

ABSTRACT

Blocking Both Head and Foot: An Examination of Bajan Stick Licking

Philip Orlando St. John Forde

This thesis examines the cultural practice of Barbadian stick fighting commonly known as stick licking. It seeks to show that stick licking is a reflection of the socio-economic conditions of Barbados, and as such is significantly different from the other African derived stick fighting systems in the Caribbean. It is also the aim of this thesis to show that stick licking was one of the avenues through which the male descendants of enslaved Africans performed their masculinity. To achieve this, research was done on some of the fighting systems of the African ethnic groups that were brought to the Caribbean and on the fighting systems of some of the other Caribbean countries. In addition to the review of existing literature, the main source of information was the interviewing stick fighters, and persons that observed stick fighting not only in Barbados but in the other Caribbean countries examined. As a result this research has a significant ethnographic component.

Keywords: Philip Forde; stick fighting; stick licking; history; masculinity