

CARNIVAL MASKS BY REBECCA HINSON

(HISTORY/NONFICTION)

Questions for *Carnival Masks* by Rebecca Hinson

LEVEL 1: What does it say?

General Understanding

- How did the Dominican carnival and its Diablo Cojuelo originate? Explain the parody of the celebration.

Key Details

- How do Carnival masks reflect originality? Explain the process for making a papier-mâché mask.
- Which characters represent triumph over adversity? Which characters add levity to the celebration?

LEVEL 2: How does it work?

Vocabulary

- Determine the meaning of parody, triumph, forbidden, meditation, masquerading, topsyturvy, procession, Castilian, satire, underworld, flailing, adhesive, snout, rivaling, ancestral, handkerchiefs, bordering, Moor, vejigas, fertility, bladder, ash, lime, nationalists, indigenous, convert, headdress, loincloth, charcoal, triumphant, frenzy, diabolical, regal, multipronged, originate, higueros, cocklebur, controversy, décimas, controversy, ridicule, intervention, unspeakable, oppression, assassinate, colonization, coercion, resilience, and diversity.

Structure

- What explanations does the author provide at the beginning of both the *Dance of the Deer* and *Carnival Masks*? After her explanations, what does she interpret throughout both books?

Author's Craft

- Analyze *Carnival Masks*, and *Carnival Dominican Popular* (below) noting important similarities and differences in the points of view they represent.

Carnival Dominican Popular.

Each carnival has a particular identity made up of its participants and characteristics. The main character of the Dominican Carnival is the Diablo Cojuelo (Limping Devil). . . . This character is not meant to represent the evil with which the devil is generally associated, but rather a satiric reflection of him.

In addition to the devil, there are nationally created characters like “Robalagallina” and “Los Indios.”

This character (Califé), as referred to in popular poetry, acts as the peoples’ voice reporting on the country’s difficult situations, officers, and people.

LEVEL 3: What does it mean?

Author’s Purpose

- The author emphasizes that the cultural identity, roots, and ancestors of the Dominican people are reflected by Carnival. Unlike the Rio de Janeiro carnival which focuses on beauty, its focus is social criticism through parody. What evidence does she provide?
- What evidence does the author cite to support her assertion that the various Diablo Cajuelos are related but different?

Intertextual Connections

- Referring to *Carnival Masks* and the links below, describe the Robagallina character.

http://ciece.typepad.com/files/carnaval-origins_w-photos-1.pdf

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OlwJv4nVZKE>

LEVEL 4: What does it inspire you to do?

Opinion with Evidence or Argument

- The National Carnival Committee was created to organize, develop, and preserve the authenticity of the Dominican Carnival. Dagoberto Tejeda Ortiz states, “Carnival has become the most important expression of authentic Dominican national culture and identity.” Integrate information from *Carnival Masks*, and *Carnival Dominican Popular* (below) to defend or refute his assertion.

Carnival Dominican Popular.

The carnival is considered the world of symbols, essences, and contents. Nothing exists without function or meaning. Everything has a reason of being, a role to fulfill. Here, artistic, cultural, social, and ideological elements converge.

Faces act as mirrors, looks as messages, smiles as exchanges, costumes as essences and characters as world of significance in an ambience where a collective personal code for communication exists.

We are others and others are we in a space of forms, appearances and invisibilities where we find and define ourselves, where we build utopias, design dreams and paint identities. Here the carnival goes undifferentiated from life and ordinary time from extraordinary time because our vision between reality and fiction is blurred.

Sources

Rebecca Hinson, *Dance of the Deer*

Dagoberto Tejeda Ortiz, *Carnival Dominican Popular*

Jorge Vasquez Mora, "Roba la gallina y lechones1.mp4" Youtube

Lynne Guitar, "The Origins of Carnival"

http://ciee.typepad.com/files/carnaval-origins_w-photos-1.pdf

Orlando Victores Gattorno, Mario Picayo, Marianne de Tolentino, Yolanda Wood, *Caribbean Carnival Portraits*