

Despite the *The Spirit of Carnival's* genuinely intriguing thesis, there are some problems. The argument that Holocaust literature, with its grim and horrifying vision of existence, is the inverse of Latin American magical realism suggests a tidier binary relation between the two genres than exists in reality. Danow notes that Latin American magical realism does not deny suffering and injustice; however, he downplays significantly the darker side of the genre in favor of its life-enhancing features, even though oppression, torture, and death are often as much a presence within the genre as beauty, mystery, and warmth. Another problem with the book is its repetitious nature. It continues to provide literary examples for its arguments long after the reader has gotten the point. Shortened, this could have been a powerful and moving article for a literary journal; as a book it becomes tiring.

Nonetheless, Danow's book succeeds in demonstrating how Latin American magical realism and Holocaust literature reflect and refract in literary form the carnivalesque spirit of inversion, intensification of experience, and hallucinatory strangeness. Drawing on the works of Mikhail Bakhtin, Carl Jung, James Frazer, and others, Danow is able to suggest a striking and subtle connection between two genres that on the surface would appear to have little in common.

John Cowley. **Carnival, Canboulay and Calypso**. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. xv + 274, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth.

John Fenn

Using mainly newspaper reports, John Cowley traces the development of calypso music during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. His analysis focuses on the establishment of the calypso tradition within the context of the celebration of Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago, though he also examines parallel happenings on other Caribbean islands. Descriptions published by travelers of the day, local folklore, and interviews with some later calypsonians provide other sources that Cowley weaves into his year-by-year account. The combination of the everyday immediacy of newspaper reports with first person accounts of travelers and calypsonians provides differing levels of perspective on the unfolding calypso tradition within Carnival. The addition of folklore provides background for some of the characters and performances that occurred during Carnival, including both those that have disappeared and those that remain today.

Cowley locates the beginnings of Carnival celebrations in Trinidad in the 1780s, citing the arrival of French Creole planters and their slaves as a catalyst. He follows the development of Shrovetide festivities along social,

political, cultural, economic, and nationalistic lines, and indicates that music and dance occupied central positions from the beginning. He notes the tension between the elite and lower class Carnival celebrations, as well as the various regulatory approaches of the French and British authorities. As changing, often reproachful, attitudes toward Carnival celebrations appeared in newspapers and official governmental proclamations, responses surfaced in the songs, dances, and other facets of the celebrations. Cowley argues that calypso music arose from a combination of traditions, and he finds African, French, English, and Latin American influences in the music, lyrical content, and presentation. In the conclusion, he briefly looks at other African contributions to Caribbean culture.

It is unfortunate that there are few references to other scholarly work done in the area, either general work on culture contact or specific ethnographic studies of the Caribbean. The lack of scholarly or ethnographic material does not, however, detract from the significance of this book, but it does indicate that only part of the story is being told. Cowley's book is more of a journalistic reconstruction than an investigation, but the result is rewarding for anyone interested in calypso, Carnival, or Trinidadian history.

Henry Glassie. **Art and Life in Bangladesh**. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997. Pp. five color plates + 511, illustrations and photographs, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth.

John Fenn

The title is apt, for in his latest book, Henry Glassie sets out to explore art, which he refers to as the "most human of things," as it is created by regular people in Bangladesh (1). They also happen to be some of the most talented and important artists in their respective crafts, and the book is thick with in-depth looks at their aesthetic styles. These detailed studies are woven into a larger narrative about economic and social change across the Bangladeshi countryside. As world-wide economic forces come to bear on markets for small, handmade crafts, the artists responsible for the goods dutifully and willfully change their art—but only to a point. Glassie provides vivid insight into the decisions and actions, both artistic and economic, taken by some of the people he came to know so well while conducting the fieldwork for this book.

The arts that Glassie investigates are not limited by type or genre, nor are they limited by the number of artists practicing any given craft that he was able to talk with and portray in the book. He begins in the capital city, Dhaka, and discusses the construction and painted decorations of rickshaws