REVIEW OF A REVIEW: Raphael Patai, "Review of the Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon", Journal of American Folklore, 92:352-4. Gyula Ortutay, et al. (eds.), 1977-79. Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon I-II, A-E, F-K. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest.

I think it is important to understand that American students and scholars of anthropology, ethnomusicology and folklore, because they do not speak or read Hungarian, have only limited access to Hungarian scholarship. Therefore, good reviewing, objective criticism, genuine interest can create healthy international scholarly relations. This is especially relevant in fields like cultural anthropology, ethnomusicology and folklore, where data is always treated on a world-wide level. Shabby reviewing, subjective criticism and a hurried or superficial interest can create endless misunderstandings, outright mistakes and bad feelings on both sides.

The problem is complicated because to comment on a book in another language is only one-half of the task. It is the original reviewer of the book that is in a crucial relationship between readers and author or editor, since his work encompasses one stage of translation in itself. My task is difficult in this case because this article is one-half a 'review of a review' and one-half a review of a book.

The work in question is the Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon I-II (1977, 1979). The editor-in-chief is the prominent, now late, Hungarian folklorist-ethnographer, Gyula Ortutay. The reviewer is Professor Raphael Patai who is a good scholar of Jewish folklore and, although he speaks Hungarian, is not really positioned so that he is aware of the whole field of Hungarian ethnography. It is possible, of course, that Patai was put in a difficult position. One does not know what occurs behind the scenes. We all get put into awkward positions, but one does wish that Patai had translated the title Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon as 'Lexicon of Hungarian Ethnography' rather than 'Hungarian Ethnographic Encyclopedia' (Patai, 1979:352), because one expects much more from an encyclopedia than from a lexicon or annotated bibliography. The claims made for the book are, of course, not only the reviewer's responsibility.

The editors of this ambitious project (the 'Lexicon' is planned in four volumes, of which three are published), claim thoroughness, plus full summaries and conclusions about the fields of ethnography, ethnomusicology, folklore, dance folkloristics, linguistics, and the many other related subdisciplines, as understood in Hungary. I believe that these are grandiose claims and that the volumes should not be offered as a presentation of a holistic view of Hungarian scholarship in these areas. The editors say that the projected four volumes will discuss nine thousand items (Ortutay, et al., 1977:9), so it is puzzling when Patai says: "The projected four volumes will contain 8,000 articles" (1979:352).

Because the books are arranged alphabetically, it is easily detectable that several important references, folk taxonomies and other critical terminologies such as those for artifacts, ethnobotanical terms, games, and food, are missing from the alphabetical listing. Patai informs us that "The strongest and most completely treated field is that of material culture...Folk art...is another very completely presented field" (1979:352). This is simply not true. For example, in the "H" section such terms as hajgatás (an important folk drama and mystery play), havajgatás (regional variation of calls), hamar leves (a kind of soup), and húsvéti rigmusok (Easter rhymes) are not discussed. Under the article dohánykertészet (tobacco gardening) the names of two primitive digging sticks, the kacor and furkó, were left out.

There are some areas in folklore that were carelessly neglected. The genre hősének (heroic song), a fundamental classificatory cluster for the comparative ethnomusicological research between the old style Hungarian folk music and poetry and its Asian relations (see, for example, Kósa, 1975), is only mentioned but not even casually discussed. The two wicked and witty trickster figures so common in Hungarian folk tales of Transylvania, the Góbé of the Székely populations and the Bugyuta of Szék (Nagy, 1974, 1975), did not receive their well deserved place in the Lexicon. The kakúkk (cuckoo), a bird with many important references in folk beliefs and superstitions, as well as the bolygólámpa (a portable lamp made out of pig's bladder), was left out. Many important wild plants and seeds, such as the boróka (Juniperus Communis L.), berkenye (Sorbus decipientiformis), galagonya (Crotoegus oxyocantha L.) are not in the Lexicon, convincingly showing that ethnobotany and ethnomedicine are not among well-known fields in Hungarian ethnography. The wild-berry gathering stick, the so-called csaptató (Hegyi, 1978:172), known in the western part of Hungary, was also left out. An important geographical and ethnographical region, the often cited Felső-Tiszavidék (see, for example, Gilyén, et al, 1975), an area denoting the northern part of the Tisza River and its surroundings, is for some unknown reason not mentioned in the Lexicon. Under the heading hold (moon), the planetary semantic value in Hungarian shamanistic beliefs and its relationship to the mythical tree of life (See, Diószegi, 1967) is not discussed. Two common folk games using coins, the csöke and pötyi, as well as the bicskázás (a competitive game with pocket knife), known also as benga or bendázás (Hajdú, 1971:203-06), are not described in the Lexicon.

In the fields of dance folkloristics and ethnomusicology there are also serious omissions and mistakes, although the reader should know that these are the two most thoroughly represented fields in the Lexicon. For example, under the title fegyvertánc (weapon dance) Gy. Martin says that it "is strictly a men's dance form and it could be found all over the world" (see Martin, 1979:91). This statement is extremely confusing. If Martin assumes that weapon dances around the world are performed by men only, then he disregards data from the Far East, mainly from Japan, Korea and China, regarding female sword dances and other weapon dance forms in which women do participate. On the other hand, if he means that in the Hungarian dance tradition the weapon dances are the property of men only, then he makes a mistake of mentioning the historical hajdutánc (dance of the heyducks) as a strictly men's dance form, for historical sources prove otherwise. (He makes this very clear himself when discussing the hajdutánc.)

The prominent ethnomusicologist, Bálint Sárosi, when dealing with the description of the special folk instrument, the gardon (hit-gardon) of the Hungarian populations of the Ghimes region in Romania (See, Sárosi, 1979:276), should have included the fact that the art and act of playing this musical instrument by women conveys important semantic and ritual values that are at least as revealing as data about the exact size, shape and description of the instrument.

There are other flaws apparent in the editorial policy of the Lexicon: one would want to know how selections are made. For example, after the title boldogasszony (Our-Mother-of-Happiness) the contributing editors cite two ambiguous and outdated works from 1885 and 1905 (Bálint and Igaz, 1977:313). Why these, when there are more recent and updated works on this very subject (for example, Schram, 1958, and Paizs, 1975), that are more easily obtainable and more relevant to modern inquiry? Of course, one has to remember to treat with respect the works of forerunners, but I see this as the major problem with the Lexicon.

We should know under what publishing policy selections of authors who will be included in a list of scholarly achievements will be made; in this case regarding a literature that spans nearly two centuries of Hungarian ethnographic investigation. Why were many earlier scholars and contributors to the development of this knowledge left out? Of these scientists, intellectuals and educated philanthropists, such names as Péter Apor, Dániel Cornides, Móric Benyovszky, János Horváth, János Károly Besse and Sándor Farkas Bölönyi are conspicuously absent. One might find it rather awkward that Imre Csenki remained unmentioned. He is the brother of Sándor Csenki, who is included; but this is illogical since the brothers (well-known gypsiologists) collected, did research and published together. Among other twentieth century students of ethnography, folklore and linguistics the names of Jenő Cholnoky, Béla Kálmán, József Erdődi, Kálmán Csomasz Tóth, István Erdély, János Balázs, Gábor Bereczky, Péter Domokos and Béla Hankó are not listed in the Lexicon. This is really shocking because this work is supposed to be an encyclopedia of Hungarian ethnography in its broadest sense. I was outraged frankly when I found that an eminent ethnographer/linguist, Samu Imre, who researched and wrote extensively on the Hungarian culture in Burgerland-Austria (see, for example, Imre, 1941, 1971, 1973) is not referred to in the Lexicon. While many names of talented figures and native masters of folklore were incorporated into the body of the text, Istvan Gozon, the peasant poet from Kiskunhalas (see Janó, n.d.) was left out. Similarly, the famous potter, Sándor Kántor, the well known painter, Ilus Király, and the late István Mátyás, a famous dancer and 'best-man', all of whom had a marked influence on folk art production and survival in their communities, are not found in the pages of the Lexicon.

Patai asks us to believe that there is no article "in which the Marxist position is explicitly stated to have bearing on a theoretical issue" (1979:354). While this obvious slip of Patai was corrected by Tibor Bodrogi, Deputy Director of the Hungarian Ethnographic Institute, in his reply (1979:355), I feel (and this should be emphasized above all) that the Lexicon is basically a product of a Communist-Marxist/Leninist theoretical orientation that is reflected throughout the volumes. The language of the Lexicon and its meaning cannot be separated from the

Socialist-Communist matrix of culture of present day Hungary. Just as the philosopher Wittgenstein rightly observes "...our talk gets its meaning from the rest of our proceedings" (1969:233). On a theoretical level, the Marxist-Leninist doctrine underlines all contingent empiricism and rationalism summarized in the Lexicon. It is sufficient to refer to the definitions given for the concept animizmus, animism (Ortutay, et al, 1977:104), and the strictly Bromleian idea of etnosz, ethnicity (Ortutay, et al, 1977:745), for the doctrinal influence is easily seen there.

Another disturbing feature of the Lexicon - especially for those of us who study the subject - is the inadequate and ethnocentric treatment of American-Hungarian culture and folklore. The minimal attention given to this field is inexcusable: immigration history, acculturation processes, ethnic distributions, immigrant music and folklore are not mentioned or even discussed (Ortutay et al., 1977:98-99). Here, too, references total only two works; none of them are written by reputable American-Hungarian scholars in this field. The editors simply disregarded major outstanding studies on Hungarian ethnicity in America and Canada, e.g., by Kósa (1957), Fishman (1966) and Dégh (1975).

Features of the general production of the volumes leave much to be desired; all readers will have reservations about the quality of photographs, printing and binding. A large number of black-and-white photographs are so blurry, dark, out-of-focus and small that they are hardly recognizable. Some of them do not reveal the purpose they were printed for (see, for example, Ortutay, et al., 1977:55, 135, 169, 180, 402). It is not clear to me, why, for instance, the editors had to squeeze sometimes as many as six to nine pictures on a five-by-seven size page, when two or three samples would do as well. Many of the pictures had been printed in previous scholarly works (with much better quality). There are a few fairly decent color prints. Knowing the strict policy on re-editions of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, it is highly unlikely that a work of similar nature will come out in the near future. For this very reason, it would have been advisable to use a finer quality of paper and a stronger type of binding. The Lexicon is not free of spelling mistakes either; for example, cigánytánc (gypsy dance) is misspelled "cigántánc" (Ortutay, et al., 1979:657), Magyarbecse as "Magyarbece" (Ibid p. 514), Géza Róheim's name is printed "Géza Rôheim" (Ibid. p. 437), and "hosszu furulya" (Ibid. p. 585-86), "long shephard flute", should have been mentioned also as hosszi furugla, for this is the most common name of this ancient herdsmen's folk instrument.

Finally, it seems abundantly clear that the general lesson to be learned from this brief exercise is that the idealistic overtones of Patai's review do not justify the many serious (and a few trivial) faults the Lexicon suffers from. Raising these points even in a restricted paper such as this about scholarly objectivity and criticism is not just intellectual gymnastics, for concepts like these are germane to discussion of cultural relativism and ethnocentrism and how it is we apperceive ourselves and others. In addition, this review should be looked at only as an attempt to grapple with an urgent need for a true reflection of the meticulous quality of Hungarian scholarship that we are so used to and that is highly regarded in Western social sciences. While I believe that this monumental work is a must for any serious student with interest in

Hungary and Eastern Europe, perhaps an English edition, if one is forthcoming, could be improved by the suggested additions. It should be, because it is a summary of almost forty years of scholarly pursuit, and shows the potency and maturity, as well as the weaknesses, of Hungarian scholarship.

László Kürti
Review Editor

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bálint, S. and Igaz, M. 1977. "Boldogasszony." In Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon. Gyula Ortutay, et al., ed., p. 313. Budapest; Akadémiai Kiadó.

Bodrogi, Tibor. 1979. "Addendum". Journal of American Folklore 92:355.

Dégh, Linda. 1975. People in the Tobacco Belt: Four Lives. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies.

Diószegi, Vilmos. 1967. A Pogány Magyarok Hitvilága. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Fishman, Joshua. 1966. Hungarian Language Maintenance in the United States. Bloomington: Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore and Linguistics.

Gilyén, N., et al. 1975. A Felső-Tiszavidék Népi Építészete. Budapest: Műszaki.

Hadju, Gy. 1971. Magyar Népi Játékok Gyüjteménye. Budapest: Sport.

Hegyi, Imre. 1978. A Népi Erdőkiélés Történeti Formái. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiado.

Imre, Samu. 1941. A Felsőőri Földművelés. Kolozsvár.

_____. 1971. A Felsőőri Nyelvjárás. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

_____. 1973. "Az Ausztriai (Burgerland) Magyar Szórványok". Népi Kultura-Népi Társadalom 7:119-135.

János, Ákos, ed. n.d. Mint Én, Földműves Költő, Szemelvények Gózon István Elbeszélő Költeményeiből. Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum.

Kosa, John. 1957. Land of Choice. Toronto: University Press.

Kósa, László, ed. 1975. Népi Kultura-Népi Társadalom. VII. Budapest: Adadémiai Kiadó.

Martin, Gy. 1979. "Fegyvertánc". In Magyar Neprajzi Lexikon. Gyula Ortutay, et al., eds. p. 91. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Nagy, Olga. 1974. Hősök, Csalókák, Ördögök. Bukarest: Kriterion.

_____. 1975. "Mesék és igaz történetek Széken". Népi Kultura-Népi Társadalom 8:303-338.

Paizs, Dezső. 1975. A Magyar Ősvallás Nyelvi Emlékeiből. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Sárosi, Balint. 1979. "Gardon". In Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon. Gyula Ortutay, et al., eds. p. 276. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Schram, Ferenc. 1958. "Adalékok a Boldogasszony névhez". Néprajzi Közlemények 3:154-166.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1969. On Certainty. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, eds. New York: J. and J. Harper.