due attention before.

A short chapter on the past and future of Hungarian folk culture concludes the volume. In contrast to the past, the authors say, where items of folk culture were produced unconsciously as part of daily life and to be used as ordinary utensils, they are now consciously produced by specialists in the trade. In the new socialist and classless society the folk artist emerges as a specialist who is given clear directions as to what is to be accepted as art and what has to be rejected. Some of this guidance results from mere economic factors such as the demand for certain items over others. The ethnographer has practically nothing to do with this. Ethnography is conceived as a historical subject whose task it is to collect items and to study them. But it does not decide what has to be passed on and in what form. In spite of the particular socialist aspect of the question as it is put here, the problem has important implications for any society that today attempts to actively promote its own folk art for economic purposes.

Balassa and Ortutay have given us an exemplary treatise of a culture as a whole. At the same time they provided us with a source of reference and a key to the established result of Hungarian scholarship in the field that will be of value for quite some time. A look at the bibliography where most of the entries are works in Hungarian makes

us appreciate this immediately. On the other hand, although most of the Hungarian texts could not be used by many of us, the items arranged according to topics afford us still some impression of what has been done in any particular field. A separate list of journals and yearbooks provides good advice on sources of pertinent information. A detailed subject index facilitates the use of the volume. This is specially useful since, as I have mentioned, precious information can at times be found in unexpected places.

The publishers have to be recommended for the care they have given to the production of this volume. The text is accompanied by very informative line drawings. Most impressive however is the large number of photographs and the wonderful color plates. The illustrations alone let us have a glimpse at the impressive richness of Hungarian folk culture. However in some instances the exact relation of an illustration to the text is not too clear so that one would wish for a direct reference in the text. The only point which I had assumed would certainly be found in a handbook like this, but which was in fact not there is a list of institutions, university departments, and museums specializing in the study and conservation of folklore, complete with their addresses. Some institutions are mentioned in passing in the text, although detailed information as to their location is lacking. This certainly does not detract essentially from the value of this fine book, but it would have been a useful service to those looking for a more direct encounter with Hungarian folklore than this handbook can provide.

I hope that the recently published English edition would find a large readership and eventually become instrumental in stimulating this sort of integrated study of folklore.

NOTE:

1. The German edition is available at C.B. Beck, Munich for DM 125.000. An English edition "Hungarian Ethnography and Folklore" appeared 1985, distributed by KULTURA, Budapest.

Peter Knecht