

on the notations, but he also ignores what seems a crucial point, whether or not the child really had to go to the bathroom. Surely there's a difference in body movement between the child who has to go and the child who's only pretending, a difference based on motive in the psychological sense. That there is such a difference is demonstrated by the fact that mothers are constantly gauging their children on such a basis, getting on or off buses accordingly. But Birdwhistell's transcription of this scene makes no attempt to render the "why" of the movement, and hence could represent equally well the false or the real kinesics of bladder control.

Ray L. Birdwhistell no doubt deserves credit for being the founder of kinesics and for directing our attention to the importance of the body in communication. But Kinesics and Context, while containing some interesting ideas, is not as good a book as could be written on the subject, and certainly not suitable for the novice in kinesics. For one thing, it sorely needs editing. In the Introduction Birdwhistell tells us that "Jones, a linguistics graduate student, dredged my writings and gleaned what he felt to be significant." There is scarcely one complete essay, in the sense in which we usually think of that genre, in the book. There is plenty of redundancy (which, ironically, Birdwhistell considers a significant aspect of communication), and the excerpts from papers and articles are not in chronological order, which results in minor inconsistencies and a lack of a sense of development. Not only the arrangement of the excerpts but also the writing itself make reading this book as tedious a task as analyzing 240 frames of an 18 second film for minute and, hopefully, significant changes. By my rough count Birdwhistell uses four metaphors in the book, two of which are combined and "mixed" in the sentence about Jones above. These minor jewels are scattered in a wasteland of jargon, needless abstraction and downright inanity. Consider this bit of advice: "Two devices have been tried for timing specific kines of kinemorphs by a single observer or team of observers. A stop watch may be used if its presence is not a significantly interfering artifact. For more covert timing, the observer can train himself to beat time with his toe hidden by his shoe. Some practice may be required before the full beat per second is mastered, but one can learn to record one quarter, one half, single, and multiple seconds with considerable accuracy." This and similar applications of officialese to mundane facts make Birdwhistell's style seem like an attempt of Stephen Potter and Kingsley Amis to consciously parody the scientific manner. It would be one thing if Birdwhistell presented evidence that his science was producing striking insights into human behavior, but because of the nature of this book, excerpts and essays, the reader remains unconvinced that Birdwhistell's writing is anything more than what Vonnegut calls "granfalloonery" attempting to legitimize itself.

A Singer and Her Songs. Almeda Riddle's Book of Ballads, edited by Roger D. Abrahams. Music editor, George Foss.

ix - 191 pp. Appendices.

Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970. \$8.50.

by W. K. McNeil

For many years one of Almeda Riddle's dreams was to have all of her songs preserved either on tape or in book form. Therefore she was more than eager to collaborate with folklorist Roger D. Abrahams on the present volume, although if the decision had been left entirely to her we would have

just another collection of song texts, albeit an important one. Wisely she assented to Abrahams's wish to focus the book on her rather than the songs she knows. This combination study of the performer and her traditions is proclaimed in the title and results in "something of a unique book in Anglo-American folksong scholarship."

Born on November 21, 1898 into a family of traditional singers, Almeda Riddle has, according to her own statement, been singing almost as long as she has been talking. The first number she actually remembers learning was the often collected "Blind Child's Prayer" which she committed to memory in 1905. She wrote this and the words of other songs she knew in a ballet book which was lost in the 1926 cyclone that destroyed her home and killed her husband and baby. Subsequently "Granny" Riddle began a second book and it is this collection which is used in A Singer and Her Songs.

Several of the songs Mrs. Riddle knows she got from her father. Others were learned from her mother, an uncle, John Wilkerson, her grandfather, and her husband. F. M. Russell, a Baptist minister, and a neighbor named Fanny Barber are the only non-family members who contributed any sizeable number of ballads to Mrs. Riddle's repertoire. As might be expected the songs are a varied lot ranging from the older ballads which "Granny" designates "classics" (most are Child ballads), such as "The House Carpenter's Wife" (listed by Child as number 243 under the title "James Harris" [The Daemon Lover]), to the American outlaw ballad "Jesse James" to Charles Harris's 1892 pop classic "After the Ball" and Gussie Davis's 1896 pop hit "In the Baggage Coach Ahead" to Jimmie Rodgers's hillbilly success "Mother the Queen of My Heart." Not unexpectedly the repertoire consists of far more Tin Pan Alley and recent items than "classics." Nevertheless it would be reckless to make judgments about the singer's aesthetics solely on this fact since, as Abrahams points out, not all items are equally well-liked by the performer.

Because A Singer and Her Songs shows tradition from the performer's viewpoint it presents a number of elements which are lacking in most folksong studies. For example, the singer's aesthetic is revealed, an important point since most works give the impression that a folksinger has no aesthetic concept. In Almeda Riddle's case the older songs are "classics" and hence authentic items which are not to be tampered with while it is perfectly permissible for anyone to change the nonclassics. Furthermore the good traditional singer presents rather than performs a song. Abrahams admits, however, that this distinction she might not have made if she had not been thrown into contact with several folklorists at folk festivals where she has appeared during the last few years. Almeda also feels that a song should be appropriate to the audience. Thus she is uncomfortable singing children's songs such as "China Doll" to adult groups. The volume also conveys the tight hold tradition has upon the folk. To them a song is more than just entertainment, it is a part of their life and in many ways embodies their values. The present book also should help put to rest the stereotype of the traditional singer as an ignorant, illiterate backwoods rube because Almeda Riddle's knowledge of ballad collections and studies is greater than that of some folklorists I have known. True, her awareness of scholarly works has undoubtedly increased as a result of contact with various ballad specialists at folk festivals and other programs where she has appeared but, on the basis of my own fieldwork, I would say that it is not unusual to find informants who are well acquainted with folksong literature.

Inevitably a reviewer must make a few criticisms of a book in order to prove that he has really read it. That is the purpose of this paragraph. Hillbilly music and its offspring, country and western music, seems to be slowly winning a grudging academic acceptance and Abrahams dutifully makes a gesture in that direction by noting that "The Boys in Blue" (usually known as "He's Coming to Us Dead") was recorded by Grayson and Whitter and "Man of Constant Sorrow" was recorded by both Emry Arthur and the Stanley Brothers. One wonders why these recordings are cited when no mention is made that "Rome County" (usually known as "Hills of Roane County"), "Black Jack Davey," "The Wayfaring Stranger," "Don't Go Out Tonight, My Darling," "The Sinking of the Titanic," "Cole Younger," "Twenty-One Years," "Sinful Flirt" (usually known as "Sinful to Flirt" or "Willie Down by the Pond"), "The Roving Gambler," "The Burglar Man" (also known as "The Old Maid and the Burglar" or "Old Maid's Last Hope"), "Jim Blake," "Letter Edged in Black," "Pictures from Life's Other Side," "Gambling on the Sabbath Day," "Mother, the Queen of My Heart," "Drunkard's Lone Child" and several others in Almeda Riddle's repertoire have appeared on hillbilly or country and western recordings, some of them originating from that source. Indeed, the whole impact of the mass media on Mrs. Riddle's repertoire is slighted. Perhaps this is because the informant knows the ballad scholar's checks for authenticity too well and simply refuses to discuss topics which she thinks may disclose facts which could be interpreted as evidence that her songs come from something other than pure oral tradition. It is evident, though, that either directly or indirectly some of the ballads Almeda Riddle knows come from hillbilly or country and western records. One other criticism is of Abrahams's use of *memorat* (p. 148). Like some other scholars he seems to employ the term as a subcategory of legend, clearly a different interpretation than that of Carl W. von Sydow, who coined the word. Von Sydow and Gunnar Granberg, who was one of the earliest commentators on the term, viewed the *memorat* as a category distinct from legend rather than merely another type of legend. The preceding quibbling, however, does not mean that this is a bad book. On the contrary, it is a sound contribution to Anglo-American folksong scholarship and indicates that we might arrive at a better understanding of folklore performance if more scholars would occasionally give the folk a chance to discuss their lore. Hopefully folklorists will in the future produce more volumes like A Singer and Her Songs.

Greek Folk Religion, by Martin P. Nilsson.

Foreword by Arthur Darby Nock. Index, illustrations, xx - 166 pp.
Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.

by Robert Thomas Teske.

Martin P. Nilsson's Greek Folk Religion has long been recognized as a unique contribution to the study of ancient history and of ancient religion. Composed of seven lectures delivered during 1939 and 1940 under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Norton Lectureship of the Archaeological Institute of America, and first published under the title Greek Popular Religion, the book was immediately hailed by classicists and archaeologists as a valuable treatment of "a somewhat elusive and hitherto neglected aspect of Greek religion."*

* Greece and Rome 10:30 (May, 1941): 142.