

Losing our Masks: Traditional Masquerade and Changing Constructs of Barbadian Identity

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ABSTRACT

Masquerade has been central to Barbadian performance culture. Such cultural forms as the 'Shaggy Bear' and 'Mr. Harding' have been part of the African-Barbadian historical narrative and lived experience. Many performed their way through slavery, emancipation and colonialism. In the independence period, these forms were corralled into the nationalist agenda and were given the additional responsibility of illustrating an ideal Barbadian cultural identity. Their African-Barbadian elements were seen as necessary ammunition in the new era against the colonial notion of the ever-anglicised Barbadian. However, as the policy makers redesigned the masquerade to fit the presumed ideal identity, masking traditions that were deemed problematic were changed, some were lost, and/or excluded from the national space. This article examines the ways in which traditional masquerade gives insight into changing constructs of Barbadian identity. It captures some of the histories that have been marginalised in the official historical narrative of the island. It also explores some of the challenges faced in designing a national culture in a Caribbean space.

Keywords

masks, Barbados, slavery, African-Barbadian, masquerade, Aunt/Mother Sally, Shaggy Bear, Bank Holiday Bear, Mr. Harding, Stilt man, Donkey Belly Man, dried banana leaves, Barbados Landship, Bum Bum/Bumbulum/Tuk band, Banja, Kadooment Day, Crop Over, Caribbean identity, CARIFESTA, Marcus Garvey.

Designing identity

Identity formation is always a process of becoming. Cultural identity is created through recall of ...*those*

historical experiences, those cultural traditions, those lost and marginal languages, those marginalised experiences, those peoples and histories that remain

*unwritten. Those are the roots of identity.*¹ Hence the strands of identity, though gathered from the past, are used to weave narratives of understanding in the present.

In 1974, Kamau Brathwaite had advised that it was the Caribbean folk who could assist in the act of re/designing cultural identity in the independence period:

*But enough has been said to indicate that for the Caribbean, as elsewhere, the base of culture lies in the folk, and by that we mean not in-culturated, static groups, giving little; but a people who, from the centre of an oppressive system have been able to survive, adapt, recreate;*²

The oppressive system to which Brathwaite referred was slavery, a system which ignored, and/or sought to reduce the humanity of the enslaved. Enslaved peoples were designated as, for example, 'chattel', 'savage', 'heathen' and 'beasts of burden'. These very ethnocentric, and often racist, points of view were easily stated because consciously and unconsciously, many Europeans did not see the enslaved Africans as possessing human qualities like themselves, or possessing the ability to create philosophical world views, cultural norms and practices.

To the contrary, the enslaved Africans were human with conceptual maps that produced meanings for their lived experiences. Their cultural expressions enabled them to create a sense of community, to re/live and re/create traditions and to negotiate their identities. Thus Brathwaite's call to look to the folk was a call to acknowledge the humanity and resilience of those who had prevailed, who ... *have devised means of protecting what has been gained*³, despite several centuries of enslavement and colonisation.

In the case of Barbados, it was especially imperative to seek the vision of the African-Barbadian majority in the creation of the identity for the new nation. This was because the colonial construct of Barbadian identity had deliberately ignored the African-Barbadian heritage. This colonial narrative carried the oft-repeated themes of British rule in Barbados and the supposedly inevitable result that all cultural practices (especially African-Creole) of the Barbadian enslaved and their descendants had been erased.

Note the traditional misleading boast, as late as the 1990s, in the publication of the Barbados Tourism Authority: *Our cultural roots are grounded in over 300 years of British heritage.* Or this explanation which attempted to broaden the issue beyond one of loss, but still foregrounded the Anglo-centric discourse: *The English were the dominant group for three hundred uninterrupted [sic] years and thus the loss and concealment of cultural practices and forms of the majority African population were more evident here than in any other territory of the region.*⁴ Hence, the narrative of acculturation continued to hold sway in the discourse, as though the process of creolisation had never occurred, as though the enslaved Africans and their descendants had not devised ways and means to counter the cultural onslaught.

The elite had woven these colonial narratives of Barbadian identity, with support from the middle classes. These were the ... *in-culturated, static groups, giving little,*⁵ who had adopted the European value system. And the middle classes were seen as the Afro-Saxons of the Caribbean, who represented the *white collar, (old) school tie, the "right" newspapers and periodicals, an elitist "Oxford" accent, visits to the Mother Country. To be Afro-Saxon became a sign of success.*⁶ Contrary to the labouring classes and the poor, this group actively pursued a Eurocentric construct for their narrative of Caribbean identity.

Consequently, the challenge of negotiating and engendering narratives of Barbadian identity suited to the new era of independence was immense. And those who opted to, or found themselves weaving such narratives in the 1970s, did reach out to these descendants of the enslaved, especially those in the poor and working classes. They journeyed into the villages and the plantation tenancies for these elusive strands of identity. And they especially sought out the masquerade entities, as many had memories of being entertained by them when they were children. Yet few acknowledged and treated them as tangible proof that African-Barbadian culture had prevailed, (Brathwaite's *miraculous maronage*),⁷ despite colonisation.

Ironically, these very designers of identity had been more spectators to the activities of the entities they sought to engage, rather than practitioners themselves. As a consequence, they came to the task of corralling

them to the national stage without a clear understanding of the myriad of meanings that they had collected over time. Or they were only interested in the visual impact of the masquerade, with little concern for any other aspects of its identity. As performances continued, other meanings evolved, usually not in agreement with what had been previously determined.

What resulted was that interventions occurred from a variety of agencies, and masks were removed. Or, attempts were made to freeze the cultural form in its appearance and meanings, in an effort to preserve it in the way it had emerged when first brought on to the national stage. Then people were dismayed as the masquerade was changed, creating several contradictory meanings, none deemed suitable to the time and space. Finally, the edginess that once entertained, became uncomfortable and eventually was deemed to be 'unsuitable'. Ultimately, one of the Barbadian masquerade entities was barred from the national space.

The sections that follow review the historical narratives of Barbadian masquerade in enslavement and the pre-independence eras. They demonstrate that there is evidence to challenge the colonial narrative of loss of culture during enslavement and emancipation as the enslaved Africans and their descendants performed their masquerade rituals into independence.

The masquerade culture of the enslaved

In the 17th century, Barbados quickly became the ... *quintessential New World slave society*⁸ as a result of the Sugar Revolution. Thousands of enslaved Africans were brought to the island to work on the sugar plantations. Their ethnic origins are yet to be fully determined as these were the early years of the trade in Africans and records only capture the ports of departure on the African coast. Yet some writings have advanced possible ethnic constructs based on these records.⁹

The cultural expressions of the African enslaved and their Barbadian descendants, such as their masquerade and the veneration of their ancestors, reflected their lived experience, their ways of struggle. They produced meanings and conceptual maps that especially spoke to world views and experiences that went beyond the dehumanising realities of slavery. Their masks, music

and dances were ... *the sustaining lifeblood of these events ... as well as the germination of ideas beyond the reach of those who brutishly supervised them for the rest of the year.*¹⁰

Further, there was no separation between the secular and the religious when they constructed meanings about their masquerade. *There was no real distinction between these worlds in a way that a post-Renaissance European was likely to understand.*¹¹ Both the spirit world and the material world were 'parallel', allowing spirits to *travel between their world and the human or animal world.*¹² And the secular and the religious were combined, making all of the components of the masquerade, such as the drums, the materials for the masks and the dancing and the singing, the active re-enactment of the philosophy that guided their lives:

*And because the music and dance was misunderstood, and since the music was based on tonal scales and the dancing on choreographic traditions entirely outside of the white observer's experience ... their music was dismissed as "noise", their dancing as a way of (or to) sexual misconduct and debauchery.*¹³

Such was the case for Richard Ligon who provided the earliest testimony of masquerade culture in Barbados. Between 1647 and 1650, the very early years of enslavement, he had repeatedly witnessed enslaved Africans felling trees to make drums for their rituals. He noted the following:

*In the afternoons on Sundayes, they have their Musick, which is of kettle drums, and those of several sizes; upon the best Musicians playes, and the other come in Chorasses: the drum all men know, has but one tone; and therefore the varieties of tune have little to do in this Musick*¹⁴

Here Ligon's lived experience of European cultural norms did not permit him to reach beyond dismissing the enslaved African drum rhythms, as he could only hear one tone. However, beyond his prejudice, what Ligon did observe was the practice that would become the established ritual of enslaved masquerade, that of utilising Sundays and holidays as the key moments for masquerade. Research shows that the enslaved treasured Sundays and holidays, the days not designated for plantation labour, and utilised these few days off per

year to explore their cultural norms. In 1768, Rev Thomas Wharton made the following observation:

*It is true they labour much... but then they have not only their Hours, but their Days of Recreation, and, for any purpose deny them these Intervals of their diversion, and you cannot take a more effectual Step to break their Hearts.*¹⁵

Handler and Frisbee also commented on how much the enslaved valued their designated days off and how the system granted the time to ensure its continuation:

*... these days provided a degree of freedom which contrasted sharply with the drabness and regimentation of everyday life; thus holidays (along with the various activities pursued on these days) temporarily reduced the severity of the system for the slave and by so doing helped to perpetuate the slave system itself.*¹⁶

By the 1780s, Dickson observed that the enslaved peoples still danced, sang and played their music on Sundays and holidays on the plantations. He also noted that in some cases, the wooden drums, especially the *coromantin drum*, which he termed a *most ear piercing instrument*, did not prevail. Instead, the enslaved musicians had *substituted, in its place, a common earthen jar, on beating the aperture of which, with extended palms of their hands, it emits a hollow sound, resembling the more animating note of the drum*. Such an occurrence could have resulted from the passage of legislation that sought to ban the playing of drums, and/or through the creative enterprise of the musicians.¹⁷

Moreover, Hughes provided a rare eyewitness account of the creolisation process produced through the masquerade. He observed that by the late 18th century, the various African ethnic groups performed their masquerade according to their world views, but were united in one of the materials used for the mask:

*Our Slaves, in their Mirth and Diversions, differ according to the several Customs of so many Nations intermixed: however, all agree in this one universal Custom of adorning their Bodies, by wearing Strings of beads of various colours, intermixed sometimes by the richer sort of House Negroes with pieces of Money. These beads are in great Numbers twined around their Arms, Necks, and Legs.*¹⁸

Observers had already noted the enslaved practice of collecting various grasses after their labour on the plantations, to make the adornments such as Hughes described. African masquerade practices would also have called for the use of organic materials, such as the grasses, leaves and wood from tree trunks, for the making of masks for the face and the body.

Orderson captured both the secular and religious components of the masquerade between circa 1780 and 1820. He observed the ritual for the veneration of the ancestors:

*It was no unusual thing to see, as each Sunday returned, hundreds,- nay, thousands of these poor deluded creatures 'throwing victuals' and with drumming, dancing and riot practising frenzied incantations over the graves of their deceased relatives and friends.*¹⁹

The enslaved in Barbados were confronting death all the time, and again this is a clear instance in which they used their masquerade to reinvest in their thought systems and traditions and construct their identities. Hughes had lamented that the enslaved were *tenaciously addicted to the Rites, Ceremonies, and Superstitions of their own Countries ... even such as are born and bred up here*. And their rites and ceremonies comprised the masquerade as 'public spectacle', becoming the *social phenomenon ... (which included) music, food, drama, narration, a stage or other performance props*.²⁰ The enslaved continued to honour their ancestors and perform the rituals for their dead, despite several attempts to prevent them from doing so.

And they claimed the Sundays, despite protest from the Church. For example, the Moravian missionaries continually blamed the *negro dance* for the poor attendance of their congregation on Sundays, because hundreds of their parishioners would attend the open air dance instead. They also noted the *dancing and revelry, in which too many are engaged from Saturday evening to Sunday night, and which preclude attention to more serious concerns*.²¹

Also by the 1820s, the days for masquerade included the plantation holiday set aside for the Harvest Home celebrations. Introduced by the planters in the late 18th century, this English festival was quickly creolised by the many African-Barbadian masquerade traditions. Even

the name of the celebration was transformed when the festival became known as Crop Over.²²

These celebrations were held on the plantations at the end of the sugar crop with the official activities based in the plantation yard and continuing in the villages afterwards. Planters developed the practice of hiring a band of enslaved musicians for the celebrations and the dancing. For example in 1828, the Mount Gay plantation paid twelve shillings and six pence for the following: *Music for the Negroes to dance at their Harvest Home.*²³ In this way the plantation system sponsored the very masquerade practices it sought so hard to stamp out.

Bank Holiday masquerade

The emancipation period of post-1838 witnessed a dramatic change in the performance traditions of the formerly enslaved as the Church commenced an intense process of conversion. Through the provision of primary education and the teaching of the Christian faith, they gained greater control over the lived experience and world views of the new citizens. By the beginning of the 20th century, Sundays were no longer devoted to the observance of masquerade but to Church attendance and bible study in 'Sunday School'. Eventually masquerade traditions in their entirety became known as *Banja*, a musical instrument, but in this case a pejorative term for African-Barbadian culture. For ... *respectability could not accept Banja, that most African of Barbadian musics, because it was low-class non-music performed by low class people outside rum-shops.*²⁴

What the removal of Sundays meant for masquerade practitioners was that they had lost fifty-two occasions for the observance of their rituals. It was also a material and spiritual attack on traditions that had anchored their enslaved ancestors for over two hundred years. In response, the practitioners took many of the rituals out of public view, submerging their meanings and creating that 'Brathwaitian' space where [t]he *unity is submarine.*²⁵ Thus many practices were lost and/or transformed in the continual process of creolisation.

In this way, Bank Holidays became the key days for the public performance of their masquerade. A British institution bestowed upon the colonies, Bank Holidays, or public holidays, were the days on which the banks

were closed, granting many sections of the general public a day free from work.²⁶ Hence, it was on the Bank/Public Holiday of New Year's Day in 1847, that Charles Day witnessed an African-Barbadian band of musicians playing for a dance:

How the band did work! – how they stamped and wagged their heads in all extasies of intense excitement, feeling to the full the delight of the dancers...

*No one within the witchery could keep still. Black nymphs, sleek as moles, showed by their contortions, how impossible it was. Arms voluntarily went up and down, and dark feet writhed like eels [sic]... this was dancing with the soul in it!*²⁷

In the early 20th century we have eyewitness accounts of the performances and can garner some details of the masking. Emphasis is placed on memory as respondents share their narratives of the masquerade. The spaces of performance were the villages, the streets, the plantation yards and popular gathering spots such as rum shops. Supported by their beliefs and centuries of ancestral heritage, these masquerade entities danced and played their way through Barbadian colonial space, despite official attempts to prevent them from doing so.

For example, note this 1900 regulation which targeted any individual *found performing upon any instrument called the pump, or upon any loud musical instruments within twenty five yards of the highway.* A pump was a drum and the penalty for breach of this regulation was five shillings, a hefty sum for a labourer in the 1900s.²⁸ Yet Barbadian musicians continued to resist state intervention. They played the drums and performed their music in the streets.

The music for the masquerade was provided by what was known as the 'Bum Drum band', or the 'Bumbulum band', or the 'Tuk Band', as different villages and parishes had various names for the musical group. In Barbados, the Bum Drum/Bumbulum/Tuk band, consisted of the fife or penny whistle, one or two kettle drums and the base drum. Percussion instruments, such as the triangle, seen by Day in 1847, and the conch shell could also be included. Often, a guitar man and/or banjo player would stroll with the band, or on the streets on their own.

Born in 1931, Aubrey Deane clearly remembers Bank Holiday activities that he witnessed as a boy growing up in the rural parish of St. Joseph.

There was tuk band all round de place and then they would go down to the Bay Houses down Bathsheba, play and get money. White Bajans lived there. Dr Scott had business in St Michael and Mr. Weatherhead. They would go there first. Then they would come up to the plantation yards to get something from the managers. They would then go to the rectory, then to the doctor, then the rum shop. They would move from one rum shop to the other. Eat corn beef and biscuits. Then spend the late afternoon in the village.²⁹

Lionel Smith lived in St. Simons in the rural parish of St. Andrew. As a child in the 1930s, he remembers that on *Bank Holidays, we made our local entertainment and Boxing Day was no different..* Harold Best had a tuk band which performed for the village:

They came straight within ten feet of our front door. The music stopped. They had come to pay their respects and to offer greetings to all in the house. ... They expected us to show our appreciation by offering a 'Three gill bottle' of rum and a bottle with water. There was no offering of a glass, for none was needed. These experienced men would all get two drinks from the bottle without it ever touching their lips, and without spilling a drop.³⁰

Deane remembers masquerade entities such as the stilt walkers, and the band, as well as those who played guitars and the banjo. He especially remembers the antics of the banjo player from the village:

A one foot fella, Stanley, played banja and on bank holidays he would go to de alms house and play banja, and people in the district would listen to de music. Dance around on that peg leg. Dance on the peg leg and spin. He dug wells for a living. He dug wells for the plantation.³¹

Edward Stoute remembered this practice for the city area of Bridgetown:

There was the Tuk band, playing away with its merry tunes ... and the 'tilt ma'. Some of these men stood on stilts about ten feet high. [They danced] to the music

of the Tuk band, comprising a 'penny flute', a steel, a banjo, sometimes a guitar, and a couple of drums, one small, and one large. These provided all of the music for the dancing of the 'Joe and Johnny' and several other types of dance.³²

Elombe Mottley also remembers additional instruments: ... *a shak shak, a jawbone of an ass or more likely a cow, a bottle, a shookster, or bread-paper and comb added in all types of combinations.³³*

A Bank Holiday masquerade entity was the 'Bank Holiday Bear', which some respondents have argued was separate to the entity known as the 'Shaggy Bear'. Here we note two rare descriptions of this entity. An eighty-six year old respondent remembers that the Bank Holiday Bear was a man dressed in women's clothing, sometimes a dress or nightgown. His distinctive feature was the protruding backside which had been stuffed with newspaper and/or cloth and which moved vigorously when he danced. He would...*skin cuffins, put his backside at you, and wuk up like a skeet.³⁴* She distinctly remembers that her father would shield her from seeing the Bank Holiday Bear and would comment on what he saw as the rude and crude gyrations of the masquerade.

Another narrative takes note of the Bank Holiday Bear of Brittons Hill, St. Michael. Known as 'Gotch', he wore a mask and a dress that had been cut into strips at the edges. He was famous because of the way he danced and moved the stuffed backside, which was reported as being highly entertaining. Respondents especially remember him dancing on Empire Day and August Bank Holiday.³⁵

On the other hand, the distinguishing feature of the Shaggy Bear was that this masquerade entity was covered in strips of dried banana leaves and spun round and round, which caused the leaves to move. A well-known figure, one seventy-five year old respondent argued that the concept of 'Shag' evolved from the use of the banana shag as the material for the strips that adorned the Shaggy Bear. And he insisted that Shaggy Bear was brown in colour and would make a horrific noise as it danced, because of the rustling of the dried banana leaves.³⁶ Other respondents clearly remember being afraid of the Shaggy Bear when they were children, because of its colour and the rattling sound it made. And some have given testimony in which they

remember that not only would Shaggy Bear be dressed in banana leaves, but so would the Stilt walker and sometimes the Donkey man.³⁷

However, another narrative explains that the Stilt walkers' masquerade was made of cloth, mostly of ladies' clothing. So too was that of the Donkey Man:

The Donkey Belly Man wore a frame around his body, the horse head in front, the body and tail behind. Made of cloth padded out. He was usually dressed as a woman. The Stiltman too wore women's clothes, with layers of voluminous ruffled petticoats and drawers reaching just below the knees ending in a frill. Both men showed by their actions and gestures that they were aggressively masculine.³⁸

Rollins remembers that there were several Stiltmen in a district. In his parish of St. Michael, the performances of the 'Martindale Stilt man' differed from that of the 'Bayland Stiltman'. Both wore a skirt of coconut leaves that had been roughly torn from the tree.³⁹

Whether or not the Stilt man was an essential part of the masquerade has been one of the main arguments of respondents. Occasionally the Bum Drum/Bumbulum/Tuk band ensemble was called the 'Stilt walkers band' as these masking entities were seen in the company of the band. The lone photograph of a masquerade performance

in the 1880s in a Barbadian village shows the band with a masked Stilt walker in the troupe.⁴⁰ (Plate 1)

Smith reflected on the performance of the Donkey man masquerade in St. Simons, seeing him as a central spiritual entity for the band:

The Donkey man was prancing with high stepping feet motions, indicating that the horse/donkey was resisting being mounted by the horseman ... The Donkey man was galloping to the beat of the bass drum, making a circle in front of the musicians, and marking out the limit to which the boundary of the viewers could advance... His patterns, and changes in direction seemed to be driven by some inner force, rather than by choice.⁴¹

The other masquerade entity in which a male portrayed a female was known as 'Aunt/Mother Sally'. 'Aunt Sally' was the name of the 1936 entity as it performed at the May Day Bank Holiday celebrations.⁴² 'Mother Sally' was another name for the entity and the one that it was hailed by at independence. Again the male performer used cloth and other materials to create an exaggerated bosom and backside. And the performer was masked. (Plate 2)



Plate 1

Villagers in an open space/pasture being entertained by a masked stilt walker and band and a lady dancing to the music, 1880s. Photo: courtesy of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society.

Plate 2

A village band at Foul Bay, near Crane Beach, on the south-east coast of Barbados. Photo: Central Office of Information, March 1955. Crown copyright reserved, courtesy of The National Archives, UK.



Indeed, most of the masquerade entities wore masks as part of their performance. Usually made by the masker or someone in the village who specialised in this skill, the materials were leaves, grasses and wood, reflecting what was used by their enslaved ancestors. They also included contemporary materials such as card and crocus bags. The task was to protect the identity of the performer as well as to create the fear factor that the masquerade was known to evoke. Many respondents especially remember that they were unable to identify the mask wearer, as the masked entity would not speak.

A masquerade entity that appeared once a year as part of plantation Crop Over was 'Mr. Harding'. An effigy, believed to have represented a white planter or overseer who had been especially cruel to his enslaved and/or freed labourers, it could also represent the hard times that followed the end of the crop season as then the majority of labourers were unemployed. 'Mr. Harding' was burnt at the end of the celebrations, though it has been argued if the labourers on a particular plantation had cordial relations with their planter/overseer they were unlikely to burn the effigy. Bell even contends that when a manager *showed some modicum of kindness* during the reaping of the crop, the labourers would not build the effigy.⁴³

Research thus far demonstrates its existence as early as 1868, when Reverend Chester observed a figure stuffed with trash, strapped to the back of a mule that was made to gallop around the plantation yard. In 1897, the trashman was hailed as 'Old Harding', and was ... *symbolic of the coming of hard times to the negroes out of season*. In the 1930s, Stoute witnessed his burning and argued that he was central to the Crop Over celebrations.⁴⁴

Finally, there was the entity that opted to mask itself in the naval uniform of the coloniser as it performed its creolised dances in the streets. A Friendly Society claiming to date back to 1863, the 'landships' were organisations of the working class and the poor who adopted a shipping motif and philosophy for their masquerade. They were seen entertaining the crowds at an 1875 Crop Over celebration with their ... *marchings and dancings*. By the 1930s there were at least sixty landships on parade, in their pristine white uniforms that had been creolised with colourful cords and plumes.⁴⁵

It has been argued that the utilisation of naval livery was the masking or 'cloaking' device of African-Barbadians. Adopting the imperial uniform allowed landships to practice their masquerade traditions and rituals in full view of the coloniser. We now know that landships were associated with the Garveyite movement,

even hosting the guard of honour when the activist Marcus Mosiah Garvey visited Barbados in 1937. And the women of the Landship were called 'Stars', reflecting his ideology. The Tuk band/Bumbulum/Bum Drum band, hailed as the engine of the Landship, has traditionally provided the musical accompaniment for the dancing.⁴⁶

These masquerade entities danced their way into independence in 1966 and were integral to African-Barbadian performance culture. Many were present in other Caribbean countries, though they may have been hailed by different names and appeared differently. For example, the Stilt walker of Barbados was the 'Moco Jumbie' of other places.⁴⁷ Banana leaves were used, for example, in Antigua, St. Kitts and Tobago for their masquerade forms.⁴⁸ And the donkey man and effigies were integral to other masquerade cultures too.

Summoned to the national stage

The early years of independence witnessed the formation of cultural institutes and national festivals, each creating avenues for the exploration of cultural identity.⁴⁹

And though these institutions all tapped into the culture of masquerade, it was the revived Crop Over Festival that really placed them in the national spotlight.

Launched in 1974, the festival was given the specific mandate of creating revenue for the tourism industry in the summer months. However, this modern version paid scant attention to its plantation ancestor and ignored the ways in which African-Barbadian culture had been central to the activities. For that matter, the crippling tourism agenda initially placed no emphasis on promoting national culture.⁵⁰ It simply used the masquerade as a source of local entertainment or spectacle.

Consequently, such masquerade entities as the Bank Holiday characters, the Landship and the effigy 'Mr. Harding' were all summoned to the national stage. Collectively, they could be viewed at the plantation fairs, one of the few activities that Crop Over designated for mass participation. They were also spotted at places where the tourists could be found, such as the Hilton Hotel and the upmarket Sandy Lane hotel.

They came as they were from the villages, complete with the key features of their masquerade. In 1974, Shaggy Bear was seen walking just ahead of Captain Vernon Watson of the Landship *B. L. S. Director* at the Hilton Hotel. His masquerade costume was made of dried banana leaves that completely covered his body, including his arms. He wore a Chinese-type-shaped hat that was popular at the time and his face was concealed by a mask.⁵¹



Plate 3

Plantation Fair at the Crop Over festival. An enthusiastic audience looks on as the masked Donkey Man and masked Mother Sally dance to the music of the Bum Drum band, 1970s. Photo: courtesy of the Barbados Government Information Service.



Plate 4
Special Issue of commemorative stamps for the 1975 Crop Over Festival. This shows a Landship crew dancing the maypole to the music of the Landship tuk band. Photo: courtesy of the Barbados Postal Service.



Plate 5
Special Issue of commemorative stamps for the 1975 Crop Over Festival. This shows a masked Donkey Man and masked Mother Sally dancing to the music of the tuk band. Photo: courtesy of the Barbados Postal Service.

The 'Bum Drum characters' were present at the plantation fairs, along with the Stilt men, the Donkey Man and Mother Sally. (Plates 3 and 5) Sometimes they performed to the music of the Landship band, as shown in the photo. And the masquerade was performed by men who were all masked. Even the Barbados Dance Theatre used their male dancers to perform the masquerade and maintained the tradition of masking the performers.⁵²

The Landship was ever visible on the stage. The *B.L.S. Director* Landship was seen performing their 'naval' manoeuvres/ dances as they entertained the crowds at the plantation fairs. And there is the image of the Landship dancing the maypole with all members in full uniform, with the exception of one male dancer. He danced the maypole in sneakers and a lady's dress. Perhaps he was due to perform, or, had just performed, a masquerade entity such as Mother Sally, before his Landship appearance? Ironically, it was this photograph that was chosen for the 1975 stamp issue devoted to the Crop Over festival.⁵³ (Plate 4)

The first appearance of 'Mr. Harding' was threatened by rain, but video footage of the plantation fair at Spencer's shows that he was indeed burnt. Built to represent the average height of a male, he had been stuffed with grass and shaped to fit into a shirt and trousers. A suit completed his outfit and a hat was placed on his head. He was brought in on the last load of canes as tradition held and was set alight.⁵⁴ In the following year, he was burnt again, but this

time at the Garrison Savannah as part of the end-of-season activities. (Plate 6)

In this way, the masquerade entities were commandeered to perform on the national stage. Meanwhile, they still continued the tradition of performing in the communities on Bank Holidays, much to the delight of onlookers. All wore masks as they performed with the Bumbulum/Bum Drum/Tuk bands. And all were reportedly male, although on one Whitsun Bank Holiday in 1977, the performer removed the mask to reveal that she was a female!

*The woman, dressed in a donkey-man's costume, danced to the music of the kettle and the flute; she took off her head gear and mask occasionally during the intervals and chatted with the residents and visitors to the island. When asked her name she replied "just call me the donkey-woman."*⁵⁵

In this case, the mask also served the purpose of concealing the sex of the performer, until she opted to reveal her identity.

Now central to the national stage, the masquerade found itself in the public eye. This new position prompted discussions of identity, though many argued that the entities were evidence of acculturation and Englishness! In the face of evidence to the contrary, masquerade costumes made of banana leaves, masks made of grasses and wood and the rhythms of Bum Drum/Bumbulum/Tuk bands, were made to support the



Plate 6

Mr. Harding burns at the end of the Crop Over festival, 1970s. Photo: courtesy of the Barbados Government Information Service.

argument. Note this 1978 narrative: *The Hobby Horse and its Barbadian survival in the Donkey Belly Man are an element of the traditional dance patterns of Europe which had some religious origin based on nature worship and sacrifice.*⁵⁶ Here the Eurocentric discourse is foregrounded, marginalising the African-Barbadian narrative.

This dilemma continues in contemporary scholarship. A recent publication on Caribbean masquerade gives scarcely a glance to Barbados, but does discuss the Shaggy Bear. Claiming that it was a replica of the British Straw Bear, the African-Caribbean tradition of using dried banana shag/leaves for their *acoustic quality* was acknowledged, yet the author argued that the masquerade entity was British and insisted on calling it by its British name!⁵⁷ In this way, the masquerade continues to be caught in an ideological stranglehold that reduces, and/or erases, the African contribution to the formulation of Barbadian and Caribbean identity.

Their new space on the national stage also meant that the performers no longer controlled their performance spaces, or their texts. The length of their performances and the materials for their masquerade were now determined by others. Their villages and streets were increasingly replaced by dance floors in

hotels and raised stages at national events. And they lost their freedom to improvise, as their music became timed set pieces of performance, and their dance movements were tailored to the tastes of European hotel managers. In turn, the entities increasingly incorporated many of these changes into their village performances, changing the narratives of the ancestral masquerade in the home space.

And they continued to face a range of responses for their masquerade, from shouts of wonder and amazement, to nods of approval, to chants of derision and dismissal. More calls were made for adjustments to their manifestation and their meanings. Some entities were deemed to be too dull, too ugly, or not sexy enough and not as exotic as they could be.

For example, the Bank Holiday Bear apparently either did not make it, or did not stay on the national stage for any period of time. It was condemned as being too raunchy, with way too many sexual overtones. Such has been the effect of the banishment that for many Barbadians today, the entity has been relegated to the space of memory and myth. With it being at least forty years since it has been performed, it is understandable that many would be surprised to know that it ever existed! It is probable that with the Shaggy Bear remaining

throughout the period, the narrative of the two has become intertwined, leaving some to believe that Shaggy and the Bank Holiday Bear were originally one and the same.

In the case of the Landship, it too came under the scrutiny of the elite and the newly conscious middle class. Accused of mimicking the colonial master and being black mimic men, debates ranged in the 1970s about the relevance of the cultural form. They were seen as *playing the monkey game* and of being examples of the inarticulate left to construct national identity:

*This then is the balloon of the whole affair, people who encourage other people to play the monkey game in the interest of a sort of recognition. The only thing to do with the Landship is to put it out to sea where it can only perish as any useless ship would.*⁵⁸

In response, supporters of the Landship argued that it was more than just performing for the crowds. They provided charitable services, were an integral link in their communities and a *more interesting and valuable institution than many others supported by other and more prominent sections of the community*. Though in the independence era there were at least twenty landships, membership dwindled under the severe public scrutiny. Eventually in the 1980s, some members opted to be combined into one ship, known as *The Barbados Landship*.⁵⁹

The 1980s and 1990s also witnessed one of the most notable adjustments to the masquerade; the loss of the mask. Shaggy Bear, Mother Sally, the Stilt men and Donkey Belly were all eventually performed without masks. Coming from the villages, the masks were judged to be too ugly and crudely made and not in keeping with the more polished form of masquerade that was evolving in the festival. In 1978, *Kadooment Day*, the day designated for masquerade and 'jump up'⁶⁰, was added to the festival. This meant that trained artists and designers were now involved in the creation of masquerade, and would have little time for the inclusion of the home-made village products in their bands.

The loss of masks also occurred because of the loss of the skills of mask making. Younger performers were unable to create the masks and many were unwilling to do so. Their sense of the aesthetic had changed with the changing times, and many had adjusted to playing the

masquerade without the masks. Self-censorship also occurred, as players themselves felt uncomfortable wearing the masks. And as the masquerade entities performed for the hotels, the wearing of the masks, deemed as scary and offensive, was not allowed, as managers did not want to frighten their guests.

And many masqueraders were made aware of a regulation that banned the wearing of masks. Maskers and *Kadooment Day* players maintain that in the 1980s, they were instructed by officials to remove their masks.⁶¹ Research has revealed that such a regulation against masking had existed since 1960. Included in the Highways Act, it stated that it was unlawful for an individual *to appear masked or otherwise disguised on any highway or in any public place*. It was also unlawful *to take part in any march or procession along any highway or any public place*. The penalty was a fine of \$240 or six months in jail. The police could grant permission to wear the masks; a choice that was never offered to the masqueraders.⁶²

It is important to emphasise that for the masqueraders, notification of this regulation came as a complete surprise! The masquerade entities had processed and performed in their masks on the roads, just as their ancestors had done before them. And we have traced the 1970s where they openly performed in their masks, unimpeded, on the national stage. It is yet to be fully understood why the regulation gained life when it did. Its effect was severe as the threat of six months imprisonment, itself a most extreme penalty, stopped many practitioners from wearing the mask.

Other adjustments were made to the masquerade. The dried banana leaves of Shaggy Bear were replaced by strips of cloth which eventually became the accepted performance material. Again, in this way they were made appealing to the tourist gaze, as the large stacks of dried brown banana leaves were deemed to be unsightly and dull. Layers of colourful cloths created new dimensions of performance for the masquerade. Yet the loss of the leaves meant the loss of an intricate narrative that spoke to centuries of lived experience. One elderly respondent, who had witnessed both the banana and cloth Shaggy Bears, emphasised that the cloth had removed the all-important fear factor the rustling leaves evoked. And it was too pretty!⁶³

The act of males playing females in the masquerade also came under attack. Seen as too crude, not suitable to the new era and too ugly for the tourists to see, their performances were heavily criticised. Such entities as Mother Sally were on the receiving end of this, as comments were made about the rough manner in which the masquerade was made and the seemingly inappropriate act of men dressing in women's clothing. Ironically, as it was now performed without a mask, the sex of the performer, complete with unshaven face and hairy legs, became a glaring reality!

Again, masquerade troupes responded by changing the sex of the performers. Females, with delicate make-up, slim waists and carefully stuffed bosoms and buttocks and carefully crafted dresses were hired to perform. This sanitised version informs contemporary masquerade, leading artist Sonia Boyce to represent both the female and 'burlesque' male versions in her film, as she illustrated *the tension between the traditional role and the newer incarnation*.⁶⁴

Even this author was affected by the change as the masquerade troupe hired to perform at the public lecture where this text was first delivered, opted (much to my shock) to present the delicate female version of Mother Sally. The leader argued that he did not like the way men performed the masquerade, without finesse and with way too many exaggerated sexual movements.⁶⁵

What did not survive scrutiny was the masquerade entity known as 'Mr. Harding'. Indeed it was surprising that he was called to the national stage at all, especially as he was said to represent the white oligarchy. As Morgan commented: *This must serve to make Whites, resident or tourist, uncomfortable at this event. Could this be one of the reasons for lack of white participation in the Crop-Over festivities?*⁶⁶

An attempt to revise the narrative to state that Harding was a black overseer on the plantation was swiftly rejected:

*Historically Mr. Harding represents the plantation system and its representative, the planter, the sugar baron. In the day when the tradition started, hardly a black man owned a plantation. Hardly a black man was called "Mister" either.*⁶⁷

Debates raged around the significance of the effigy. Concerns were also raised about the response of the crowds to his burning as many threw bottles, stones and sticks. With the focus also on 'bad behaviour', the annual burning was plagued with calls for its discontinuance.⁶⁸ In 1983, Harding failed to appear, never to be seen on the national stage again.

Conclusion

Forty years have passed since Brathwaite advised the Caribbean to seek the descendants of the enslaved Africans and infuse their narratives of resilience into the evolving constructs of national identities. And though the ancestral masquerade was corralled for the task in Barbados, it was quickly determined as offensive and unsuitable. A process of pruning of the manifestation and its meanings was launched, resulting in the literal and symbolic removal of the masks.

In turn, key components of the African-Barbadian identity were erased, or marginalised in the national narrative. Ironically, the masquerade, filled with ancestral ammunition for the battle of identity formation, was carefully crafted to suit the old colonial discourse! Banishing the leaves, the grotesque and the effigy, all served to change its visual and spiritual dynamics. Such has been the impact of the intervention that for many Barbadians today, their sense of the 'authentic' rests with the sanitised versions. The concept of masking and organic masquerade is alien.

Yet, scholars remind us that we humans use masks to 'reinvent ourselves' as we *still believe in their power to move us*.⁶⁹ The odd occasions when banana leaf versions of the Shaggy Bear have been re-staged have served to indicate the possible impact of revisiting traditional manifestations of the entities. In 2003, when Shaggy Bear was performed in banana leaves at CARIFESTA in Suriname, he was hailed as the 'Bajan Leba'. His leaf manifestation infused him with new/ancestral meaning - that of the god responsible for ritually cleansing the masquerade space.⁷⁰

As Barbados continues to struggle with the colonial narrative in the independence period, re/creating the ancestral masquerade could raise awareness of alternative Barbadian constructs of identity, and perhaps, fulfill the Brathwaite mandate. 🇧🇩

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NOTES

1. Hall, Stuart, 1995. 'Negotiating Caribbean Identities' in *New Left Review*, 209, Jan - Feb (1995), pp. 3-14.
2. Brathwaite, Edward Kamau, 1985. *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean*. Jamaica: Savacou, [1974], p. 64.
3. Ibid.
4. *Barbados. The Best It Can Be. nd.1990s*. Drayton, Kathleen, 1996. 'Art, Culture and National Heritage' in *Barbados Thirty Years of Independence edited by Trevor Carmichael*. Jamaica: Ian Randle, p. 198.
5. Brathwaite, op cit, p. 64.
6. Brathwaite, op cit, p. 31.
7. Brathwaite, op cit, p. 64.
8. Handler, Jerome, *Supplement to a Guide to Source materials for the study of Barbados History, 1627-1834*. Rhode Island: The John Carter Brown Library and the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, 1991, p. xv.
9. For example, the Adangme, Asante, Dahomey, Edo, Ewe, Fante, Ga, Ibibio, Igbo and Yoruba communities. Beckles, Hilary, 2006. *A History Of Barbados: from Amerindian Settlement to Caribbean Single Market*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 40. For this present analysis it is best to note that the masquerade would reflect West African traditions. Also, unlike other Caribbean countries, the Yoruba were not a major influence in Barbados in the post-emancipation period, as additional labourers, African or Asian, were not as elsewhere imported to the island.
10. Nettleford, Rex, 1988. 'Implications for Caribbean Development' in *Caribbean Festival Arts: each and every bit of difference*, edited by Nunley, John W. and Bettleheim, Judith. Seattle: Saint Louis Art Museum and University of Washington, p. 184.
11. Brathwaite, Edward Kamau, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820*. Clarendon Press: 1971, p. 220.
12. Warner-Lewis, Maureen, 2011. 'West Africa in the Caribbean: Art, Artefacts and Ideas' in *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies: Vol 25: 4*, 2011, p. 562.
13. Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society*, p. 220.
14. Ligon, Richard, 1657. *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*. London: Frank Cass, 1976, p. 48.
15. As cited in Bennett, J. Harry. *Bondsmen and Bishops: Slavery and Apprenticeship on the Codrington Plantations of Barbados 1710-1838*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958, p. 22.
16. Handler, Jerome and Frisbee, Charlotte, 1972. 'Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados: Music and its Cultural Content' in *Caribbean Studies*, 11:4 [1972], p. 12.
17. Dickson, William, 1789. *Letters on Slavery*. Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1970, 1st ed. 1789, J. Philips, London, p. 74. See for example, the 1688 law which banned the drums. Despite the law, the enslaved found ways to play their drums and make their music, though aware of the scrutiny of the law.
18. Griffith Hughes, 1750. *The Natural History of Barbados*. London, p. 16.
19. Orderson, J.W., 1842. *Creoleana: Social and Domestic Scenes and Incidents in Barbados in Days of Yore*. London, pp. 37-38.
20. Hughes, p. 15. Also McCarty, Cara and Nunley, John W., 1999. Introduction to *Masks: Faces of Culture* edited by Nunley, John W., New York: Harry N. Abrams, p. 15.
21. Lewis, Kingsley, 1985. *The Moravian Mission in Barbados 1816-1886. A Study of the Historical Content and Theological Significance of a Minority Church Among an Oppressed People*. Frankfurt am Main. New York: Peter Lang, 1985, p.126. Also Handler and Frisbee, p. 12.

22. Burrowes, Marcia, 2011. 'Treat to Labourers: Plantation Crop Over from Slavery to Independence' in *The Journal of the Barbados Museum & Historical Society*, JBMHS, Vol. LVII, Dec 2011, pp. 54-76.
23. Ledger of the Mount Gay Plantation. June 1809 – December 1836. Thanks to the management of Mount Gay for granting me access to the ledgers.
24. The musical instrument is the banjo. See Elombe Mottley, Elombe, 2003. *Identities: Volume One*. Kingston: Fat Pork Ten Ten, p. 159.
25. Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens*, p. 64.
26. Barbados observed the following days in the emancipation period: 26 December, 1 January, Easter Monday, Whit Monday, Empire Day, May Day. There was an August holiday to mirror the British Summer holiday, or, Emancipation, though that Emancipation was not consistently observed until the late 20th century onwards.
27. Day, *Five Years Residence in the West Indies*, p. 53.
28. Highways Act 1900-5, clause 32. *The Laws of Barbados 1900*.
29. Personal interview with Aubrey Deane, 28 May, 2012.
30. Lionel Harcourt Smith, 2002. *Death of a Village: The Story of St. Simons*. Laudate Dominum Publishers: Mandeville, Jamaica. p. 72.
31. Deane interview.
32. Stoute, Edward Stoute, 1979. 'What is a Kadooment?' in *The Advocate Magazine*, May 27, 1979, p.11.
33. *A shookster was a barrel stave with a taut tuned wire running from one end to the next*. Mottley, pp. 161-2.
34. As related by Trevor Marshall as he spoke with the respondent, 28 May 2012. To 'skin cuffins' is to perform somersaults and to 'wuk up like a skeet' is to dance vigorously, with an emphasis on circular movements of the waist.
35. Personal communication with Wayne 'Poonkah' Willock and Errol Rollins, both residents of Brittons Hill. 27 May 2012.
36. Personal interview with Respondent A in St. Michael, 5 May, 1997.
37. Personal interview with Hazel Burrowes. 10 April 1997. Personal interview with Errol Rollins. 21 October 2003.
38. Hutt, Maurice B., 1978. 'Preserving our Culture' in *The Advocate-News*, June 25, 1978, p. 3.
39. Personal interview with Errol Rollins. 21 October 2003. Martindales Road and the Bayland area were spaces in which mainly working class and poor Barbadians resided. Hutt, 'Preserving our Culture' in *The Advocate* op cit.
40. Photograph is the property of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society. c. 1880s.
41. Lionel Harcourt Smith, 2002. op cit, p. 75.
42. *Barbados Observer*, May 30, 1936, p. 10.
43. C.V.S. Bell (Rev), 'What Crop Over was' in *The Advocate News*, June 1, 1979, p. 4.
44. Chester, Grenville John, 1869. *Transatlantic Sketches in the West Indies, South America, Canada and the United States*. London, pp. 81-82. Also Gilmore, John Gilmore, ed., *Chester's Barbados: The Barbados Chapters From Transatlantic Sketches, [1869] by the Reverend Grenville John Chester*. Barbados: National Cultural Foundation, 1990, p. xi and pp. 33-4. *Barbados Agricultural Reporter*, June 1897. Edward Stoute, 'Give Crop Over full support', *The Advocate Magazine*, October 31, 1976, 15.
45. *The Times*, July 7, 1875. Burrowes, Marcia, 2005. 'The Cloaking of a Heritage: The Barbados Landship' in Heuman, Gad and Trotman, David, eds., *Contesting Freedom: Control and Resistance in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean*. Oxford: MacMillan Caribbean, pps. 215-234. Also Aviston Downes, 'Searching for Admiral Moses Wood: the oral tradition and the History of the Landship' in *The Journal of the Barbados Museum & Historical Society*: Vol. XLVIII: Nov 2002: 64-78.
46. *The Advocate News*, March 8, 1932, 8. Landships performed before the Governors of Barbados and the Windward islands and the Dean of the Anglican Cathedral. See also Burrowes, 'Cloaking of a Heritage'. Marcus Mosiah Garvey was a Pan-Africanist and Black Nationalist who, in 1912, formed the Universal Negro Improvement Association U.N.I.A. His followers were known as Garveyites. He created a shipping company called the Black Star Line.
47. And 'Moco Jumbie' captures the spiritual significance of the entity: *The reason that stilts were used was because tradition had it that the images of spirits—Jumbies—can float on the air, and so elevation was part of the 'costume'*. See Allsopp, Richard, *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, p. 385.

48. In Antigua the masquerade was called 'Banana Flag' and in Tobago, 'Banana Flag-Flag'. The donkey man was called 'Bull' in St. Kitts-Nevis, 'Bad-Cow' in Guyana and 'Borokit' in Trinidad. And effigies are still burnt in Caribbean celebrations in Curaçao, Dominica and Martinique. Allsopp, Richard, 1996. *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 76 and 199.
49. Most prominent among them was the Yoruba Institute which explored the African-Barbadian heritage. The National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (N.I.F.C.A.) showcased the arts within schools and the wider community. And the Barbados National Dance Theatre (B.D.T.C.) explored Barbadian identity through dance.
50. Editorial, 'Preparing for Bigger Festival', *The Advocate News*, June 4, 1975, p. 4.
51. *The Bajan*, (July) 1974, p. 4.
52. 'Response Overwhelming to Festival in St. Lucy', *The Advocate News*, June 11, 1974, 3. Conversation with Rosemary Neilands, one of the founders of the BDTDC. She directed performances for the fairs. 10 June 2012.
53. *The Bajan*, October 1975. The Landship call their dance steps naval manoeuvres in keeping with their shipping motif. The maypole dance is performed around a tall pole, which has ribbons attached. Both male and female Landship members dance the maypole. The dance movements and manoeuvres speak to the African-creole heritage, while the name recalls its English relation.
54. Video footage courtesy of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society. Footage shown to an audience on 14 August, 2011.
55. 'Now a donkey-woman', *The Advocate News*, June 3 1977, p. 7.
56. Hutt, p. 3.
57. Robert Wyndam Nicholls, 2012. *The Jumbies Playing Ground*. Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, pp. 59 and 89.
58. Bailey, Lawson Bailey, 1975. 'Shocking State of Affairs' in *The Sunday Advocate-News*, February 9, 1975, p. 4.
59. Brome, Joe, 1975. 'The Landship Saved Many a Man' in *The Sunday Advocate News*, March 30, 1975, p.10. *The Barbados Landship* was launched under the command of Captain Vernon Watson. The move to combine the various ships was an unpopular one, leading to further loss of membership.
60. Pronounced ca-doo-ment. Allsopp gives the meaning as: 'Much noise and confusion'. See Allsopp, *Dictionary*, p. 324. Kadooment Day became a Barbadian national holiday, devoted to the revelry of masquerade and music on the streets.
61. Several respondents spoke about this. For example, personal communication with Adzil Stuart, 15 May 2012. Also conversation with masquerade band leader Kenny Bovell, who explicitly remembers being in a band where the designer was prevented from creating masks for the revellers. 26 March 2013.
62. Clause 32, Highways (Amendment) Act, 1960-1. 1960. *The Laws of Barbados 1960: Acts 1-35*. Barbados: The Barbados Government Printing Office. Thanks to John Hunte for bringing my attention to this regulation.
63. Personal Interview with Respondent A in St. Michael, 5 May, 1997.
64. Thompson, Allison, 2009. 'Sonia Boyce and Crop Over' in *Small Axe*, June 2009, Vol 13. No. 2. p. 151.
65. Conversation, 16 June 2011.
66. Morgan, Dawn, 1983. 'Bury Mr. Harding' The Pelican Magazine, *The Nation*, April 29, 1983, p. 4.
67. Callender, Timothy, 1979. 'Done de Crop Over' in *The Nation*, July 8, 1979, p. 26.
68. Kerr, Felix, 1979. 'Bad Mannered Louts' in *The Advocate-News*, July 13, 1979, p. 9.
69. McCarthy and Nunley, 'Introduction', p. 17.
70. The Suriname masquerade entity in banana leaves is called Leba. Leba/Legba, an African and Caribbean spiritual entity, is the god of the crossroads. Interview with Henk John. 15 June 2008. CARIFESTA is the Caribbean Festivals of the Creative Arts.

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