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Review of: W.L. Heston and Mumtaz Nasir, *The Bazaar of the Storytellers*

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writing style. It provides insight on asceticism and the institution of *sadhu* to scholars of South Asia by firmly rooting theoretical concepts in the person and stories of a single ascetic. Finally, with Narayan's energetic style and rich ethnographic descriptions, the study is accessible to a popular audience interested in India and folklore.

The Bazaar of the Storytellers. By W. L. Heston and Mumtaz Nasir. (Islamabad, Pakistan: Lok Virsa Publishing House, 1989. Pp. 350, introduction, 13 drawings, notes, glossary, references. Rs 150)

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This is a fine book that will be of interest to scholars as well as to a general public. It is a product of a collaboration between the Pushto scholar, Wilma Heston, and the Pakistani National Folklore archives, which hold a large collection of tapes of *badala* (story songs) collected from the Qissa Khwani (Storyteller's) Bazaar in Peshawar, Pakistan.

Anyone who has visited Peshawar will recall it as a romantic and compelling city. It is the only true urban center of the Pushtun (or Pukhtun, according to the dialect), whose love of freedom and warrior ethic have both fascinated and dismayed Westerners since the days of the Raj. The Bazaar of the Storytellers is the major nexus for the continued invention, perpetuation, and reinforcement of Pushtun values; it caters not to outsiders, but to the Pushtun themselves; it is here that for generations exemplary tales of tribal valor and romantic entanglements have been originated and sung to musical accompaniment. Wilma Heston has culled for translation a representative sample of the vast repertoire of the bazaar performers and has offered the reader a chance to enjoy, albeit in adulterated form, the pleasures of the quintessential Pushto art form: songs of heroism and love, with a tale of the supernatural thrown in for good measure.

Although it remains the center for the production of these passionate *badala*, Qissa Khwani Bazaar itself is nowadays hardly picturesque: it consists primarily of shops selling cassettes to those Pushtun who have invested in the tape decks that have become so commonplace, even in the most remote regions. Singers, who once had their audiences limited by the range of the human voice, can now reach thousands and even millions of their countrymen.

But if the technology is new, most of the songs are not. Heston, using the tapes collected by the Folklore Institute and the chapbooks consulted by the singers themselves, finds some of the *badala* date back to the 17th century, if not earlier, and reached their final form in the 19th century. These songs, such as the famous romance of Adam Khan and Dur Khanai, and the heroic saga of the warrior Ramdad, are well known to most Pushto speakers. The storytellers thus play upon the listener's expectations, and different singers emphasize various aspects of the story according to their own mood and artistic intention. The aim, however, is always the same: to tell "a story sweet as sugar" and to inculcate the values of Pushtunwali, the Pushto code of honor.

But even though many of the stories are old, the tradition of originating these tales remains vital; some of the stories retold in this volume are about recent events, including a moving account of a tragic lovers' suicide that occurred in the 1960s. What is most impressive here is the tremendous continuity displayed. For the Pushtun, the world may have indeed changed, but the songs they listen to still exemplify much the same morals and the same sensibility as were expressed in the 17th century: warrior valor is honored above all but inevitably leads to death, love is powerful and doomed, treachery looms everywhere in a world that is sometimes beautiful but always hostile. These *badala*, in their tragic and highly romantic vision of life, offer us more than marvelous and exotic stories; they also allow an insight into the deepest problematics of the cul-

ture itself, such as the tension between female seclusion and the ideal of love, and between the constraints of kinship and the assertion of manly independence.

The translator manages to convey the flavor of these harsh stories without overdoing academic fealty to the text. (Interested scholars can, however, order copies of the tapes and notes, and a more detailed transcription is in preparation.) Of course, even with the best of intentions, songs must lose in translation, since the reader has to do without the driving beat of musical accompaniment. And the original poetry itself, in Pushto, has a rousing, thumping quality that the translator wisely has not attempted to replicate, except for the opening and signature couplets.

Instead of fruitlessly attempting imitation, she has happily elected to tell each story in clear blank English verse, relying on repetition and on local idioms and metaphors to give us the taste of the original. She also begins the book with a concise discussion of the social structure and worldview of the Pushtuns, so that the uninitiated reader has a context for appreciating the stories. Short introductions to each tale, along with explanatory endnotes coded to paragraphs, give whatever other explication is necessary. As a result, one need not be a scholar of the region to enjoy these tales.

In sum, I recommend this book not only because it has a charm of its own, but also because it has the merit of adding to our knowledge of the Pushtun, whose values of equality and liberty are so familiar to us, and who live in a world where romance, valor, and honor continue to be portrayed—at least in song—as the essential values of human life. The only difficulty is that the volume is hard to get, but it can be ordered through Lok Virsa Publishing House, P.O. Box 1184, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Magyar Népköltészet [Hungarian Folk Poetry]. Editor-in-chief: Lajos Vargyas; editor: Márton Istvánovits; editorial contributor: Ágnes Szemerkenyi. (Volume 5 in the series *Magyar Néprajz* [Hungarian Ethnography]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1988. Pp. 877, illustrations, bibliography, indexes. Price 321 Forint)

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This massive volume (the fifth in the series of eight on "Hungarian Ethnography," prepared by the Ethnographic Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) is apt to arouse both the admiration and the envy of folklorists outside Hungary. Admiration—because it contains an astoundingly rich array of materials organized in an exemplary manner—and envy for the position of a group of folklorists who have the unstinting support of the state that made its publication possible.

My own delight with this volume is in no way diminished by my puzzlement over the incongruity of the title and the content: the title is "Hungarian Folk Poetry," but the content is Hungarian folk literature in the widest sense. In the preface the editor-in-chief explains that "the term 'folk poetry' appearing in the title designates not only verse genres: our volume deals also with prose genres. It discusses everything from the tale and the legend to folksong and ballad, from folk prayers to riddles." While this statement describes the compass of the volume, it does not answer the question of why it was not titled "*népirodalom*" (folk literature), when that is precisely what it is about.

Let me list briefly the chapters the volume contains: folktale, the relationship between tale and belief, legends of origin, belief legends, historical legends, anecdote, proverbs and sayings, verbal riddles, true stories, life histories, autobiographies, the folk ballad and the history of its study, legend-ballads, the peasants' historical poetry, the survival of heroic songs in folk poetry, the