evidenced in this painting, as well as parallel representations conveniently reproduced in these two books, is less based on vernacular discourses than on literary ones, especially ethnographic treatises. Armchair ethnographers happily copied from each other, and literary authors in turn mined ethnographies for such images.

The outline of the essay as well as Stanzel's overarching finding serve as an organizing principle for the fuller, edited volume in which 14 further authors from Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Poland offer carefully researched chapters. Six of them cover general themes, such as the relationship between climate theory and national character as found on the painting, or on the role of dress in relation to this pictorial national stereotyping. Here, Austrian folklorist Franz Grieshofer notes that the clothing depicted is actually borrowed from upper-class clothing trends and not the more recently essentialized ethnic costumery. The final 10 chapters are devoted to the 10 types on the picture, with Wolfgang Brückner writing on the French (Brückner, perhaps because of his interest in folk art in general, is to my knowledge the only German folklorist who has made earlier efforts to analyze these types of painted typologies). Many of these essays uncover the same pattern: old clichés are but lightly updated on the Völkertafel.

Among the most important issues discussed in these works is the role of writing and publishing in the dispersal of ethnic stereotypes. The editor goes as far as arguing that the trail for written, literary precursors for the "Table of Peoples" is so thick, reaching back to classical antiquity, that one ought to reconsider the assumption that these ethnic and national stereotypes were originally of vernacular, oral provenence. Indeed, Jack Goody, in his *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), cites this Austrian tabulated depiction of peoples as an example of how writing imposes structure on the oral imagination, and how the table forces previously far more free-floating national stereotypes into a rigorous scheme.

The question folklorists confront in the face of such evidence is how to contribute to the dismantling of this long and happy interface between printed word, image and vernacular discourse. The Austrian Museum of Folklife and Folk Art shows the Völkertafel as part of its permanent exhibit, with a brief text that problematizes the piece within its historical context. Stanzel's book is for sale in the museum store. Yet just as a curator back in 1913 was able to bid on this particular ethnic comparison, many other curiosities like it, stemming from different eras and circumstances of production, are ready to be bid on from antique rows to E-Bay, awaiting the careful, historicizing treatment that Stanzel facilitated for this one.

The Eternal Storyteller: Oral Literature in Modern China. Ed. Vibeke Børdahl. (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999. Pp. xiv + 368, preface, 21 illustrations, three bibliographies, index, contributors.)

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This edited volume is based on papers and performances at the International Workshop on Oral Literature in Modern China, hosted by the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies in Copenhagen, Denmark, in August 1996. It is a kaleidoscope of ideas and approaches in the field of Chinese studies of oral performance and oral-derived literature. The workshop was joined by researchers from Europe, America, and Asia, as well as five master storytellers from China. The volume contains not only scholarly articles based on the workshop papers but also transcriptions and vivid pictures of the storytellers' performances. Thus, the book achieves its goal of not only presenting aspects of the world of Chinese oral performance in description and analysis but also bringing it to life.

The central thrusts of the volume are a search and a query: a search for a poetics of the vast corpus of traditional "storytelling and singing arts," known in Chinese as *quyi*; and a query for the rationale behind the long tradition's durability. The volume not only features recent studies that reflect the latest findings but, more significantly, works done by the early pioneers in the field of Chinese oral traditions, such as Boris Riftin, Chen Wulow, Vena and Zdenek Hrdlicka. The editor's introduction and John Miles Foley's "A Comparative View of Oral Traditions" open the

volume. While the introduction provides general information about the workshop, Chinese storytelling tradition, and its modem studies, Foley's essay is extremely helpful in placing the Chinese studies in a comparative framework. Finding it a universal phenomenon in human societies, Foley sees oral tradition as a specialized, highly economical way of communication. Judging that the earlier orality versus literacy hypothesis advanced primarily by Walter Ong was a "necessary first step toward appreciating oral traditions in their diversity" (p. 19), Foley argues that oral traditions bridge the assumed gap between orality and literacy. Highlighting the interpretive power of "tradition," Foley advances his ideas on "traditional referentiality," developed in his book *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Indiana University Press, 1995), as a poetics for oral traditions.

The rest of the book is divided into four parts. Part 1, "Historical Lines," takes up the question of Chinese storytelling from various historical perspectives. André Lèvy explores questions of why and how the earlier term for storyteller, *shuohuade* (literally, "tale-teller"), changed into the later *shuoshude* ("book-teller"). He Xuewei, in an effort to trace the origins of Chinese storytelling, lends support to existing theories about the close relationship between Chinese storytelling and Buddhism. This relation is based on two types of written sources of oral-derived characteristics, *bianwen* (transformation texts) and *baojuan* (precious scrolls). Lucie Borotová's piece takes an overlooked approach to the study of oral traditions, namely, the iconographic representations of entertainers in the Qing period (1644–1911). The well-known folklorist Duan Baolin deals with the history and prospects of storytelling in China. His view that the oral genres will continue to prosper in China is in contrast with Marja Kaikkonen's view, presented in the same section, that the traditional oral arts are faced with inevitable demise under the challenge of more modern entertainment and China's changing social environment.

Part 2, "A Spectrum of Genres," deals primarily with individual oral genres of quyi. Vena and Zdenek Hrdlicka provide a thorough report on a kind of small street theatre called *lianhua lao* (songs of the lotus flowers) that they observed in Beijing in the 1950s, a time when many foreign researchers could not work in China. Other papers in the section concern the folksong tradition in the Southern Jiangsu area, the singing materials written in the so-called women's script *(nüshu)* found in a southern Hunan region, as well as puppet and human opera.

Part 3, "Studies of Yangzhou and Suzhou Storytelling," highlights some of the most recent research on storytelling in Yangzhou and Suzhou. The essay by Susan Blader adopts John Miles Foley's concept of "immanent art" and David Rubin's notion of "constraint" and applies them to the evaluation and criticism of a "folklore text" made by the Suzhou storyteller Jin Shaobo based on his father Jin Shengbo's famous orally performed narrative. Mark Bender adopts a performance approach and focuses his article on the phenomenon of shifting in the performance of Suzhou *tanci* (Suzhou cantefable), which features pairs of storytellers. Bender defines "shifting" as the change made by the storytellers from one sort of genre, style, register, mode, means, or communicative channel to another. He argues that the prevalence of "shiftable" phenomena contributes largely to arousing and holding audience attention, as well as to the artistic strength and viability of this particular tradition of performance. Boris Riftin analyzes the various versions of the same story told by several schools of Suzhou and Yangzhou storytellers, comparing their mutual congruity with a text written down on the basis of storytelling during the Song dynasty (960–1127). Vibeke Børdahl's piece concludes this section with an inventory of the jargon and technical terms used in Yangzhou storytelling. This inventory goes far beyond the function of a glossary for this particular oral tradition. It represents storytellers' own "poetics" of their performing art.

The last section, "Performance of Yangzhou Storytelling," contains the Chinese transcriptions accompanied by English translations and synopses of five episodes taken from four famous tales told by the five invited storytellers. Students beginning research on Chinese storytelling will find the three bibliographies attached to the end of the book extremely helpful.

The diversity of materials and approaches and the spirit of scholarly collaboration among

researchers and performers hailing from three continents are the most distinct strengths of the book. However, I find the inconsistency of the translations of some terms, such as *quyi* (e.g., "storytelling," "telling and singing arts") and *shuochangyishu* (e.g., "prosimetric art," "narrated and chanted arts"), a weakness. Despite this limitation, which is inevitable in many nascent fields involving the translation of special terms, this informative book is a landmark collection of works on Chinese oral traditions, based on solid research and striking performances. The first of its kind both in Europe and in America, the book stands as a milestone in the emerging field of Chinese folklore study in the West.

"A Good-Natured Riot": The Birth of the Grand Ole Opry. By Charles K. Wolfe. (Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press and Vanderbilt University Press, 1999. Pp. xv + 312, preface, 47 illustrations, two appendices, notes, discography, index.)

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At the 1999 American Library Association conference in New Orleans, I was approached by a salesman for a new online used book supplier who bragged that he could find any book I could name. The first title that popped into my mind was Charles K. Wolfe's *The Grand Ole Opry: The Early Years, 1925–1935,* published in 1975 by *Old Time Music,* a British periodical. I became familiar with the work through a copy in the Folklore Collection at Indiana University, liked it, and had searched unsuccessfully at used bookstores myself for a copy to purchase. The salesman dutifully typed the information in the search box, clicked "Go," and then embarrassedly confessed to me that the title was not found.

With *"A Good-Natured Riot": The Birth of the Grand Ole Opry,* Wolfe has made my search for his earlier volume unnecessary. In this new work, he has taken his original project, incorporated 25 additional years of research and interviews with Opry stars and their families, and created a fascinating, readable history of the early days of this venerable radio program. *"A Good-Natured Riot"* brings us back to a time when "old-time" or "hillbilly" records were produced in small batches for regional sales only, radio was still considered a fad, and the Nashville establishment considered the Opry broadcasts an affront to the image of the city as the "Athens of the South." (Despite its new sobriquet of "Music City U.S.A.," there remains a palpable separation between the society of Nashville's old-money families and the participants in the city's most famous industry.)

The Grand Ole Opry was the brainchild of George Dewey Hay. Born in Attica, Indiana, in 1895, he was raised in Chicago and by 1919 was working in Memphis as a court reporter. He also wrote a humorous column called "Howdy, Judge" for the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* that described the interplay between a white judge and Black defendants. When the newspaper founded a radio station in Memphis and made Hay one of its announcers, Hay developed a radio personality for himself, blowing a steamboat whistle he dubbed "Hushpuckena." In 1924, he was hired by Sears to become the announcer on their radio station, WLS in Chicago. Hay was there when WLS inaugurated the WLS Barn Dance, the first successful radio program featuring old-time music.

In October 1925 he was invited to the opening of Nashville's WSM, owned by the National Life and Accident Insurance Company. (The station's call letters reflected the company's motto, "We Shield Millions.") Hay was offered directorship of the new station, and he accepted in November. He quickly saw that the station's tremendous broadcast range—on clear nights the broadcasts could reach both coasts—demanded more varied programming than the light classical and dance band music that had been scheduled. From his experience in Chicago, he knew that old-time music appealed to a broad range of listeners, especially in rural areas, and on 28 November 1925, Hay broadcast a fiddler named Uncle Jimmy Thompson from LaGuardo, Tennessee. The rest, as they say, is history.

Yet Wolfe describes the development of the Opry from a hit-and-miss programming operation of local talent into a highly structured cast of musical professionals. In the early chapters, Wolfe brilliantly lays out the context for