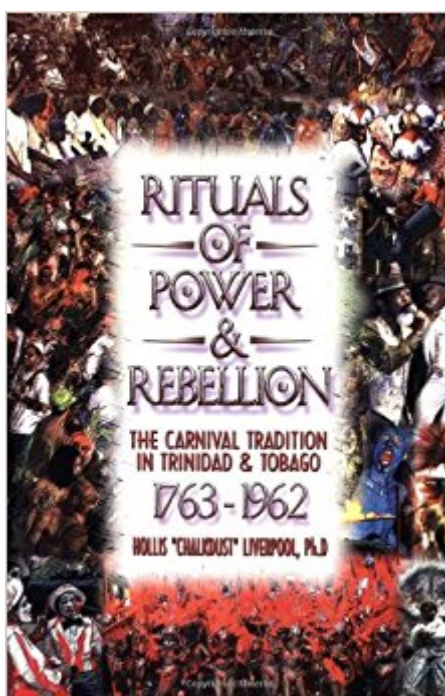


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# Rituals Of Power & Rebellion: The Carnival Tradition In Trinidad & Tobago, 1763-1962



## Synopsis

The noble contributions of African peoples in the development of the carnival tradition in Trinidad & Tobago.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A highly original. I haven't seen anything remotely like this. -- Dr. Fred Cooper, Professor of History, University of Michigan" "A vigorous, painstaking, well-researched, critical study of an important and interesting subject. -- Dr. Maxwell Owusu, Professor of Anthropology, University of Michigan" "Certainly the best book I have read on Caribbean history." --Kenneth Tannis, MA Toronto, Canada

Hollis Urban Liverpool was the Director of Culture for the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago up to 1999 and is currently the Director of the Carnival Institute, a division of the National Carnival Commission. He holds a BA and MA in History from the University of the West Indies; a MA in African History and a Ph.D. in History and Ethnomusicology from the University of Michigan, a Post-grad Diploma in Education from the University of the West Indies; and a Certificate of Philosophy from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. He has published four books and written several papers on Trinidad & Tobago's culture, carnival and calypso. As calypsonian Chalkdust, he has been crowned Calypso Monarch of Trinidad & Tobago five times, and World Calypso Monarch in New York on the two occasions the contest was held.

Good book

This book is a total literary perfection. Dr. Liverpool does justice to the past, present and future of the history of our culture. Well done. The information within could have only been derived from lengthy research, patience and commitment.

Book Review. Prof. Hollis "Chalkdust" Liverpool, *Rituals of Power & Rebellion. The Carnival of Trinidad and Tobago 1763 - 1962*. Chicago: Research Associates School Times Publications and Frontline Distribution Int'l Inc., 2001. ISBN 0-94839-080-8

Dr. Hollis "Chalkdust" Liverpool has a natural talent for writing. The roots of the Carnival tradition, the history of calypso, the music, the dancing, and the masquerading date back to the place of origin, the homelands of the Africans, in the Western regions of Africa, before the period of slavery and forced migration to Trinidad. In the 18th and 19th century in Trinidad, the lyrics, the melodies, the tunes, the call/response style, everything related to calypso, were eventually affected by the Spiritual Baptists' arrival to Trinidad from the US. The Shango music and the African style of dancing from Africa were brought to Trinidad and Tobago by the slaves, and as a result of adaptation to their new environments, the Africans produced "the calypso". The Carnival and the calypso cannot be separated, for the Africans created their new style of masquerading and singing to vent their anger and frustrations from their oppression during their period of enslavement. "Rituals of Power and Rebellion" and the sequel "From the Horse's Mouth" are two books that go together and deserve recognition not only for the literary style, but for their authenticity as historical texts that shed light on a topic that few historians have discussed before. It is true that texts prior to these scholarly books were Eurocentric in their outlook. The Europeans style of masquerading was also brought by the French and others to Trinidad, but the survival of the Carnival tradition was mainly due to the Africans from Africa who created their new style of masquerading and singing in their new home in Trinidad and Tobago. Recently, Prof. Hollis "Chalkdust" Liverpool launched his book in Toronto, "From The Horse's Mouth: Stories of the history and development of the Calypso", published in Port of Spain, Trinidad: Juba Publications, 2003. ISBN 976-8194-13-8

Dr. Hollis Liverpool is currently a Cultural Anthropologist and Assistant Professor of Social Sciences at the University of the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas. He is a Professor, a Calypsonian, an historian, a Calypso Monarch, a writer, an author of many books and has made suggestions in his book "From the Horse's Mouth" that the music and recordings of all the calypsonians from Trinidad and Tobago should be preserved for generations to come in the Archives. The Carnival and the calypso history are part of the culture of Trinbagonians

and we must be proud to promote it as such. The birth of the T and T calypso has its own natural beauty. Dr. Liverpool says, and I put it succinctly, "If you don't buy a book for yourself, buy them for your children," and I agree with him. We must teach our kids the appropriate historiography of our country of birth. I enjoyed reading both these books, because now I have a greater understanding of Caribbean history, music, culture, and traditions. Trinidad and Tobago has calypso, kaiso, soca, chutney soca and many more styles of music yet to come. Review by Henrietta Akit, a Trinidadian from Toronto. B.A. Honors in History, from the University of Western Ontario, Canada.

"Rituals Of Power and Rebellion" by noted historian and calypsonian, Dr. Hollis "chalkdust" Liverpool, is a masterpiece of scholarship, insight and impressive research. An in-depth study of the evolution of Carnival in the Caribbean and in Trinidad & Tobago in particular, "Rituals Of Power & Rebellion" is that history lesson, which needed to be told and which now needs to be read by all people of the African Diaspora. Dr. Liverpool uses his wonderful skills as a storyteller to keep his readers enthralled as he unravels the many layers of social, anthropological, cultural and musical history, which have contributed to the survival and evolution of Carnival. As a history of Carnival, "Rituals Of Power & Rebellion" is unparalleled. It covers all aspects of Carnival's growth and evolution. The book takes the reader beyond the shores of Trinidad & Tobago as it examines the strong cultural and social ties, which kept the displaced and enslaved African closely connected to his African traditions, as evidenced by the nature and characteristics of the Caribbean masquerade. "Enslavement, then, did not cut the cultural rope linking Africa to the New World. Rather, there was always continuity and change. ... The Carnival in Trinidad then, was filled with African traditions of mask, masking, masquerading, singing and dancing." Dr. Liverpool shows how European and other ethnic traditions also influenced the manner in which Carnival evolved. "The tradition of Carnival, it will be seen, was utilized by the people as part of their organized cultural resistance, to check the imposition of European values and customs on Africans generally." "Rituals Of Power & Rebellion" is a wealth of information. It brings together many of the elements - positive and negative - which have contributed to the social and cultural evolution of the displaced and enslaved African. It gives the reader an in-depth look at the traditions and customs of Africa, which survived the Middle Passage -- those African myths, customs and rituals, which are so important to the heritage of the displaced African wherever he happens to be. "That the Carnival tradition survived from 1783 to 1962 was due in no small measure to the resilience of the Africans in Trinidad and their determination to carry out their West African traditions despite the attempts of the dominant elites and the Colonial Government to rob them of their memories and legacies." Calypso is traditional

Carnival and Dr. Liverpool gives his readers a master's course on this subject as he shows the direct relationship of calypso to the music of Africa in technique, rhythm and style. "The roots of music and dance as contained in the Carnival of Trinidad go back therefore to Africa, where music is integral to almost all aspects of community life". The book gives a detailed look at the various musical instruments and the patterns of music, which have influenced the development of calypso, as well as other forms of Caribbean music. It is a fascinating account, which gives, in great details, evidence of the strong connection, which the music of the Caribbean still has with the African continent. We are told that, "Singing in the Caribbean followed the African impromptu style and call-and-response pattern." Dr. Liverpool gives such an in-depth analysis of the subject that this book becomes a most useful reference for students of Caribbean/African musicology. "RITUALS OF POWER & REBELLION" educates the reader on the evolution of Carnival, the music and the masking and, in so doing, gives a remarkably in-depth historical review of the period in question. Not only does it provide the political and cultural aspects of the celebration of carnival from 1763 to 1962, but it also gives an insightful account of Trinidad's history during that period. It shows the indubitable spirit of the displaced and enslaved African in the struggle to survive the harshest of conditions in a place far removed from the land of his forefathers. On reading "RITUALS OF POWER & REBELLION" one becomes acutely conscious of the important role of a people's heritage on their cultural and social evolution, often in ways not usually considered. Dr. Liverpool has written an exceptional book. To his credit as a storyteller, this remarkable historical account flows beautifully and becomes an easy read. It will, no doubt, become an important part of the scholarship for students of Afro/Caribbean studies. It should also become a much-used reference on bookshelves in the homes of anyone interested in the evolution of Carnival in the Caribbean and in the cultural history of people of the African Diaspora. Hats off to Dr. Hollis "Chalkdust" Liverpool for such an impressive tour de force...Kanchan Gilfillian & Anthony County... New York, N.Y.

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