“Taking It to The Streets” –Community Events in Post-Katrina New Orleans

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Prologue

Getting on the streetcar, which has been a steady way of transportation in New Orleans since 1835, is like spending 20 minutes in another era. As the streetcar takes you slowly through the historic Saint Charles Avenue, the beautiful Garden District with its villas and gorgeous green flora you become dazzled at once by the charm of New Orleans. And as you daydream your way past the ancient oak trees, gently rocked into a daze by the movement of the cart, you get the whiffs of jasmine and magnolia flowers that brush past you from the gardens, making you almost jittery of anticipation of reaching the French Quarter. The noise from the wheels hitting the tracks is loud, sometimes it creaks, cutting through the lazy lull you get into, and every once in a while the streetcar comes to a holt. Then the driver makes a joke about the old thing, gets out and seemingly hits the cart at just the right spot or does some other trick that's just right, and the streetcar starts moving again. Sometimes someone will perhaps stand up and tell the tourists an interesting fact about one of the monuments that we pass, or even a funny story. Surely you will strike up a conversation with your neighbor, and yell for the tourists to push at the backdoors harder when they are getting off.

When your little journey through the history of the more fortunate part of New Orleans comes to an end at the tip of the French Quarter, you get up and wait in line to get off the cart. As you push through the heavy backdoors and stride off this legendary institution you step into a whole other world. If it is a little late in the afternoon the bouncing notes from the big-band that plays on Bourbon will hit you like a wall, together with the stench of the busy Canal Street. If you feel like it, or become curious, you might take a closer look at what is happening at the end of the famous party street and become part of a usually huge crowd that circles the band.

The band, mostly a big compilation of different horn-blowers and percussionists, are regularly playing a collection of well-known classic New Orleans songs, usually in the brass or jazz category. As the crowd and the players get into a certain flow or faster pace in the music and movement in the rhythm, the crowd starts to participate by dancing in a clearing in front of the band. Those that start dancing in front of the band are mostly not the tourists that are watching, but the usual crowd of locals that hang out around Canal Street and the connecting smaller streets that make out what is the French Quarter. They are usually the homeless, or the very intoxicated, some of them are veterans or other people with disabilities. Most of the dancers are African American, with the occasional white person in the mix,

seemingly dancing in another style and rhythm than the rest. The smell of the sewage oozes out of the manholes at the end of Bourbon Street, and the traces of partying passers-by are left on the pavement in the form of leftover food, glow-in-the-dark cups, pink feathers and bead necklaces, and you are most likely to step in something that you would prefer to be in a garbage bin, and not on the street. Some of us just watch, and some may bounce a bit to the rhythms of the music.

As it gets darker outside the dancing becomes more energetic, the dancers more drunk and the band members starts to play around with each other, almost having play-offs, yelling encouraging words, laughs and claps at each other's soloes. Some of the members might arrive late, some go during the performance or just hang out for a bit without playing, and making it seem like it is a loose organization of friends joining in when they feel like it. The band also has "groupies." They sit next to the band or help out with collecting money from the viewers into cardboard boxes. Sometimes they join in on the dancing, or beat the rhythm with improvised instruments, like spoons, buckets or the cardboard boxes. The dancers often acknowledge the musicians; not through giving money, like the rest of the crowd are urged to do, but they salute them through clapping and handshakes. Or they might show their pleasure in cheering words of praise loudly at the band and follows up by dancing more profusely.

Some of the dancers often try to involve those that are watching, flirtatiously playing with them to get out to the clearing to dance. More often than not they shyly get into the groove for a little bit, and then back out when they feel they have had their fun. Some of those that get into the dancing crowd are more energetic than others, or are just more heavily intoxicated, and they put on a bit extra for the cameras, walking up to a spectators' camera almost hitting the lenses with their smiling or grimacing faces.

A group of college kids might walk by, dancing for a bit drunkenly with the rest of them, usually wearing Mardi Gras beads or feather boas, or perhaps big colorful hat: the usual things that one finds for sale by the vendors in the French Quarter.

Further up the street are all the bars, fake voodoo-shops and small kiosks selling cheap New Orleans artifacts to the tourists. Servers are usually trying to lure in new customers, and every so often a street artist pops up by your side, perhaps dressed as a Bayou monster, a silver statue or perhaps it is just the enormous man dressed in a tiny skirt and a bra usually seen posing with tourists in pictures for money.

This is the New Orleans outsiders are most likely to meet when they first delve into the Crescent City, New Orleans. But there is much more to be said about the culture that lives

within the levee walls of this city that the unsuspecting and ignorant tourists, and sometimes the locals even, does not know, or merely does not care about.

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INTRODUCTION

"Give in to the glitter."- Miss Foxy Red

In the spring of 2012 I conducted my first anthropological fieldwork in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. It was just my luck that the warm embrace of the Mardi Gras Carnival was there to welcome me in, and introduce me to the wonders of being in an anthropology students' dream situation. Mardi Gras is a time when social interaction is at its peak. The rules of everyday life are dissolved into a frenzy of parties and extravagant costumes, unique performances and traditions, and the famous parades came whooshing past me numerous times a day. Thus, my field of observation revealed itself to me quite quickly after arriving in the field. My new roommate told me;

"There is always an excuse to party down here; there is no way of keeping track of all the events and festivals. They celebrate everything, like the "its six weeks till St. Patrick's Day party". I have never seen anything like it. And you'll have sparkling glitter on you at all times, and you'll have no idea where it came from. Don't even bother to get annoyed at it. You have to give in to the glitter."

I wondered why there was such a high frequency of these community events, and began to participate in public events all over the city on almost a daily basis to find out.

Main Argument and Thematic Focus

"Community events" is a term I understand as serving the purpose of an umbrella notion of organized events when people gather around a common task of activity. I understand "community" in Victor Turners' sense of the term; to denote the social relationships formed in an "area of common living" (Turner 1969:96). In the context of New Orleans, this might be neighborhoods, or even the relationships of the residents in the whole city. The community events were open for anyone that wished to participate. In this thesis most of the cases that are described are festivals or parades. Most of these community events were centered on activities of listening to music, parading, eating food and dancing. The community events would often be presented with "themes", and these themes would be a wide array of often celebratory occasions, like anniversaries, or markings of different food seasons, like "the creole tomato

festival." It could be music festivals celebrating music in general, or specific musical genres. One of the parades that I present as a case later in the thesis was a Mothers' Day parade, in which the organizers implemented the "structure" of a celebration to create a public political protest. I understand these community events often as being rituals, or to contain ritualistic attributes. This understanding derives from Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart interpretation of Roy Rappaport's definition of ritual; First, ritual is a kind of performance. Second, the performances are "more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances". And lastly, these sequences may "not be entirely encoded by the performers". This means that there is also room for change and invention in the ritual expressions (Strathern & Stewart 2010, Rappaport 1999). I also recognize rituals in the terms of Victor Turner, understanding ritual to be a process, as initially suggested by Arnold Van Gennep (Turner 1969, Van Gennep 1909).

I would like to apply the understanding sociologist David Émile Durkheim had of experience, as being divided into the known and the unknown; everyday life being the known and the unknown being what can be seen as "unknown cases of fate" (Rappaport 1999: XV). What the people of New Orleans know is everyday life. For many this is a life filled of uncertainty and insecurities, struggles and hardships, grief and sorrow. The unknown are these uncertainties of what may come, and what one cannot control. I argue that for most of the people I got to know in New Orleans this is due to a high crime and murder rate, and high levels of poverty, growing parallel with tensions between some of the population and the local authorities. In addition to these factors, the city is still rebuilding after the immense natural disaster of Hurricane Katrina, and people live with a constant risk of new natural disasters as the city is geographically vulnerable to especially hurricanes. I suggest that many habitants in Post- Hurricane Katrina New Orleans face the insecurities stipulated by the United Nations Development Programme in 1994. Hurricane Katrina flooded the city in 2005, and the city is still rebuilding after the devastation the hurricane caused. Insecurity in anthropology has been treated as a factor in many formations of social life, but it has not been faced as a term in itself to be explored before the UNDP stipulated a list of sources of human insecurities referred to below. By insecurity I understand not only individual or collective distraught leading to sentiments of insecurities, but I also include the kindred emotional states that can be described as anxiety, feelings of being at risk and feelings of uncertainty (Toscano 2004:1879). First on UNDP's list there is "economic insecurity", including the difficulties caused by a lack of economical infrastructures and job opportunities. Most of my friends in New Orleans could not even afford to evacuate if there were to come a new storm. Second, there is "food

insecurity"; based on the statistics publicized by *change.org* in 2010, revealing that 60% of the population in New Orleans had to choose between paying for utility bills and paying for food. Access to convenience stores that sold affordable fresh foods and greens were also a huge issue, again a factor leading to the third source of concerns relating to "health insecurity". There was a dramatic lack of healthcare and institutions to take care of those physically or mentally ill for a long time after the flooding of Katrina. After Katrina, suicides in New Orleans tripled, and significant numbers of people are still suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (Solomon 2010). Fourth, is the "environmental insecurity", owed to the vulnerable physical landscape and geography of a city situated partly below sea-level. The fifth source of insecurities are "personal insecurities," connected to the threat of abuse, crime or violence, either in close relations or as more community based matters, which is a major concern in New Orleans. Ethnic tensions and threats of violent clashes have been in flux throughout history in New Orleans, creating what the UNDP refers to as "societal insecurities". And lastly, the UN agency lists the threats of state or political oppression, or risk of violations of one's human rights, specified as "political insecurity". In the aftermath of Katrina political structures, in addition to law enforcement, failed the population to a high degree, and continues to be a source of insecurities due to what is referred to as "police brutality" by my informants[1] (UNDP 1994; Winslow 2004:257-258). Based on the argument presented by Michel Foucault (1982); that one can find power everywhere, and where there is power there is also the possibility of struggle, I suggest that many habitants of New Orleans also face struggles in relating to power-structures or authorities, as I will show throughout the thesis. In facing all of these factors of insecurities and struggles, I argue that the community events can be seen as strategies for controlling and expressing these tensions that derive from these insecurities and struggles. Through participating in the community events, the participants will engage in a process where they separate themselves from everyday life, and move into a phase of liminality where the participants can experience an emotional "catharsis" and transform these tensions into moments of collective joy, which is an attribute of *communitas.*

New Orleans is a city of many fascinating and astonishing qualities, histories and traditions; its mix of traditions is completely unique in the North-American context. But the city presents many intimidating aspects of crime, poverty and lived tragedies as well. There is a fine line between the joy you both see and feel in the streets at the various community

[1] See Chapter Three for further discussion.

events, and the struggles of everyday life in this city. And it is in-between these ranges of emotions and experiences that my field research began to grow and find its place. These emotions and experiences were expressed in a range between pain and joy, which is why I will again use the terminology of Arnold Van Gennep and Victor and Edith Turner to understand and explore what I see as liminal phases within the rituals of the community events (Van Gennep 1909, Turner 1969, Turner 2012). The community events should be understood as a time of liminality, and that the participants that engage actively in the event are partaking in and experiencing that liminality, although at different levels; some participate and become more engrossed in the ritual than others. This liminality is where everyday life is left behind, and the participants engage in the activities of a community event, and are at that time expressing emotions quite freely. Within this liminality different processes may occur, and certain patterns revealed themselves to me, pertaining to this space between pain and joy. I argue that the most significant attribute of liminality in the cases I describe is the occurrence of *communitas*. According to Edith Turner, communitas is a gift from liminality, and is part of the liminal phase where the participants are "betwixt and between" (Turner 2012:4). In the context of New Orleans, this can occur at community events when participants express their struggles, but also their joy. Quite frequently I saw people speaking or performing songs that included elements of stories of struggle, death or other types of trauma. As this is a city where these issues were common place for almost everyone, they were conveying to the participants that life in the city, often called the Big Easy, is often not so easy after all. I saw how mediating these struggles and insecurities of everyday life when in engaging in the activities at community events, created a space where the emotional turmoil would be transformed in the matter of moments, into something that I interpreted as collective joy and communal empathy, as the effects of communitas. My understanding came to be that people in New Orleans almost seemed to not only thrive with this sentiment of communitas, but that it was completely necessary for rebuilding lives and society after the destruction of Hurricane Katrina, both in regard to individual struggles and collective ones. In this paper I look at aspects of struggles and insecurities through exploring how they were performed and mediated at many of these community events, and subsequently knitting them together to show how people transform their problems in moments of collective joy. Consequently many of the community events became rituals of inversion, where the community in some ways tried to present an alternate order where the sentiment of communitas serves as an imagined utopia, where the communities became "better and safer". My informants would often refer to this as "cleaning up the street".

What is communitas, and what lies in the process in which the participants at the community events in New Orleans experience it? When her husband, Victor Turner, passed away, Edith Turner continued their long and varied work on communitas, resulting in the book «Communitas –The Anthropology of collective joy". There she puts my perception of my own experience of this matter so eloquently into words; "When communitas emerges, one feels it; it is a fact of everyone's' experience. That being so, once we become familiar with its properties it can be recognized as necessary for survival (Turner xii: 2012)." Communitas has no singular form, and neither does it arise in the same circumstances every time, and Edith Turner argues therefore that it is almost impossible to define communitas as one thing. We must rather write the accounts of our informants' depictions of it. The nature of communitas is not static, nor is it experienced the same way for everyone. The sensation of communitas is something that unfolds through a common experience, at that moment, or in a specific sphere. It leads to a sense of a relationship between those that have shared an experience together. Turner argues that communitas is "togetherness" in itself. Communitas is fluent, it can be obtained anywhere, making the task of defining it almost impossible, but yet it has been felt by everyone (Turner 2012:1-14). Victor Turner claimed that communitas could emerge in three forms; the first being that of an *existential* or *spontaneous*, which he suggested was the more typical form of communitas, a happening which is "prior to any necessity of social organization". The second form is a *normative* communitas is an attempt to "capture and preserve spontaneous communitas in a system of ethical precepts and legal rules" (Hambrick 1979). The third may be a form of *ideological* communitas, and is "the formulation of remembered attributed of the communitas experience in the form of a utopian blueprint for the reform of society" (Turner 1969, Hambrick 1979). Turner sees communitas as a form of anti-structure, but with the attributes of dialectic relationships with structure, which affirms structures accordingly, which he sees as a necessity of "healthy structure". Having just anti-structure or just structure, would consequently lack a vital part of social order, and would result in either chaos or the opposite, a state of total rigidity (Hambrick 1979).

My title "Taking it to the streets" refers to a saying in New Orleans, and indicates that people take "it" to the streets. This "it" is a "something" that I suggest contains the struggles, sorrows and insecurities that all the participants recognize, but the community events allow people to make their emotions public. By taking "it" to the streets, they also reclaim the streets and spaces they move in during these community events, if not only for those fleeting moments in time. They are reclaiming them from powers or agents that are hard for them to control, or are "disruptive" in their everyday lives, often specified as criminals, or even the

police by my informants. Applying Paul Connerton's terms of *locus* and *memorial*, I suggest that the participants in the community events as agents in generating the streets as *locus* of cultural memory through the participants spatial practices. The understanding that the places are carriers of *memorials,* which can be visual attempts of remembering, like landmarks, monuments and place-names, are more explicit ways of remembering than the *locus.* In the case of New Orleans these place memorials are very often restaurants, bars, statues or historical landmarked houses (Connerton 2009). I understand "place" in spatial terms, as a specific location with inscribed meaning, and with "practice," because people do things at these places (Cresswell 2009). I will therefor refer to these places as "places with meaning". They are places where communitas has happened, and where my informants have formed good memories, like the streets or at specific bars or restaurants. But it can also be traumatic or painful memories that derives from events in the past. Which means that the memories connected to these places can draw on the past into the present, and generate both individual and collective remembrances (Connerton 2009). As very often stated by New Orleanians, these memories can be produced in relation to the flooding after Hurricane Katrina. These streets are locus of collective and cultural memory, as spaces where residents of New Orleans have for instance moved in, lived in, and paraded in. When understanding the streets as locus of cultural, collective or personal memory, of for instance parades that have happened in the past, memories can become spatial texts spatial texts, following Connerton, and can "be representations in the form of metaphors for various kinds of social units and categories so that actors are able to constitute meanings and different power relations through their everyday spatial practices "(Connerton 2009:19). Henceforth, the street becomes a "medium of representation" (Connerton 2009:24). To Connerton, both the house and the city street are examples of "the locus", and he notes: "Because it is difficult to control, the street is a possible zone of massive contestation and can turn into a special kind of political space" (2009:22). In the case of New Orleans down town city streets this was best observed when my informants in their words "took it to the streets." This saying of "taking it to the streets" derives from the term "to take to the streets," which can signify several activities; it can mean crowds gathering in public streets to show communal solidarity, or togetherness, for or against causes or specific structures of domination. It can also mean to gather for public celebrations in the streets. But it can also mean the acts of "taking to the streets", meaning that one adopts a lifestyle where one lives one's life mainly on the street. This term is mostly used as a negative term when referring to people who engage in drug crimes, prostitution and other illegal activities. In this thesis I show that in "taking it to the streets" people are forming a

stance against institutions or agents that are sources of domination or disruption, that cause insecurities and struggles. In taking the community events to the streets they are also engaging in several kinds of activities including music and dance. As Abner Cohen wrote;

"Music, literature, dance and other arts are autonomous aesthetic forms, but are simultaneously also techniques that develop and maintain cultural forms of social relationships… Social relationships are, however, also relationships of power…" (Cohen 1993: 7)

The streets of New Orleans are, by employing the term of anthropologist Setha M. Low; "contested landscapes". Setha M. Low states that in the contested city, the symbolism of urban movements temporarily taking control of the streets are well-known images, and we often can see this all over the world, through demonstrations, parades and carnivals and through other similar events. Here "the urban power structures" are temporarily inverted, and alternate orders are filled in to mediate and transform urban conflicts, through "symbolic control of the streets" (Low 1996:391). These are physical spaces which are converted into something else; the space is for the duration of the community events, appropriated to the needs of the participants. These "urban conflicts" can be about who "owns" the street, or controls the activities that goes on there, or it can be conflicts that reach a more general or political level, as for instance, issues regarding violence as a communal problem. This is a conflict which is contested between "the people", "the criminals", the politicians and the police, in regards to how to best handle the issue. This thesis is a contribution to the understanding of these types of community events as contestation of the streets between the participants and agents or institutions that are "disruptive", and to the understanding of *communitas,* set in a post-disaster urban setting.

The Anthropology of New Orleans

There are many anthropologists who have explored the complexities of New Orleans. However, one work in particular stands out as relevant for my own; that of Helen A. Regis on the traditions of second line parades and the Mardi Gras Indians in the city, which she has studied about for almost twenty years, and subsequently published several articles about. There are numerous articles written by several anthropologists on the consequences of Katrina, especially focused on neighborhood development and criminalization of second line parades (See Robert E. Barrios 2010, 2011, Dinerstein 2009, Gladstone & Jolie Préau 2008, Helen A. Regis & Breunlin 2006). There is also a substantial collection of musical research on

New Orleans musical genres, in particular with regard to the unique jazz history in the city (See Woods 2005).

Anthropology written about the community events that I have observed is often limited to the spheres of just the second lines or the carnival season of Mardi Gras, in which they are often separate subjects in the literature. I have chosen to view community events in general over a period of six months, and I have observed them as not separated into what Helen A. Regis suggest are "colored spheres", based on racial lines. I have not done this as it felt unnecessary to do so to highlight my argument and there were always white participants in events that are predominantly viewed as connected to the "African-American sphere". There are different community events every day all over the city, where one can quite easily experience what I have argued is the liminal attributes of ritual behavior, i.e. *communitas* (Turner 1969). Despite this fact, there is written very little about occurrences of communitas in New Orleans. The only account I can find is a small example Edith Turner presents about the communitas felt by the survivors and rescue teams in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Another subject left somewhat unexplored in the field of anthropology based on New Orleans is Vodou- religion, which I have somewhat explored in the fourth chapter of the thesis[2]. The exception is comparisons to Haitian vodou made by some anthropologists, amongst others Helen A. Regis (1999), and "Voodoo Queen: The Spirited Lives of Marie Laveau", written by anthropologist Martha Ward. In this book she explores how New Orleanians still relate and feel the presence of the deceased Voodoo Queen of New Orleans, Marie Leveau (2004).

Main Methods

In New Orleans I lived with a couple, both involved in the burlesque community in New Orleans, as well as another enticing character whose seemingly only source of income was selling drugs and taking on smaller gigs as a waiter. Together we lived in a "shotgun house" that had mostly avoided the floodwaters of the devastating Hurricane Katrina seven years previously, and was situated in what is called Uptown New Orleans[3]. Uptown is a mixed income area, comprising of both luxury homes in some parts, and public housing projects in

[2] Vodou can be written "voodoo" or "vodun", but I have chosen to refer to it as "vodou" in regards to a recent debate on the terminology when the Library of Congress announced that it changed its subject heading for the Haitian religion from "voodooism" to "Vodou", because scholars feared the term "voodoo" denoted a certain stigmatizing tendency toward simplification, and it being a term dating back from when Haiti was under US. rule or for many was an "occupation" and meant it contained a racist bias (Ulysse 2013).

[3] A shotgun house is a narrow rectangular residence, seen all over the city. It is called a shotgun house because it is said that if one were to fire a bullet at the front of the house, it would shoot straight out of the other end without hitting any obstacles, like walls inside the home.

others. Our house was somewhere in the middle of these arrays, and allowed me to live as comfortably, and as safe as I could get with my limited funds.

To acquire information and knowledge of everyday life is a process of experience where habits are embodied (Bourdieu 1977). My field consists of many forms of non-verbal communications which I have acquired by participating in the community events, very often by dancing alongside my informants. I view anyone in the participating crowds in these community events as informants. This non-verbal communication they provided, of what often were expressions of joy, was key to my understanding of the processes at work in that sphere. My understanding of communitas derives partly from experiencing it myself at these events.

As I began to understand that my field lay in these community events I started to carry a camera and voice recorder everywhere I went. I have recorded sound from various community events, and would ask to record anyone I had conversations with when I felt it was appropriate.

My attention have been on the "grass root" festivities, often organized by local volunteers and founded by smaller businesses. These events do not pull in any major economic forces from the tourism industry. For many it could seem that I have excluded the biggest parts of what is symbolically known all over the world as "typical" New Orleans traditions, but I have only followed the events that seemed more important to informants and locals, which often spoke about the biggest celebrations, as being "touristy", and often impractical. Although tourism is a key factor to the economy in the city, it is concentrated to particular areas in down-town New Orleans, and most of the community events I mention were situated outside the regular tourist trail. Although many of my informants worked in those areas and were completely dependent on the tourist economy, I spent my time with them mostly outside those spheres.

It must be said that for safety reasons I have in this paper stitched together events and stories that did not happen at the same time. The same goes for the stories my informants, where I have used several biographies to create "personas," so that my informants could not be recognized. I do this because some informants were engaging in criminal activities, or they would provide me with what I have chosen to regard as sensitive information. I have used pseudonyms for some areas, streets and all informants. While the community events are completely public, I have not included any pictures or information that could directly incriminate anyone. This was a concern because New Orleans revealed itself to be a place where law and life were often "confused, if you will, and amongst many different criminal

activities, drug use is quite common. As the reader might notice, my informants used an expletive language, which I have not in any way altered or "censored".

Chapter Outline

In the first chapter I will outline historical and geographical developments that are essential to the growth of New Orleans both as a city and its' traditions. In this chapter I will take a closer look at the development of festivals and different types of parade organizations. In the second chapter I will show how New Orleans is still recovering from the category 5 Hurricane Katrina, which broke down parts of the levee walls surrounding the city and flooded it, creating a major crisis. In this chapter I will depict how people still relates to the devastation after Katrina, and how they still feel betrayed by the structures that were there to protect them, like the politicians and the law enforcement officers, amongst others. I will then explore how they mediated the grief after Katrina at community events, and how communities rebuilt known "places of meaning", like bars or restaurants. In the third chapter, I will explore one of the biggest concerns the population has; the violence and crime that shape life to a great extent in New Orleans, arguing that people use the performance sphere to mediate these issues and create alternative orders through rituals of inversion. Here I will also show some of the tensions that arise between the communities, law enforcement and the criminals, by taking a closer look at several killings that occurred during my time in the field. The subsequent chapter will be a case study of a traditional New Orleans Jazz Funeral of a beloved New Orleans musician to demonstrate to the reader the interplay between pain and joy within the liminal stage of the ritual. The last chapter will be a discussion of the perseverance and ingenuity of one particular neighborhood, and I will describe how community events actually have created permanent change, for both communities and for individuals on a street which is portrayed as a "success story" by the media. This chapter also includes a discussion of gentrification, and what it entails on this particular street. Here also the personal stories of my informants will illustrate how they use performing and going to community events as personal outlets, and how some of them have changed their lives by doing so.

Chapter 1 – Setting the Scene- The Making of a Vibrant Melting Pot

Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the geographical setting and historical developments that has led to the different cultural spheres and traditions in New Orleans, Louisiana. The history of New Orleans is very present in everyday life. The streets are filled with monuments and landmarks that are *memorials* of the past, or "places with meaning"; which are embedded memories, and for many New Orleanians, a sense of pride of the past closely tied to sites associated with specific events, like festival grounds or specific concert-venues. New Orleans is now a multicultural gathering of communities, with traditions that go far back into the history of the African Diaspora and the synchronizations with cultures in the New World. Concluding the chapter there is a small section of general information regarding modern day New Orleans. Within the history of New Orleans lies the development of the community events which I will concern myself with in the subsequent chapters.

Landscape – Living Wet and Low

As you fly over the vast city of New Orleans, you first notice the curves of the Mississippi River. The river stretches out separating New Orleans into an "Eastbank", which makes out the greater part of the city itself, which lies between the river and Lake Pontchartrain, and the more rural "Westbank" in which both banks have several connecting parishes[4]. It is easy to forget that the river is there while you are on the ground, as most of the areas that one moves in are not in eye-sight of the river. But New Orleans would not be there if it were not for the Mississippi. The river brings water all the way from New York State, runs by New Orleans and out into the Gulf of Mexico through five deltas. The rock-less mud, clay and sedimentation of the river have built up the lower part of Louisiana, actually making it geologically the youngest part of the United States. However, the watercourse could also be the city's downfall, since it makes even the ground one walks on unstable. In fact, about thirty feet down underneath it, the foundations are still clay and debris. Walking thorugh the streets of New Orleans, one can still see the devastation after the Hurricane Katrina flooding in 2005, and you learn to never forget how the natural forces can leave people powerless in its course. The whole town is in fact sinking, some years as much as up to a third of an inch in some

[4] A parish in Louisiana is what constitutes a "county" in 48 of the U.S. States. A Parish can also signify a church or a minister's congregational territory.

areas. New Orleans seems to stick out from swampland on all the other sides, and was notably in very old records referred to the "Isle of Orleans" (Sublette 9-12:2009).

Figure 1. - Maps of New Orleans neighborhoods, and the state of Louisiana (New Orleans Marketing Corporation 2913, Britannica Kids 2013)

The Mississippi has a mighty strength, and is exceptionally hard to control. Its water volumes are only surpassed by the Amazon and the Congo rivers. New Orleans can almost seem like a bowl that is in constant risk of water pouring over its edges and drown it. However, the inhabitants are somewhat protected by its surrounding levees, although they have failed the people and flooded the city numerous times[5].Yet, the river also makes the soil very fertile (Sublette 2009:8-24).

[5] New Orleans has been flooded several times. The most destructive floodings were the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927, the Betsy flooding of 1965 and the Hurricane Katrina flooding of 2005 (Sublette 2008).

Mardi Gras 1699 – Louisiana is Colonized

As the French were inclined to compete with the Spanish for the mines, and with the British for control over the mouth of the Mississippi for the purpose of creating a harbor; they sent Sieur d'Iberville, an explorer and colonial administrator from the Nouvelle-France, now known to us as Canada, to discover more of the river. The minister of the French navy had picked up on the plans of the British to settle a post down where the river met the Gulf, and so the race was on between the interested parties. Iberville set his sails and finally was the first to set camp on the Eastbank of the mighty river, on the very day of Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, more popularly known as Mardi Gras[6]. A small river ending up in the Mississippi at the sight was then named Mardi Gras, and twenty days later Iberville met with the local Native American tribe, the Houmas (Sublette 2009:36-44).

They soon made a post for trade with the Indians, and to cut a long story short, this developed into the settlement Natchitoches. Four years later, in 1718, Nouvelle-Orléans was finally founded on the first crescent of high ground above the Mississippi's mouth, hence the nickname of "the Crescent City". This happened only three years after the Sun King of France Louis XIV had died, and Louis Phillippe II, the Fifth Duc d'Orleans was the regent (Sublette 2009:45-49). However, after several wars, the lavish spending of his predecessor and the hyperinflation, the French Empire was in trouble. The task of populating the swamps of Louisiana was harder than first planned. The French began a forced migration to the area from France, based on the same model previously used in Canada. For a period Louisiana became a French penal colony, taking in the vagabonds, criminals and prostitutes that survived the journey from France (Sublette 2009: 52-53). There was a great mix of cultures from the very beginning of the settlement, and the settlers continued bringing in another group of forced migrants; the slaves (Sublette 2009:56-57). In the beginning the settlers took Native American slaves, but it did not take long before the trade of African slaves was introduced to the area. Then, from 1754 to 1763 the great Seven Year's War fought out between all the great powers at that time, naturally resulted in territories being swapped and transferred[7]. New Orleans was under Spanish control from 1763 until 1801, when it reverted back to the French. During that period there were two great fires and several storms, followed each time by the rebuilding

[6] In Christian tradition "Mardi Gras" or "Mardi Gras season" refers to the Carnival celebrations, beginning on or after Epiphany and culminating on the day before Ash Wednesday. Mardi gras is French for Fat Tuesday, referring to the last night of eating richer foods before Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday. It is celebrated several places, but is mostly know for the big carnival in New Orleans, bringing in significant amounts of tourists.

[7] From 1754 to 1763 the great Seven Year's War affected Europe, North America, Central America, the West African coast, India, and the Philippines.

efforts of the Spanish, making the Spanish influence on the city's architecture significant. In the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 Napoleon sold Louisiana to the U.S. (Sublette 2009).

New Orleans was left in the outskirts of other settlements, and became a melting pot of European, North American, Native American and African cultures. There was a big French-speaking population, which subsequently grew bigger after the Haitian revolution in 1804. This revolution brought Haitian refugees to the area, often migrating through Cuba, again bringing in cultural influences from various areas (Hirsch and Logsdon 2013). While the French treated the slaves better than the British were inclined to do, it was the Spanish who set new standards for the treatment of the slaves, and after a while the slaves were allowed to participate in the funerals of other slaves (Kein 1992:21).

Mutual Aid

I will delve a bit deeper into the history of the slaves due to the fact that much of the rituals and traditions that I depict derives from the traditions of the slaves that had become an increasingly important part of the effort to build and populate Louisiana throughout the 18th and 19th century. The African and Native American slaves were often living together at the slave quarters, and formed relationships and collaborations, and sometimes even marriages. The slaves were in increasing numbers allowed to have Sundays off, and would meet to trade and socialize at Place de Negres, or what is now known as Congo Square. Congo Square is still a meeting place for celebrations and events (Sublette 2009: 281-283). The slaves that were participating in funerals developed a tradition where they would sing at the funeral procession. From this a new form of funeral ritual developed over time, the New Orleans jazz funerals. There were no financial institutions or systems in place to insure the slaves, or ensure that they would have a proper burial according to their traditions when they did not have money for the arrangements. In time, the slaves organized financial institutions themselves. They were called Benvolent Societies, Friendship Societies or had similar titles denoting mutual aid within the group. The mutual aid organizations were basically a forerunner to what are now insurance companies. With time, some slaves were able to make enough money to buy their freedom. Free black men in New Orleans got together and founded organizations to ensure that those that were ill, lost members of their families and so on would receive financial aid. The first one on record was founded in 1783 in New Orleans, but these kinds of mutual aid societies quickly caught on and spread throughout the United States, beginning in Philadelphia already in 1787. Every member paid a fee, and would in

return receive help when needed. But the society clubs did not only serve as financial organizations; The slaves and those that had been freed had knit close ties with each other, so it was also a community based organization that got together especially in times of need, or if members of the society were in distress (Curl 2009:25). It then became the custom for what was becoming known as "Perseverance Benevolent and Mutual Aid societies" to throw balls, parties and parades in addition to the funerals (Frenchcreoles.com: 2012). In the beginning old documents show that is was standard that the slaves would follow the deceased to the graveyard singing mournful songs. But as the Perseverance Benevolent and Mutual Aid clubs started to expand the funeral, they developed into bigger event with music and bigger organized processions. Those kinds of slave funerals may be dated to before the 19th century (Kein 1992:21). The Jazz Funerals are held for members of those clubs or for esteemed musicians in New Orleans, and will be described in chapter 4 in this paper. These Perseverance Benevolent and Mutual Aid clubs are forerunners to what is now known as The Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs. In addition to the development of the jazz funerals, a different, but kindred tradition grew from the activities the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs; the second line parades.

Second Lining

The traditions of the mutual aid societies of The Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs developed over time, and as mentioned, the clubs would arrange other festivities than the jazz funerals as well. The most important tradition of these clubs are now second line parades. A second line parade is sponsored and arranged by the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs traditionally on the clubs' anniversaries. The club pays for the brass band, the permits and the prerequisite police escorts and for their own meticulous and unique suits and costumes for the occasion. The clubs are usually consisting of members that are friends or even families. Within the different clubs, the members can obtain different roles or statuses through elections, however, the titles vary from club to club. The band and the club make up what is the "first line" of the parade, and the participants that follow them make up the "second line" (Regis 1999: 472-477). One can also use the verb of "second lining" to mean engaging in the parade. Participants may be referred to as a "second liners". The band plays the upbeat brass music while the members of the social aid and pleasure clubs dances energetically behind them, with segments of rehearsed collaborative dance moves. Sometimes the parade stops for the possibility to just dance, or for the participants to watch the club members' dancing in the front. The parades

will also stop at “places of meaning” that are special to the club, for instance, bars or regular hang-outs.

Figure 2.- The brass band in the “first line” of the parade. Abandoned house after Hurricane Katrina in the background.

The actual moving or the rhythmic walking in the procession, a type of “half-dancing and halfway walking”, slouching forward while one steps or bounces to the beat, is what the locals refer to as “rolling wid it” [8]. Typically there are several divisions of the second line. One is consisting of the participants closest to the first line where one can hear the music better. They are often actively participating and dancing more energetically than others. The unsaid rule of “dance or get out of our way” is implicitly implemented by squeezing those that cannot, or will not dance as actively to the calmer second division of the second line. By those that cannot, I mean those that do not master the specific style of dancing that is required to be a “good second liner”. Being a “good second liner” means embodying the sense for the rhythm and movement which is required of the second lining style of dancing. There are masters of the art of “second lining,” which are given the title of Grand Marshalls. Children are often encouraged, to participate and learn how to “second line” in the more active divisions of the parade. Second lines can at times happen outside the realm of the Social Aid and Pleasure

[8] «Wid” is slang for the word «with».

Clubs in a wide range of urban spaces, for example at weddings and concerts. Some Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs, like the Zulus, also serve as Mardi Gras krewes, and organize parades during the Mardi Gras season[9]. The vast tourism economy in the city has also led to a commodification of New Orleans traditions, like the second lines. Performers have utilized the form of the second line parade, creating parades where tourists can see and experience the "authentic vibe of New Orleans". Helen A. Regis calls these second lines for "mock parades" (Regis 1999: 474).

Figure 3.- The "second line" of a parade.

Mardi Gras Indians

While the second lines are legal parades, meaning the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs usually have paid to have sufficient parade permits in place, there is a different form of mutual aid societies New Orleans that shows a disregard for every rule implemented by the authorities to regulate them. Parallel to the traditions of the Benvolent Societies, the traditions of what then was known as "Black Indians" produced several tribes around the city. It is said that the Native Americans helped the Africans by teaching them how to survive in the swamp, and that sometimes outside tribes would help slaves to escape from the plantations or hide

[9] When it is a Mardi Gras Krewe, krewe is spelled with a "K" and an additional "e", and not "crew".

them from their owners. The culture and traditions of the Mardi Gras Indians, which are also referred to as Black Indians, sprung from this bond between African slaves and Native Americans. The tradition of masking as an Indian is in many ways a tribute to the Native Americans for helping the African slaves during that time. Even though the exact origin of the Mardi Gras Indians is still disputed to this day, they make up an important part of the history and of the city, and the Indians are quite visible at almost any community event. The different tribes are organized into hierarchical units, where mutual aid is at its core[10]. Part of what is so interesting with the Mardi Gras Indians is that in contrast to the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs, they refuse to this day to conform to the state laws and will not apply or pay for neither parade permits nor the required police escorts. Each year on Mardi Gras Day they reveal their new suits which they work on all year, and the tribes engage in parades where they meet other tribes all around the city[11] (Smith 1994).

Development of Tourism

Tourism in the United States was developed from the age of the Civil war and the new railroads could bring in those that wished for a warmer climate. In 1867 the first steps were taken to develop New Orleans as a tourist city, when a photographer was hired to take pictures to encourage investments overseas. New Orleans was from then on portrayed as a city where leisure activities and "sinful" behavior was encouraged. For instance, the red light district of New Orleans became quite popular with visitors. While festivals and celebrations, what I have called "community events," were in the beginning something happening in the realm of the locals, the celebration of in particular Mardi Gras became a tourist attraction, funded by private parties or the government to promote economic growth. The celebration of Mardi Gras increased over a longer period, and became a whole "carnival season", attracting tourists from Europe and the Northern part of the United States. So, the parades and festivals have developed not only in accordance to the development of tourism, although the tourist economy is quite dominant, the festivals and parades are also still a great part of social life outside the realm of tourism (Gotham 2002).

On the one hand this embellished culture grew from founding from the government and private organizations to promote tourism. On the other, the traditions of the second lines,

[10] It is uncertain how many tribes are in New Orleans, but most of my informants estimated it to be approxiametly between 30-50 tribes.

[11] See chapter 3 for further discussion on the Mardi Gras Indians.

smaller local festivals and the Mardi Gras Indians developed outside of this realm[12]. Many, amongst others the New Orleans based anthropologist Helen A. Regis, has understood these spheres to also be divided in colored spheres, and I am inclined to agree, even though I would like to stress that the "black" and "white" spheres does not wholly exclude one another, as every event I participated in was had participants engaging in the activities of all ethnicities[13].

Modern Day New Orleans

	New Orleans	Louisiana
Population estimate 2005- Pre-Katrina	454,863	----------
Population estimate 2006- January Post-Katrina	158,353 (-64%)	----------
Population estimate 2010	343,829	4,533,372
Population estimate 2011	360,740	4,574,766
Black population estimate 2010	60,2 %	32.0%
Hispanic population estimate 2010	5,2%	4,2%
Caucasion population estimate 2010	33,0%	62,6%
Asian population estimate 2010	2,9%	1,5%

Figure 4. – Statistics of New Orleans (Infopleace.com 2013, Quickfacts –census, government 2013)

[12] While I have not explored in detail the commodification of these festivals and parades in this paper, it must be mentioned that the expansion of the parades in particular have been funded and developed partly parallel to the development of and for the direct purpose of tourism. My focus was mostly directed towards community events that were not largely connected to the tourism industry, since I have not written and anything about the major celebrations here, like the Mardi Gras Carnival, St. Patrick's Day or the biggest musical festival in the South, Jazz Fest. Nonetheless they are a part of the bigger picture, but for the purpose of limiting this thesis I have ruled out the major issues of tourism and the biggest celebrations.

[13] It may seem from the literature I have read that this may be something that has changed in some degree after hurricane Katrina, meaning that the "white" and "black" boundaries of the spheres were now more "blurry". More white people would venture into the "black" sphere during community events. Although I cannot say this with certainty, it would be a subject I would have liked to make further inquiries about if I were to observe the development over a longer period than six months. If these are tendencies "in the making", I was only left with a slight sentiment and understanding of this, and observed a few reactions, mostly people reacting negatively, to the second lines being "white." If the reader turns his or her's attention to the pictures presented one can observe participants that are both "black" and "white".

The New Orleans Metropolitan area now includes New Orleans, Metairie and Kenner, and consists of the parishes Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, and St. Tammany. I have concerned myself with just the inner city of New Orleans, which in the time of my fieldwork in 2012 had an estimated population of 369,250 people. The city is undergoing rapid growth, due to the increase in business and venture-capitalism in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when business opportunities were considerable. But the city lost almost 100 000 inhabitants due to Katrina's' death tolls and displacement of citizens not able or wanting to return (see census on previous page). Although, the effects of the financial crisis of 2008 was felt all over the US, and threatened the recovery of the New Orleans economy, it seemed that smaller local businesses had a considerable role in keeping the economy afloat in this time (Mitchell and Dahlheimer 2009).

The majority of income is based on the tourism industry in New Orleans, which has declined after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The city is also a major contributor to the oil refining and petrochemical production in the United States, and a major part of the economy is also based in maritime economies. New Orleans is also a center for the health care industry of the United States.

In the following chapter we will begin by exploring the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, and how people relate to the memories of the storm while trying to rebuild the city. In "rebuilding the city", New Orleanians refer not only to rebuilding the physical constructions that were ruined, but also the rebuilding of their lives, places of work, their traditions, and so on. New Orleanians and politicians will often use the term "rehabilitating the city" when speaking of this, denoting that getting the city back on track means more than just rebuilding the damaged houses after of the storm; it meant rehabilitating the whole community that had suffered due to the flooding. My informant, Miss Diva Fire told me "Things are not as they used to be, something is wrong." She expresses a general sentiment among my informants that there is a change in New Orleans for the worse after Katrina, and that New Orleans was a better place to live in before.

Chapter 2 – "After Katrina…" - The Struggle

"Katrina is not just something that happened in the past. Katrina is the future."
–Anthropologist Martha Ward[14]

Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore the consequences of the 2005 Hurricane Katrina; by delving into my observations of how people relate to the difficult memories generated during and in the aftermath of the storm, I argue that residents in New Orleans are still inn a post-disaster state. The chapter begins with an outline of the events of the hurricane and the aftermath to show the reader that several sources of struggle and insecurities arose, some of which New Orleanians I met still faced. Subsequently, I will illustrate some the consequences the storm had for the community events of festivals and parades. I argue that communities try to transform spaces and places by "taking it the streets". I have explored community events where memories of Katrina were communicated, and I will depict how these expressions of traumatic experiences, memories and emotions left after the disaster were transformed into moments of collective joy in the streets, and at other "places of meaning", through festivals and parades. These "places of meaning" were rebuilt, and festivals and parades were re-instated in an effort to rebuild not only physical structures, but individuals' lives, and the community life. In conclusion I will suggest how Katrina also has served as a "rebirth" for the city. New Orleaninans could also refer to Hurricane Katrina, as "the storm", "hurricane K" or just "Katrina".

Early on in my fieldwork I attended a seminar where author Ted Hughes led a debate before the primary election in Louisiana in 2012. He said that it is impossible to write anything about New Orleans today without writing about Hurricane Katrina. Even though my time in New Orleans doing my fieldwork was then seven years after the flooding of the city, I soon realized that memories of the storm and its aftermath was a constant marker in conversations I had with people that lived in the city before, during and after the storm. Hurricane Katrinas' impact is immense in both peoples' current lives and past memories. I will explore this in greater detail in the following paragraphs, beginning with my first experience with how people relate to places in New Orleans, as *memorials* of the disaster.

[14] See Adams, Hattum and English: 2009:1.

Driving Through Post-Disaster New Orleans

Mr. Francais was quite skilled in the art of conversation, and I was able to sit back and relax while he was chatting away about everyday life. He told me about himself and his girlfriend, and waving his hands in every direction pointing to all the different areas that were hit hard by Katrina. He pointed to the area that was the business district, and where the tourist area, the French Quarter was. He was smoking incessantly, driving fast on the elevated highway that leads into the city. Since I had just landed he was concerned that I was jet-lagged or hungry, and kept suggesting we could go eat different types of famous New Orleans cuisine. Suddenly, he paused for a moment, then he pointed to a big round building that was towering over the constructions around it; "And there it is, I took a longer route so you would see it right away. That's the Superdome, but you probably know all about that and Katrina." The Superdome is symbolic to many as an epicenter of desperation in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina in 2005, as it was one of the few places where the media was able to film on the ground after the flood. Thousands of people who were left behind after the mandatory evacuation gathered here to get the help that eventually arrived too late for many that were in desperate need of water or medical aid, and many died as a result. This was my first introduction to how the people of New Orleans constantly relate to places in New Orleans that invokes traumatic memories.

Hurricane Katrina

The 2005 Hurricane Katrina is believed by many New Orleanians and scholars to be a natural disaster that turned into a man-made disaster, due to the failing and slow response from the organizations and agencies that were expected to protect and save the citizens from what eventually happened; a collapse of order, immense property damages and the loss of 1,836 lives (Woods 2005:1005). Hurricane Katrina was the first of two category 5 hurricanes in 2005, and was part of one of the most active Atlantic Hurricane seasons ever. The presiding President, George W. Bush Jr., declared a state of emergency for Louisiana on Saturday, August 27, and for Mississippi and Alabama following the next day. But the declaration left out twenty-four parishes in Louisiana, among them was the city of New Orleans. Nonetheless, Ray Nagin, the Mayor at the time, issued a voluntary evacuation at 05.00 PM on Saturday. He warned the people of New Orleans that the evacuation might become mandatory the following morning, but when the time came there was still hesitation. The ones that were particularly vulnerable to this kind of storm were the 130 000 people in new Orleans living below the

poverty line, the elderly, the sick and the institutionalized, those that could not afford to or manage to evacuate themselves (Dyson 2007).

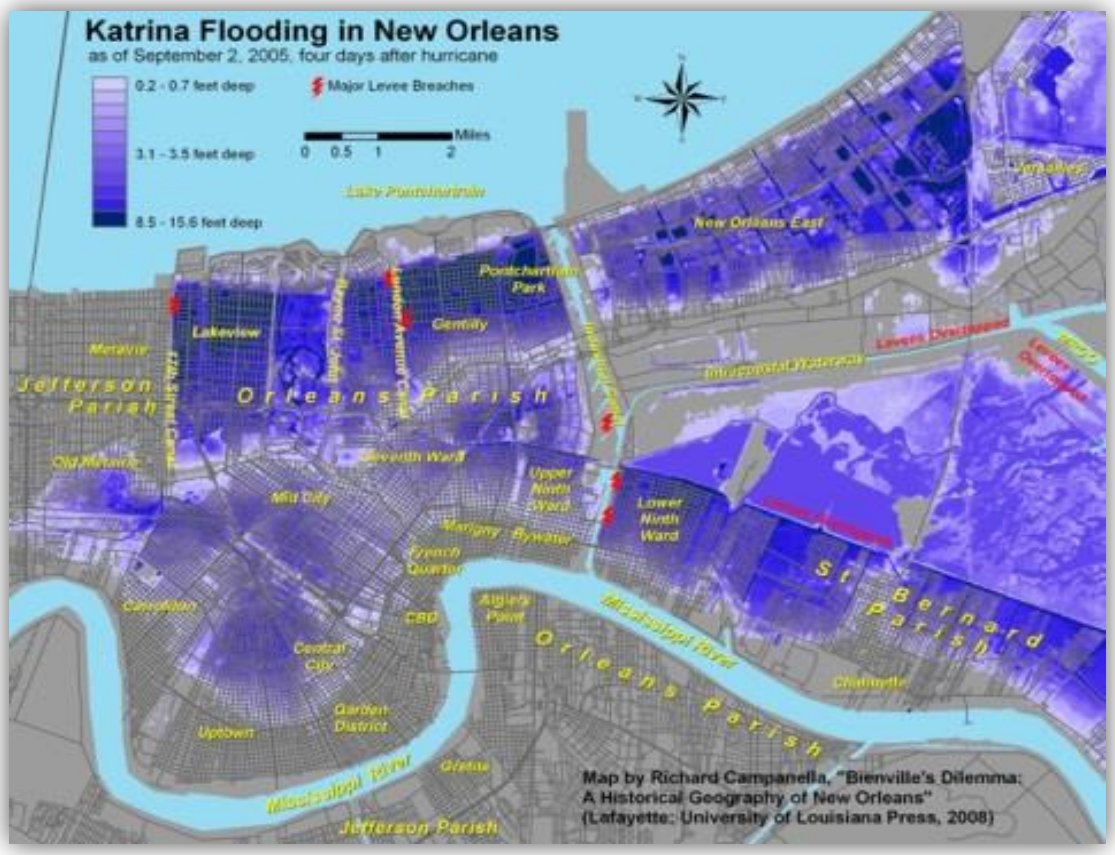

Figure 5. - Map of the floodwaters, indicating water depth four days after flooding (Campanella 2008).

That Sunday the message from the authorities was clear; Hurricane Katrina was the hurricane they long had feared would come. Mayor Nagin finally issued a mandatory evacuation. Roads out of Mississippi and Louisiana had already been ordered to contra-flow all lanes to let as many as possible drive out from the city[15]. Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast later on that Sunday, August 29, 2005. The hurricane had by then been downgraded from a category 5, to a category 3 hurricane. The first breech of the levees surrounding New Orleans was reported to the Army Corps of Engineers at 05.00 A.M. that Monday morning; subsequently over fifty more breeches were detected. It had been clear for a long time that the levees would not stand through a storm like Katrina, yet nothing had been done to strengthen and build up the levee walls. This led to speculations of what was the intent of the government at this point; were they only interested in saving the properties in certain areas of

[15] Contra-flow is a disaster strategy which involves opening up all lanes on inbound interstates so that the traffic only goes one way. It is still a subject for debate, as it has sometimes failed during real and trial evacuations.

the city? During Hurricane Betsy in 1965 there was also a breach of the levees. It is commonly believed that at that time they used dynamite to blow up the walls in the Lower Ninth Ward, a lower-income area to this day, to save the properties of higher value in the Lakefront Area and especially the center for tourism, the French Quarter. Many residents reported hearing explosions in the same area during Katrina. This led to further speculations as some New Orleanians believe that the government used the same plan again to save the French Quarter. However, others claim the noise that people heard was just the actual levee wall breaking. The low-income level Ninth Ward was almost washed completely away, and 80% of New Orleans flooded (Dyson 2007).

Those left behind in the city tried to survive in their homes, attics and rooftops. Others had gathered at the Superdome and the Convention Centre, as ordered by Mayor Nagin. At the Superdome the supplies, food and water, lasted for a day and a half. Consequently a great tragedy arose; the people inside were desperate, did not have enough water, and starved. There were horrible hygienic conditions, and the illnesses of the sick inside were rapidly evolving. Many died inside or right outside the dome. All of which the rest of the world only caught glimpses of in the news[16] (Brinkley 2007).

In the wake of the tragedy of the storm, a crime wave of looting and violence followed, that was committed by both police officers and civilians. Reports and rumors of rapes occurring inside the Superdome generated additional tension. The federal response was too little too late. People were confused and trapped inside their own city. At this point they were kept in place and cut off from the surrounding areas by the National Guard and Police. At the same time the police were seen looting businesses all over the city. When the people left behind finally were evacuated after the storm, it happened slowly and chaotically, spreading and displacing families all over the United States (Dyson 2007:55-76). People I talked to about the evacuation often referred to the way they had been treated at the hands of the government officials as being "treated like cattle or slaves". One man told me that he had been located in a church before he was eventually taken out of the city, he said;

"I was pointed to a couch or some seats or whatever put out by FEMA[17] or something, and I would not sit on that shit. When we came back some fucking politician stood there shaking peoples'

[16] Sorces elaborate on different statistics as to how many died inside the Superdome, ranging from ten to over one hundred fatalities.

[17] FEMA is the Federal Emergency Management Agency and is responsible for organizing respionse to all disasters, whether it be natural or human made disasters.

hands when we stepped out of the train, welcoming us back to the city, and I would not fucking touch his hand."

He laughed while telling me this; apparently proud of his own resistance towards the little help he received. The distrust people have in what I would call "the protective structures", like FEMA, the local and State Government was often expressed in conversations. When informants communicated the deceit they felt and abandonment from these "protective structures," they expressed these occurrences as something emotionally painful or traumatic. However, these concerns are also often expressed through satire, as if the insecurities and pain brought on by the deceit is "funny". This sarcasm or what I suggest are expressions of "resistance", as concerns about resistance, according to Dirks, Eley and Ortner,; "seems both a way to find the cracks and fissures in the terrible proliferation of power itself… and to contest the hold power has over us" (1994). As argued by Foucault, power and resistance go together, as freedom is a prerequisite for power, and that power and resistance are producing and reproducing each other (Foucault 1977, 1980, Dirks, Eley and Ortner 1994).

Donna M. Goldstein explores similar expressions of humor in her monograph based on her fieldwork in a shantytown in Rio, Brazil (2003). Her informants use humor when expressing traumatic and difficult events and life circumstances, and she argues that:

> *"Humor is a vehicle for expressing sentiments that are difficult to communicate publicly or that point to areas of discontent in social life. The meanings behind laughter reveal both the cracks in the system and the masked or more subtle ways power is challenged.. Humor is one of the fugitive forms of insubordination" (Goldstein 2003:5).*

One might also argue that this humor is a form of what is referred to as "petty" everyday form of resistance, by James C. Scott, as they are "weapons of the weak", expressed through forms of resistance where there may be no explicit or "open" challenge of the dominant parties or agents (1985). Hence, the subject can not only be seen as solely "the effect of subjection", even if the subject cannot always be understood as a "purposeful agent" (Dirks, Eley and Ortner 1994). Therefore I suggest that for instance, joking with authority figures publicly, or how the government for instance handled the disaster of Katrina, was also an outlet of frustrations which would more spontaneously and easily be expressed within the state of liminality throughout the rituals of community events.

Figure 6. - House with spray-painted markings after security check after Hurricane Katrina.

Aftermath

In the immediate aftermath of the storm, before all of the floodwater had receded, the area was hit hard by a heat-wave, making survival for those left behind an even harder task. Less than a month after Katrina, another hurricane hit the Gulf Coast; Hurricane Rita. Even though Rita was not as severe as the people had feared, another storm and evacuation made matters even worse. Rebuilding the buildings that were destroyed and the construction of completely new houses in New Orleans would take time, money and hard work, and venture capitalists saw the opportunity to strike. The total collapse of infrastructure and social services created a situation of chaos, and subsequently the need for new structural formations, and roads, bridges and buildings needed to be built. According to journalist and author, Naomi Klein, venture capitalists took advantage of people, buying the now cheap and abandoned land. She called this a wave of "disaster capitalism" (Klein 2007, as quoted in Adams, Hattum and English 2009: 1-7). The storm left behind a ruined city, decaying human and animal bodies in the streets, toxic waste and chaos. There were also a significant number of residents who were evacuated and consequently displaced. Many returned after a while, however, many of the evacuees eventually also settled down elsewhere. Countless people returned to their ruined homes only to begin a long battle with the insurance companies. Many were left living in what proved to be toxic FEMA trailers for several years. So many had lost their homes and

jobs, and this only made matters worse when insurance rates, and rent rates increased rapidly. The public school system was almost non-existent. For the residents of New Orleans, which was only half of what it used to be a year later, the pace of recovery was too slow, especially in rebuilding the public schools and for the lower-income neighborhoods. This was a problem despite the efforts of money drives and projects, created by celebrities like Brad Pitt, to rebuild fast and effectively. Many of the Housing Projects were closed down, even though many of them were in good shape, or had not even been affected by the flood at all. The common belief amongst citizens and scholars in the area was that Katrina was seen as an opportunity for the government, and the City Planning Commission aimed to "clean up" New Orleans. By closing the Projects they would effectively "evict the poor" from the city. Of course, this soon became an issue that divided people along the racial lines. The African American New Orleanians felt they were in a war to survive, yet again, relating this to their heritage of hundreds of years of struggle against slavery, racism and poverty. The political discourse, some harsh statements from politicians, and the continuing lack of or all too slow helping hands, opened the discussion on class and racial divisions (Adams, Hattum and English 2009: 2-26). Quite famously, politician Richard Baker told lobbyists that; "We finally cleaned up public housing in New Orleans. We couldn't do it, but God did" (MacCallum 2005).

"Clean up" is a term used both by media and my informants when describing different processes of "improving" areas in New Orleans. It would imply a "beautification process" where the area in question is renewed and buildings are remodeled, painted and so on, to appear more aesthetically pleasing. It could also connote a "clean up" of the activities in the area, meaning an increased focus on relieving the area of crime and violence, gang-related activities, traffic violations and so on. So "cleaning up" the area also meant making it safer for all residents to move freely in.

New Orleanians are still struggling to rebuild lives and buildings after Hurricane Katrina. The city has also been hit hard by later struggles, like the Deep Horizon Oil[18] spill. The spill put a heavy strain on the livelihood for many in the Gulf Coast that lived off of the resources ruined by the oil, mostly fishermen and businesses on the coast, and people that worked on the oil rigs. It was not only a health hazard for animals, the sea culture and landscapes at the waterfronts, but also for the people living close to the affected areas. The full extent of this is

[18] Also known as the BP Spill, and is considered the largest accidental marine oil spill in the history of the petroleum industry, claiming 11 human lives. The consequences of the over three month gush of flowing oil, after many failing attempts to detain it, was devastating on the coastlines and wetlands of especially Louisiana.

not yet fully explored by scholars and scientists, and the long-term effects are yet to be experienced (Juhasz 2012). Naomi Klein argues that the cited "disaster capitalism" prolongs disaster as a way of life, and medical anthropologist Vincanne Adams et al. (2009) suggest that the effect of living in a prolonged situation that leaves physiological, psychological and material issues after a disaster can be referred to as "chronic disaster syndrome." This syndrome consists according to Adams of three phenomena; first, living with the consequences of personal trauma, second, the mentioned effects of disaster capitalism, and third, permanent displacement. On the fifth anniversary of Katrina, in 2010, about 100 000 of the original population had yet to return to New Orleans (Tilove 2010). These lived experiences, traumas and insecurities are as mentioned reinforced for many by the conviction they were betrayed by the government that were supposed to protect them. Hence, the consequences of Katrina have led to people feeling that they are not safe, and not sufficiently protected from what can threaten their lives, their health, economy and livelihoods. Furthermore, the very traditions of their communities, such as the festivals and parades, were feared lost with the displacement of citizens and poor economy.

The violence and problems that erupted during the floods have created a minefield of tensions. Most of the residents experienced significant trauma, and many witnessed severe violence committed by civilians, and by soldiers and police officers. Before Hurricane Katrina the city had long-term problems with poverty, racism, crime, and the murder rates even before the storm were high. Hurricane Katrina was believed at least by many of my informants to have only made these matters worse. I suggest that the flooding and destruction of the city only re-established and underlined issues that were already prevalent, and made trusting the authorities an even greater problem. To make matters worse; pundits, politicians and media all over the country soon began a heated public debate on whether it was of any use to even rebuild what was often called by right-wing conservatives "the city of sin" (Raeburn 2007:812). It took weeks, even months, before people without press-passes could even be cleared by the security forces to return. Many residents of New Orleans had nothing to return to at all.

Rebuilding and Gentrification

The different traditions I mentioned in the first chapter, the second line parades and the masking of the Mardi Gras Indians, still stands strong in today's New Orleans. That fact is not something that should be taken for granted an informant told me, as many of those that

participated in these types of community events were struggling to return to the city after the flooding. As mentioned, what was called by many New Orleanians and scholars an "eviction of the poor" from New Orleans after Katrina was significant, generating a crisis for the African-American working-class. The anthropologist Robert E. Barrios, amongst others, argues that this neoliberal approach, which is what Naomi Klein refers to as disaster capitalism, allowed government officials, the financial elite and those that had the possibility of upwards social mobility, to conceptualize New Orleans as an «empty space"[19]. Both good and bad came from the new urban planning that followed, but for many it was devastating. Businesses flourished, creating a gentrification process in many parts of the city. This meant that property values increased, and some areas were being rebuilt quite fast. However it also meant that the lower-income citizens that had been displaced had little or no possibility of returning to these areas. Statistics show that while there is overall economic growth in New Orleans, this progress is not often evident with the pre-existing lower classes (Barrios 2010:586-608).

The new urban planning would repeat a cycle of what many locals and scholars like Robert E. Barrios claim to be a "reproduction of racialized class differences in socially constructed spaces", but not only that, the empty space could now be utilized on neoliberal capitalistic principles, and establish fruitful commercial streets (2010). First and foremost, city planners did so by making it difficult for the poorest to return. Most disturbingly at the time they demolished over 50% of the public housing units that were close to the commercial areas, and rebuilt them in other parts of New Orleans over time. This was done despite the fact that the majority of these were not flood-damaged at all. The recovery and new architectures were created to facilitate growth and investment potential, not to appropriate these spaces for the rehabilitation of the population. The poorest were pushed out of these commercial streets. In New Orleans it seemed that the neoliberal approach in the new urban development was a way for the politicians and social elites to handle any natural threats, by creating a stronger economy. Matthew Ruben points to the same "clean up" and "eviction of the poor" from commercial areas that one could see after Katrina in New Orleans, occurring in downtown Philadelphia. This type of gentrification has been happening there since the 1980's (Ruben 2001:435). This gentrification was contested by especially the African-American working-class in New Orleans, which have tried to appropriate their traditions to the new changes, by for example setting the parade routes underneath the new highway that

[19] Neoliberalism – a term used for "the resurrection"of classical capitalism, and denotes minimal state impact or influence in market economy.

was constructed over the area where they would parade quite freely before, which I will explore below.

Anthropologist Susann Ullberg has explored the social memories after disasters in her work. After an enormous flood in 2003, in Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz in Argentine, she noticed that the disaster was not remembered in the same way by everyone in Santa Fe, but that the "memories of the flooding" was embedded in everyday life and in an "urban landscape formation" in the form of for example expressions through graffiti, and the new levees that were built. This is quite similar to the observations I have made of development in New Orleans. She states; "Catastrophes are social processes as much as critical events." She further claims that social memory is important to understand and collectively learn from experience and improve the capacity to deal with any future critical events of the same nature. There is of course individual memory, but social memory is "enacted through discourse and embodied practice" (Ullberg 2010). Social memory can be enacted by for instance through rituals, as in the community events in New Orleans. She further claims that: "shared experience from a critical event can also be transformed into knowledge," and that this is "embodied knowledge". As in New Orleans, some of the evacuees in Sante Fe de la Vera Cruz were moved to other areas, and Ullberg utilizes Paul Connerton's concepts of place memory and defines these new neighborhoods as "locus of flood memory" (Ullberg 2010, Connerton 2009).

The memories of Hurricane Katrina is often expressed at the community events, as for instance in the case of a female performer who told a story before singing a song about how she got her band back together in the aftermath;

"We couldn't find all of us, our dear bass-player had passed away, and the band was scattered all over. One by one though, they returned. And this song is a song about the love we have for New Orleans, and the pain of seeing it wash away."

For the residents that have lived in New Orleans all their lives, returning to the city after Katrina was very difficult. As mentioned, not only were their homes and places of work destroyed, the insurance companies proved unwilling to pay out. All public infrastructures, especially the public school system was unreliable, at best. What one of my informants called "the glue" of their community, namely traditions of parading and festivals, was being threatened in several ways. If we look passed the obvious population decline and subsequent decline in members of the different communities, there were several processes at work which

could make it difficult for these traditions to flourish. The New Orleans Police department (NOPD) stated as an increased threat of violence at these types of community events after Katrina, the required fee to the NOPD for their police detail during the parades would go up from the 1,200 $ before the storm, to 8,000 $ in 2006. For the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs that is already run on the members' money and the money they managed to collect throughout the year, this was understood as a "criminalization" of innocent people based on an attempt to "clean up" the city to make it more attractive for the higher classes and capital investment (Barrios 2010:591).

Even in the 1960's urban development planning seemed to take a turn towards "cleaning up" some of the predominantly African-American neighborhoods. These particular neighborhoods are seen as the cradles of the traditions of second lining and Mardi Indians; the Treme neighborhood in particular has been restructured several times. By building the Louis Armstrong Park in the 1970s, next to Congo Square which has been an epicenter of social activity for the colored population, they cut the neighborhood of Treme off from both the Square and the tourist center; the French Quarter. Later, construction of an elevated highway would overshadow North Clairborne, an area which was extremely important for second lining, African-American businesses and Mardi Gras Indian events. This meant that city planners paved over the grounds in which these traditions flourished, and therefore the building of the highway was recognized as a blow against the community, according to anthropologist Robert E. Barrios. But the people of the Treme and the active second liners would not accept the manmade alterations that were being imposed upon them, and have ever since transformed the parking lots underneath the highway as parade routes, appropriating it to their "cultural needs" (Barrios 2010:598). Most of the second lines I attended would move underneath this highway, showing also that the people are very persistent in their pursuit to not give in to the changes that are being imposed on them. The Treme is still important for the traditions in New Orleans, as will be explored in further detail in chapter four. A young man that lived in Treme told me that the neighborhood had changed since the storm;

"You see, there was like a governmental clean up, even though the police don't come up here a lot. Like, city planners, real estate agents and shit, they tried to like buy up properties and make good people out of all of us living here, basically by kicking us out or kill the music. But a lot of the properties were sold to that guy that you met earlier, his family has been here for ages, and they're good people."

He was referring to a very intoxicated man I had been introduced to earlier that day, that was sitting on his porch with a whole gathering of people around him. The young man told me; “But a lot of the bars and restaurants either changed or couldn’t be rebuilt.” Several people I spoke with would often mention a restaurant that was so important for the community in the Treme that people from the whole neighborhood volunteered for several years to rebuild it. The importance of these gathering spots, like the bars and restaurants, was often pointed out to me, making it seem like they were necessary for the very survival of people, not only as places of work but as places that made “fighting for New Orleans worth it”, as this particular informant put it. These are examples of “places of meaning” that I have referred to previously; places where my informants would gather and have a good time, and thus over time develop memories that connected particular places to the experience of collective joy there.

Music

One of the political projects musicians in New Orleans dedicate their time to is called The Voice of the Wetland Allstars. Since before Katrina this voluntary organization have been raising public awareness about the erosion of the Louisiana wetlands, which could eventually would lead to a greater risk of destruction in the possible event of a future storm like Katrina (Swenson 2011:chap 1). They have done this by producing music with political lyrics about the erosion, and have performed these together for years[20]. The erosion is believed by scientist to have numerous sources, for instance, the raised sea-levels due to global warming, the commercial logging industry, the oil and gas extraction in the area, and amongst other grazing mammals; the muskrat have proved to be a major source of erosion due to their rapid spread and intake of plants that would accumulate as peat and raise the level of the marsh if it was not eaten (restoreorretreat.org). Front-man in this project was the beloved Malcolm John "Mac" Rebennack, Jr. He is more commonly known as Dr.John, the Night Tripper. He has long been devoted to raising awareness of the erosion of the wetlands, which was just one of the many issues he has brought into his often politically potent lyrics. In 2009 he released an album that was a collaborative post-Katrina work called “City That Care Forgot”, and I once saw him perform one of the songs from that album at a festival. He is now an elderly man, but still has a lot of flair, and is quite a sight with his big voudou-cane and elaborate suits. The

[20] The members are Tab Benoit, Cyril Neville, Corey Duplechin, Johnny Vidacovich, Big Chief Monk Boudreaux, Johnny Sansone, and Waylon Thibodeaux.

song pleas for a second line parade after the hurricane. In the end of the song he performs a monologue criticizing the politicians for the treatment of citizens after the storm, and the raise of the parade fee the second line parades. At this performance people both cried and laughed, and yelled word of praise to the sentiment of the song.

"My people need a second line"
My people need a second line
For the ones that did all that dying
And I can hear their spirits crying
They want a second line

My people need a second line
For all their families they might never find
The old and the young
Lost down the line
Down in New Orleans
Everybody knows
As long as you get in that second line
That's where you go

(Monologue)
You know it ain't right to charge people for a second line
It's somethin' spiritual
Ought to be kept from politics
Sendin' twenty squat cars to stop a second line
Sendin' the musicians to jail
Remember what Tootie Montana[21] *said*
Goin' down To City Hall, tryin' to help the Indians one and all
How could they do that shit?

Been that way for over a hundred years
That's how we deal with death and fears
How we smile
And don't be crying
Lord, my people need a second line

My people need a second line
Second line would be right on time
And I believe it wouldn't hurt so hard
If we just swing a handkerchief
On the way out of this graveyard
://: Do a little second line ://:
Second line

To The people
Their community leaders
What's wrong with you politicians?
-Dr.John and The Lower 911(2009)

[21] Tootie Montana was a famous Mardi gras Indian chief. After an emotional speech held for the council chambers addressing the harassing treatment the police had given the Indians he fell over and died on the spot. This moment is addressed often in performances.

I was often told stories by the evacuees, and notably they would often begin their stories by relating this event to a timeline according to if the stories they would tell me happened before or after Hurricane Katrina. “After Katrina, when I got back from Atlanta…” or similar opening statements were frequent, even though the story itself was perhaps not about anything relating to the storm. This suggests that most people saw Katrina as a defining point in a timeline; there was the time before the storm, and the time after it. But while personal and community lives were disrupted by the storm, traditions of parades, music, festivals and so on, seemed to have been revitalized in the aftermath, and these traditions were brought forward into the new post-Katrina context. My informants understood the traditions’ and the different “places of meaning”, like specific restaurants, or bars, importance only after there was a real threat of them disappearing. An informant told me; “Well, the city wouldn’t have survived if the music was gone. Getting the musicians back rescued us, and without the bars there would not be much music.”

The musical traditions in New Orleans was a priority for the inhabitants of the different neighborhoods to restore by reinstating musical education, replace ruined instruments and rebuild the places where music was played. “Rebuilding New Orleans one song at a time” is a well-known slogan which reflects this importance. What happens in the communication between performers, musicians and the public, when dancing and music is involved in the community events, is pivotal to the understanding of how people expressed individual struggles and displaying pride of surviving the storm. When these struggles were expressed it would consequently invoke a sentiment of togetherness, or communitas, amongst those present.

Music has always taken peoples everyday concerns or the political issues of societies and transformed them into performances, through notes and lyrics. Music is at its’ core sound waves, but when those sound waves are created and it hits someone’s ears something else than waves happen. It summons individual emotions as well as collective emotions. From music grows dance, movement and lyrics that can paint a picture or communicate a message. In New Orleans music is everywhere; the faint sound of someone practicing their horn, a boom-box on a front-porch, a brass band in the first line of a parade, or from the many clubs, pubs and bars that features live performances. It is in the foundations of the city, and has always been a form of identity for the city. It is the birthplace of jazz and successively many other genres of music; so, when people are in pain, many seem to turn to music.

In physical anthropology, and in many other disciplines, we can find a rich body of research on the actual physical and chemical changes that happen in the body while listening

to or playing music, or while dancing. Many scientists argue that dance and music can better peoples' lives substantially. As early as in the 1920's the German dancer, Rudolf Laban, brought people together to let them experience the collective joy of dancing within a group freely, and he recognized this activity as being healing for those struggling emotionally (Pericleous 2011: 5-7). There has been a major focus on how individuals suffering from depressions can use dance in a therapeutic way, as for instance discussed by anthropologist Judith Lynne Hanna (1987, 2006). Not only is the physical activity good for the body, it can set people free from inhibitions, and let them more freely interact with others. If a majority of New Orleanians suffer from "chronic disaster syndrome" and their everyday lives are influenced by insecurities and struggles (see introduction and chapter 2), I suggest that the community events this collective joy which is created while dancing and playing or listening to music can be seen as emotional outlets and therapeutic. In engaging in collective dancing and singing, one may also express, develop and reproduce their traditions and heritage. By moving in the same streets of their ancestors, they are developing the same type of skills as they did, both as musicians and dancers (for further discussion see chapter 3). They are therefore embodying knowledge of individual and collective past memories and traditions, and creating new ones.

The memories of Katrina were often performed through music at community events. Both the act of performing, and the act of getting together at important sites that are "places of meaning", which could be specific concert venues, bars or restaurants, or in the streets, has always been central elements in social life in New Orleans. Many of these places were destroyed during Hurricane Katrina, and it seemed that in the aftermath, rebuilding these places became almost a necessity for the locals. This again brings me back to the arguments of Edith Turner's which I introduced in the introduction; that communitas can become a necessity for survival. These places were potential places where occurrences of communitas may occur in the future, as many had memories of having experienced this at these places before (Turner 2012). They are places that bring the past into the present, and places of possibility to create good memories in the future.

Gathering Together

During my time in the field I frequently visited a bar my informants would often meet at. The first time they took me there my main informant Mr. Francais waved eagerly to the

known faces around him, and we found a couple of seats at the counter and ordered two drinks. The bars are not only famous historical landmarks, but often serve as meeting points during harder times. In jazz funerals the parade routes often pass by the deceased regular "hang-outs". It is still allowed to smoke in many bars in New Orleans, so we lit up our cigarettes and he exchanged a couple of words with a man sitting in the corner that I could not make out. He leaned in and said to me,

> *"That guy over there used to be a policeman; he stayed during Katrina and guarded his house. When the National Guard came to search his house and take him with them, he took out his riffle and told them to get the fuck off his property. He was like; "I'm an Officer and if the fucking looters ain't getting' my house, you ain't either."*

He told me that the policeman used to come to this bar all the time, and that the bar was one of the central points of activity after the storm. People would gather here in the weeks after the storm for company, to hear live music, to see if there was any news or just sit by a fan for a little while. A luxury when the electricity was out in most parts of the city. Mr. Francais got the attention of one of the waitresses, "Hey, when did you guys open again after?" He apparently did not have to say after *what*, because she replied "Oh, the same day, by candlelight. Everybody got together, some brought their instruments. We ain't lettin' a little storm stop us. A bit of water was commin' in, but that was nothing." The bar was located in the French Quarter, which was mostly spared from the highest floodwaters. We spoke for a little while about the storm and when the people sitting around us had returned, he turned to me and said,

> *"And when people were coming back, or looking for someone they would come here and sign in their names and numbers, if they had any, so people could come here and check if they could find the names of people they knew. It was all so chaotic right, phones were down and there was no way of getting in touch with everybody."*

People often told stories of how they gathered together in their communities after the storm, often to listen to music. And the music itself was emphasized as part of their identity now, that some songs meant more to them in the aftermath of the storm. Some of the bars had aggregators, and was able to provide some electricity, or at the very least fans to fight off the heat-wave. Such gathering, are I suggest a form of communitas, which was formed in the

aftermath of the storm, when the residents of New Orleans were in a state which I suggest was similar to being in a state of liminality. The people of New Orleans were in a state of being "betwixt and between" after Katrina, and it was a time filled with uncertainty and fear. This time was certainly separated from the realm of everyday life, which according to Victor Turner is one of the attributes of liminality (1969). The communitas that was generated in this liminality was a feeling of togetherness among the survivors. The community events might often derive from the need for an outlet or space where collective joy and togetherness, which is part of this sentiment of communitas, can transform emotions related to pain, grief, trauma and insecurities. Edith Turner also points out in her work that communitas that were created between the survivors of Katrina, whether it was between those that were trapped on attics and rooftops together or between the individuals that got together to arrange rescue-missions, like the self-proclaimed "Robin Hood Looters" that stole boats and food to bring out to the people. She compares this type of communitas to groups that go through severe illness together, in her example; cancer (Turner 2012:73-78). She writes that communitas is also a "sympathetic and compassionate entanglement with another person", meaning that communitas can imply that people are more willing to help and care for each other when we are struggling and communitas is felt within a group. In New Orleans the sense of collectivity seemed to me to be the only thing that held the city together in the time right after Katrina. I will accentuate the arguments I have made here by introducing the story of one of my informants, Mr. Punky Navaho.

Introducing Mr. Punky Navaho

When Mr. Punky Navaho was a little boy his favorite thing was helping his dad making the float for their Mardi Gras Krewe. He remembers how his father used to paint symbols of their spirits, and the history of their tribe on the float, and how they used to take him along on the float so that he could throw out beads to the crowd and make them beg for the prettiest and biggest. He is now in his early forties, and is a member of the same Krewe as his father. When Mr. Punky Navaho returned after Katrina his house was ruined, and his place of work was completely washed away. "I stayed on peoples' couches, and we started to rebuild the salon I worked in. Getting a place to work and a steady income was more important than my house. That was so fucked I needed the job to rebuild." But he stresses the importance of being a part of the Krewe and the punk band he was in at the time. "The only time I stopped working, was when I started working on the float or to play music, we needed to get ready for

Mardi Gras, we sure as fuck wouldn't cancel that. I guess, if there's no music and joy there's no New Orleans left to speak of." He is now twice divorced, his first wife could not handle the stress of living in New Orleans after the flood, and left him to live elsewhere. His second wife was struggling with depressions and drug-addiction after the storm. "They were both crazy before the storm, Katrina, that bitch, sure didn't help," he said about his ex-wives.

Getting Back On Track

Mr. Punky Navaho points to important factors of life after Hurricane Katrina. Reinstating institutions that are considered important to the communities in the different Wards, especially the parades, the festivals and special eating spots was pivotal to the "rehabilitation" of New Orleans. The loss of population had grave consequences for the African-American culture in the city, many thought that they would not manage to recover. But the members in Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs and the Mardi Gras Krewes seemed very persistent. In late October 2005 the first Second Line following a Jazz Funeral was seen after a famous chefs' death. Slowly, but steadily, more second lines followed in the coming months, some to commemorate those who lost their lives during Katrina. The Black Men of Labor held their annual second line in November after the hurricane, a little late, but nonetheless not cancelled (Turner 2009: 125-133)[22]. Numerous people displaced by the storm came back for that occasion and depicted it as the moment when people knew that the city was not dead after all. A couple of months into the rebuilding the festivals began to make their appearances again, starting with Voodoo Experience, and the clubs, pubs and bars proceeded in reopening their doors (Spera 2001:5). Getting these businesses and festivals on their feet again was no easy task, and was often the results of the communal efforts of volunteers. The President of Tulane University in New Orleans, Scott Cowen, is currently working on a project portraying New Orleans as a model for urban renewal, and recently wrote in a blog that:

> *"Still, you can't just move on to the "new normal," sweeping aside the grief and suffering of the aftermath. People need to preserve cultural legacies and personal history. They need the restoration of hope and belief. In New Orleans, the touchstone was Mardi Gras and other celebrations that define our city — and express communal joy and meaning… In the end, it's communal resolve that ultimately will make the difference. In New Orleans, ordinary citizens have been most responsible for revitalizing this iconic city. These residents displayed unbelievable resilience and fortitude, reimagining New Orleans as a stronger and better city than before*

[22] The Black Men of Labor is one of the bigger Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs in New Orleans.

Katrina. What New Orleanians demonstrated was truly government by the people...” (Cowen 2012)

Still rebuilding – Concluding Remarks

Five years after the storm, despite of the significant decline in population, the traditions of for example second lining and masking as Mardi Gras Indians were almost as popular as they were before the storm. Many in the younger generations had recognized the importance of their traditions and cultural inheritance. It is common to now recognize Katrina as not only a tragedy, but also as a “rebirth” for New Orleans. The famous New Orleans musician Allain Toussaint famously have said that the Katrina flooding seemed like more than a drowning of the city, it was like a baptism, and that the city could now reinvent itself in the shape that it wanted (Townsend 2010). This is a double edged sword; the struggle is prominent in peoples’ lives. For many, everyday life has become more of a struggle for survival after Katrina filled their lives with added insecurities. But many individuals, businesses and traditions and have persevered, and are thriving in the aftermath. New Orleans is still a unique and strong community, and the New Orleanians keep rebuilding, “one song at a time”. As I will show in the following chapter this struggle of rebuilding is also part of creating safer neighborhoods after a long period after Katrina experienced by many of my informants as a “harder crime surge” in the city.

Chapter 3- Parading for Peace –Taking Back the Streets

Introduction

In the previous chapter I recognized the importance of New Orleans being in a post-disaster state. I portrayed how people relate to and deal with several insecurities and struggles concerning the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In this chapter, I will explore issues of violence in the city, and depict how these issues were mediated at community events. New Orleans has always had high crime and murder rates, but there seemed to be a rise in crime in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. This is a matter of constant debate. New Orleans city has the 17th highest murder rate in the world, and is the murder capital of the United States of America, with an average of 59 murders for every 100 000 citizens per year (Quickfacts.Census.Gov: 2012). If one bears in mind that the actual population is a little more than 360 000 (2011), the murder and crime rates seem astonishingly high. In the course of my fieldwork I lost count, and could not keep track of the ongoing crimes and shootings. By the time I went home to Norway, there had been over 90 killings in New Orleans during this period. Many of the ones that were killed were children or young adults, and these deaths became public concerns, and raised the debate on "racial profiling" in the media. These concerns were often communicated through performances at community events.

My informants were concerned with what they, the politicians and the newspapers referred to as "the culture of violence." The term "culture of violence" suggested that violence was a "way of life" for many, especially for young African-American persons from lower-income neighborhoods. A "culture of violence" seemed to indicate that this "culture" reproduced itself, and was called an "evil circle" by some of my informants. These lower-income neighborhoods would by implication be labeled as "dangerous" or "bad" because of the high rates of crime and violence. The causes of crime in New Orleans tended to be explained by both local politicians and my informants as consequences of poverty, racial discrimination, an insufficient school-system, drugs and a reproduction of the "culture of violence." Parallel to the focus on the "culture of violence" there were tensions surrounding issues of "racial profiling" and "police brutality" in New Orleans. I will depict some observations of how emotions or tensions, relating to insecurities, trauma, pain and sorrow after occurrences of violence are sometimes expressed at community events. By observing how people mediate tensions related to the "culture of violence", I argue that they are transforming these tensions into "symbolic and temporal togetherness." Arnold Van Gennep analyzed ceremonies which he called *rites de passage*, in which the participants have

undergone what he refers to as a "life crisis". He outlined that there are three phases in these rites de passage, which were *"separation", "transition"* and *"incorepration".* Although he also argues that the importance of every phase might not be as prominent in all cases; as *separatio*n is most important in funeral ceremonies, while *incorporation* might be the main focus in for example a confirmation of a young adult (Van Gennep 1909). It is this transitional phase which Victor Turner suggests is a time of liminality for the participants, where one is "betwixt and between" the everyday life and the moments of engaging in the community events.

In the community events in New Orleans, the liminal stages or phase of the ritual allows the participants to experience a feeling that they are in the struggle together after what can be understood as "life crises,» and are symbolically portraying in the liminal stage "a more ideal community" where the community gets together to create "better and safer" neighborhoods. In order to illustrate my argument I discuss how people try to "take back the streets" from the "culture of violence" in a Mothers' Day parade. In this case, the streets could be understood as a *locus* of collective and cultural memories; this includes the memories of violence in the streets (Connerton 2009). I will then explore how the Mardi Gras Indians have transformed their own "culture of violence"; by ritualizing the violence and creating a "symbolic battle in the streets" between the tribes that were once fighting with real weapons. The Mardi Gras Indians have by transforming this ritual created a safer and better situation for their tribes, although there are still tensions between the tribes and the police.

Crime in New Orleans

The contemporary tensions and issues of violence that were primarily emphasized by those attending the community events, such as festivals and parades, were the difficulties in facing "black on black" violence and gang crime. In 2012, as noted above, New Orleans had the highest murder rates per capita in the U.S., and the death tolls are highest amongst young under-educated and underprivileged African American males. While society at large is getting back on track after Katrina, presiding mayor Mitch Landrieu maintains that the murder rates are still a huge problem, and that his No.1 priority in his governing period will be to create safer communities (Krupa & Donze 2011). As mentioned, there is also a great focus on the accounts of violence between police and civilians, understood as "police brutality" by my informants, which has always been a heated issue in New Orleans.

The next paragraphs is the first verse of a song performed by New Orleans rapper Kidd Kidd in his most recent album, where he expresses that living in New Orleans is similar to experiencing a "war." He expresses his love for the city, but that he is unsure about the future when he says; "Only Lod knows if we gonn' die today." Yet, he is also exemplifies how people bring their pain to a second line parade after a gun has been fired, where people are in emotional pain but "tryin to crack a smile". He explains that his "hard rhymes comes from hard times". I understand this to be not only a reference to this rap about hard times, but also to the fact that his abilities have developed in having experienced these hard times.

New Warleans

It's all on me
This is my city
This is where I'm from
It's a lot of love, New Orleans
A Street thing
This big gun in my pants goes boom
Like a bad smell it'll air out the room
In the morning right before your kids go to school
With a new by lunchtime, he'll be on the news
Reportin' live from the city of the blues
Investigators lookin' fo' clues,
Blues
These hard rhymes comes from hard times
My part was doing life, he caught hard time
Somebody died, here come the second line
Tryin' to crack a smile
Pull your cries inside
You see the pain in her face through a smirk
Celebrating with your face on a shirt
You thought Katrina was the worst thing that happened to us?
You thought that Fema money was enough?
But we gotta get it by all means
Tryin' to survive in the City of New Orleans

The fuck yesterday, say yes to the day
Because who knows if we gonn see tomorrow anyway
://: Only lord knows if we gonn die today
So we living everyday like it's Friday, hey ://:
…

-Kidd Kidd, Featuring Juvenile – "New Warleans (Like it's Friday)" (Kidd Kidd 2012).

Although New Orleans has continuously had issues with crime and violence, in the time right before Hurricane Katrina in 2005 violence was spiraling into a crime-frenzy[23]. For some time after the hurricane, crime, according to my informants, seemed to have relocated with the displacement of poorer citizens, mainly to Houston. But it did not take long before crime

[23] it is important to note that statistics are hard to read while comparing pre-Katrina New Orleans to the time after the storm, because there was no way of knowing the extent of the population-loss before 2010, when census showed that the population had declined by over 100 000 people.

levels were once again peaking in the Crescent city. A young male informant explained that the drugs were cleaned out of the city, and when the drugs came back, the crime did too. While there can be numerous explanations for this "culture of violence" and its "root causes", it seemed as if one could relate the "harder" crime and violence to the struggle people experienced after the disaster.

When presiding Mayor Mitch Landrieu ran for office, his public objective was to battle the "root causes" of what he referred to as "the culture of death." Many New Orleanians regarded this as "war" that was going on in the streets. I understand Landrieu's term "culture of death" as closely related to the term "culture of violence." He stated his intent to "fight the crime surge with an emphasis on mental health, education and employment, as well as more patrols and targeting hotspots" (Moseley 2012). Mental health, poverty and drugs seemed to be a great concern for my informants when speaking of violence. Social media, like New Orleans based blogs, seemed especially focused on the illegal drug and gun trade as causes for crime. One man told me when we were speaking of his return to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina; "so when we all got back, there were no schools, no money, no health care, and no shrinks. People were barely holding on. And if crime was bad before the storm, the storm sure as hell didn't make it any better." While the percentage of below poverty level households in New Orleans are about the same as before the storm, there has been an almost tripling of residents that are homeless and living on the streets, or in the abandoned houses left after Katrina. The public mental health care system was, it is safe to say, inadequate after the storm, with many professionals and caregivers scattered all over the country. This poverty and lack of mental health care was often related to the ways crime and violence developed. Many struggled with the traumas and losses after the storm. And many suffered from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, in addition to struggle with the financial difficulties that for many arose after the destruction of property, which was substantial (Cockerham 2012). My informants seemed to see all these issues as coinciding with the spike in crime, and thus summed up the expression that violence in the city had "hardened" in the last years. They stated that it had become "more vicious" and "hateful". A young man involved in the illegal drug-trade said that he felt scared and insecure. His involvement in that environment meant that little provocation was needed before he risked getting shot at or killed. He told me,

"In New Orleans, things are so bad now, and so petty, that you can get killed for owing a dude twenty bucks. I don't wanna end up like that, so I try not to sell, and I've gotten off the H.[24]*"*

In March 2012, reports of young children getting shot and killed, or being involved in serious offences, became quite frequent. The youngest victim was a five year old girl who was shot and killed by a stray bullet from a "drive-by" shooting at her 10-year old cousins' birthday party. The shooting was said to be a result of an ongoing dispute between two gangs in the area [25].

Since local political discourse was centered on the "culture of violence" in the streets, many projects are initiated to generate permanent positive changes to this "culture". These different projects especially focused on high-risk groups of young African-American males. It seemed that offering the young alternate lifestyles through work-programs and similar projects, was thought by the people involved in these projects to generate changes in the "root causes" of this "culture of violence." At the community events, particularly the parades and festivals, I observed a growing awareness around these issues. The participants at these events would state that the communities needed to collaborate to create more enduring solutions to "the culture of violence."

Parading for Peace

As mentioned, there are active organizations and projects engaged in an effort to change and transform the "culture of violence". In 2011 and 2012 it seemed that the murder rates were so high that it resulted in an intensified effort to make this kind of change happen in the different communities around the city. More and more projects and incentives were becoming visible and available to the public. There was an emphasized focus on "youth development", and the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs were getting involved. Every parade season in New Orleans has a theme presented by The Social Aid and Pleasure Club Task Force, and the season of 2011-2012 was themed "Parading for Peace" [26]. Their public statement said:

[24] H is short for "heroin."

[25] Just to give the reader a deeper understanding of the significance of violence, and the impact it can have for residents of New Orleans, it is worth noting as an example, that the same 10 year old whos' birthday party was scene of the "drive-by" shooting, had lost his father in a shooting a couple of months before this, and was himself grazed by a bullet at a recent shooting during a Mother's Day Parade in 2013.

[26] The New Orleans Social Aid and Pleasure Club Task Force is a collective of clubs that adhere to the traditions of local African-American benevolent societies

"Member clubs and the Task Force endeavor to strike a balance between the celebration of our culture, through annual second-line parades, and engagement in the social challenges facing our city today. We sponsor youth programs, community resource events, and targeted projects to assist our community members in need. In addition, we partner with local campaign for peace SilenceIsViolence to counter the culture of violence that grips our city. This year's theme, Parading for Peace, is an outgrowth of that partnership" (Flaherty, Louisiana Justice Institute Blog: 2011).

This shows the communities own engagement in making positive changes is not necessarily in accordance with, or in collaboration with the law enforcing authorities. Since the police forces were often, as noted, seen as part of the problem, it seemed that these types of initiatives and projects, would try to not involve the police in their work. This initiative of "parading for peace" was also brought into other spheres than just the organized parades of the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs, as I will show later in this chapter.

In the following paragraphs I will illustrate how the tensions surrounding the "culture of violence" were communicated through conversations and performances at community events, opening with a conversation I had with two streetcar drivers while I was on my way to a festival.

"A boy got shot yesterday…" – Exploring the Liminality in Community Events

On a warm summer day I was getting on the streetcar together with my peers to Mid-City where that weekends' biggest festival was held. Most of the passengers getting on the streetcar were carrying folding chairs, water bottles and backpacks with supplies. Two uniformed streetcar drivers got on the cart and sat down on the bench facing me. They both acknowledged my presence by giving me the usual nod and polite smile.

Man: "Wooh, felt good getting' off on time today."
Woman: "Aaah yeah!" (Shakes her head and blows air out of her mouth heavily.)
Man: "A boy got shot yesterday."
Woman: (Raises her eyebrows) "What? Where?"
Man: "Just off of Pretty Avenue, you know that park there? And I think his brother got shot with him. They be playin' basketball"
Woman: "What? So that because they won?"
Man: "Mmmmhmmm… Probably" (Shakes his head and looks out the window.)

Woman: Shoot, they be trippin' , they be doing that"
Man: "Only in 8th or 9th grade." (Shakes his head again, and puts his hand to his forehead.)
Woman: "Dat gon' be a biiiig secondline. I'mma tell my mama 'bout that."
The Anthropologist: "Do y'all know when that's gonna be?
Woman: "I'm sure they'll say something 'bout it on Taking It To The Streets[27] *."*

This reference to a big second line shows that whenever the communities lose a younger member it is common that a big crowd wants to join in on the second line following the jazz funeral. Violent deaths were often referred to by informants as "losing someone to the streets." Participating in the second line procession, walking and dancing through the same streets as the deadly violence occurs, is part of what I suggest is as a strategy for "taking back the streets" from the people that are inflicting pain and fear onto those that are affected by this violence. In the case of New Orleans that can be criminals, but as I will show later in this chapter, it can also be the police.

The ritual of the jazz funeral symbolizes both a time of mourning and of a transformation of that pain and sorrow into something joyous; a celebration of life and the passing of deceased into the afterlife (Turner 2009). After the burial, the participants will form the second line, and dance in the deceased honor, and the participants will feel a sense of collective joy and togetherness, which are attributes of communitas. In the following chapter I will depict one of these funerals. Below I will explore how participants in festivals and parades express tensions in relating to violence and what I pose are "disrupters", meaning agents that disrupt the parades or their everyday life. This could be an eruption of violence in public as exemplified by the several shooting during parades in the past, or it can be incidences of what is believed by my informants to be cases of "police brutality". The participants of the community events have experienced being betrayed by these "disrupters," especially in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, for instance, as the police failed to keep them safe. They are "disruptive" because they have made life difficult, interfere in a "disruptive" manner at the community events or are "corrupt" or "violent". For instance, when speaking with my informants many would connect the issues of gang violence with the corruption of the police and police brutality. A female informant said: "Violence spreads violence, and the police officers are part of the problem."

[27] Taking It To The Streets is a radioshow and a website publicizing community events, and was my main-source of information of when and where the parades and second-lines would start.

The Rituals of the Community Events

The community events are rituals in which people dance, sing, listen to and play music and parade together. In these events the participant are engaging in a ritual process, where in Van Genneps terms, they are first *separating* themselves from everyday life (Van Gennep 1909). This is a pre-liminal phase where they are preparing for the ritual, like getting costumes on or travelling to where the community event is being held. In the community events of New Orleans participants are also contesting the streets as a space where traumatic, disruptive or distressful events have occurred due to actions of agents that are "disrupters" of their safety and well-being. These can be as mentioned, criminals that are breaking the law, often those that individuals that are violent. Shootings would be the most worrying and disruptive actions of these individuals, as there are shootings almost on a daily basis in the streets, which in turn threaten the safety of the residents[28]. After this phase of separation, they are then transitioning, according to Van Gennep, or as Victor Turner claims this is a stage of liminality. This is a time of blurred boundaries, and the phase where communitas can occur, which are the phases I will concern myself with below. By dancing and walking together in this state, different processes emerge between the participants, in many instances a feeling of togetherness, which is communitas (Turner 2012:11). In these moments they are also conveying a sentiment that they feel safe in the streets, and that they "own" them, or have "taken the street" from the "disrupters".

The "disrupters" can also be those that oppose these types of rituals as many do, due to noise and criminal conduct, like drug-use. Another example is presented in the reoccurring conflicts between traffic and the parades. The drivers get annoyed at the participants of the parades for taking up the whole street, and vice versa. In these incidences they are also seen by the participants of the events, as the people that are opposing or disrupting the collective joy of the moment. For instance, the participants will repeatedly complain about the noise the police-sirens make during the parade, as they disrupt the music and harmony of the crowd. The police are also limiting the mobility of the participants, by cutting them off from side-streets and other empty spaces in which one could dance more freely. They will also limit how intoxicated one can get. At the second lines they will stop the parade with sirens after four hours, which is the regulated timeframe set within the police regulations. Of course, their presence will also prohibit any visible drug-use, like smoking marihuana.

[28] Not only is violence and shooting in the streets a safety hazard for those that are involved in the conflict, as history will show, stray bullets have killed many in New Orleans.

As mentioned, Van Gennep argues that after the rite of separation a stage of liminality emerges, where the sentiment of communitas may occur. One is stripped of social status and transitions into something else. The communitas is unstructured, and Victor Turner refers to this stage of liminality in spatial terms, where one is betwixt, and between (Turner 1969). In these community events in New Orleans, the participants are often between joy and pain in this liminal stage, and can be interpreted as being at the margins of society. By this I mean that they are outside their everyday life and the everyday rules and morals. For instance, the participants will dress inappropriately, or expose themselves to spectators, or they might raise their voices louder than what is usual, or perhaps dance in a "wild" or perhaps in a highly "sexualized" manner. Children will often also partake in the activities, and can be observed drinking alcohol. Communitas and collective empathy can lead to strangers might start up conversations spontaneously or more randomly than in everyday life, and the participants that are seemingly strangers can create bonds, dance together and have fun, share food, alcohol and drugs.

In these liminal stages of the New Orleans community rituals, many seem to be able to speak more freely about their problems and concerns. They are able to express deep sorrow and pain to those present, most often by mediating their meaning verbally, but also through visible symbols or actions. In this "ritual relates the individual to the collective by joining the emotional to the ideological" (Beezly, Martin & French 1994: XV). This expression emerges in different forms, for instance one can observe quite frequently that participants are wearing signs or pictures of the recently deceased on their clothes, or they might have anti-violence slogans on t-shirts or symbolic remembrances of Katrina. They often display their sorrow, perhaps more bluntly, through the visible act of crying while dancing or singing. This sentiment of togetherness in these events is almost consciously invoked by performers and creates a feeling equality, and a sentiment that all the participants are in their struggles together (Turner 2012:4). When I say "consciously invoked" I mean that participants will stress "togetherness" verbally. For instance, at a festival a performer stated "we are all in this life together, and no one is alone in facing their struggles, because we all share this pain." A young woman told me, "…when I go to these things I bring it all, I dance it out, all the tension and problems that gather up during the week, I just let it all out in the weekend, especially during the second lines."

This liminal stage can both create a sense of permanent and "deep rooted feeling of community" amongst those present, and it can at the same time be very fleeting (Turner 2012:22-25). It seems as if the participants of the community events that I depict are in this

state of liminality portraying the "ideal community," where one can express oneself freely, and be together with others in both their pain, and in their joy. They also feel safe and happy, and can move and dance without concern. More often than not, the participants emphasized that participating could serve as an emotional outlet for them, leaving them liberated if only for a little while from their problems. Some said it built up their confidence to participate and to perform. They also stressed the "togetherness" they would feel, and that these were moments in time when especially "race" did not matter, and what I suggest as the "categories of society" would become blurry. One of my informants called this "an amazing phenomenon", and said "it's truly a gift, that people can get together and have a good time like that. There are all kinds of people that would never have met elsewhere. Black and white!" Thus, we can see that different processes may arise in the stage of liminality; emotional outlet or catharsis, the mediation of problems, and the blurring of social categories that are so prominent in everyday life. It is time of transformation of emotionally pain to collective joy. In the following paragraphs I will depict some cases where I observed these processes at a festival.

Expressing Struggles and Insecurities

After the conversation that I had with the streetcar drivers about the young boy that was shot (see pages 44-45), the streetcar stopped next to the entrance of the festival, which was proceeding as most festivals do; with good food, music at several stages in the festival area and people relaxing on the grass in front of the stages with their drinks, talking to others or getting into the music. Some were doing acrobatic yoga on a mat, while others were dancing slowly to the calm afro-beat band that was on one of the stages. The smell of marihuana was thick in the air, mixed with the flavorful steamed smoke from the barbeques around. The kids were gathering around a little handmade puppet show, and some of them were getting their faces painted by a girl with a long pink dress. The band was finishing up, so the MC got up on stage to announce when the next band was getting on stage[29]. He went on to listing the different sponsors of the festival and promoted their different services by reading from a note. After a little break, the next band which was a Mardi Gras Indian Band got on stage and dedicated the next song to "all those 1700 dead, and to all the boys at LSU[30]. Penitentiary that is, I'm not talking about the University, but the jail". They played a song with the lyrics

[29] MC means Master of Ceremonies, and is the host of staged events. MC is also used to denote a skillful rapper.

[30] LSU is the Louisiana State Panitentiary

"Don' mess with me, and I won't mess with you" repeated throughout the whole tune while the audience joined in, singing the words and waving their hands in the air. Later on a band member wore a hoodie over his Indian suit and said;

> *"I don't mean to get political but, we've lost some boys lately. We all be dads, so we know that we want our kids to be safe in the streets, no matter what they're wearing or how they be lookin' that particular day. Another young man was shot right outside Burger king the other day; I say what's going on here? So, I want ya'll to think about that boy wearing that hoodie that got shot and remember that we want ya'll to be safe. It just ain't right. Now, I think he had a L on his cap when he died, so let's all get our hands up and shape it like an L, and raise that high"*

The audience did as he implored and raised their hands shaped like L's, while still cheering the band on, and then formed in a spontaneously second line that moved in a circle in front of the stage[31]. On a stage at the other side of the festival ground, one of the most famous brass bands in New Orleans was rigging up to play. One of the band members grabbed the microphone and introduced himself;" to all of y'all visitin', I'm Brass-Johnny, y'all maybe don't know who I am, but the police sure does." At a different stage later on that day a MC was joking about having some lines of cocaine with the mayor before coming on stage. In the parades and community events I describe, inversions of norms and everyday structures happen, for example by dressing "inappropriately", doing drugs, performing political satire or by dancing very exuberantly and freely. If one person were to do this outside the sphere of these rituals they would be anomalies, and even as they actively engage in these activities and succumb to the liminal stage they become somewhat "polluting" to the "normal state" for the outsiders, or those that do not participate (Mary Douglas 1966, Turner 1969). They are viewed from the outside as "the troublemakers" that takes over the streets, disrupting traffic and making noise, getting drunk and getting into trouble.

There is also a sense of people constantly walking a thin line between what will be tolerated by the police in the community events. They might be close to a police officer, and hold a marihuana joint hidden inside their palm, knowing that the police officer most likely will smell the smoke, but not know where it is coming from. Performers might mock the police on stage, while police officers are present in the crowd. In the second line parades the dancers can playfully walk up to the police cars and perform dances where they make fun of

[31] He was referring to the death of Justin Sipp, discussed more in detail later in this chapter.

the police, by for example mimicking them, or just get very close to the officer while energetically dancing, without actually touching him. I would like to compare this to the example of the installation rites of Kanongesha of the Ndemby, described by Victor Turner. In this rite, one of the attributes of the liminal phase is when tribe members will walk up to the chief and insult or mock him, while the chief and his wife must sit silently on their mat and receive the insults without reciprocating the sentiment (Turner 1969). In the community events in New Orleans there is nothing the police officers can do when they are insulted, unless the participants cross the line, and actually break the law.

Figur 7- Old dancing man mocking police officer at a Jazz Funeral second line; pretending that his shovel is a symbol of both a gun and an elongation of a penis, while other parade participants laugh and cheer him on .

These small fragments of performances pinpoint the tension between law and life in New Orleans. Some respect the police, since it is a high-risk job in New Orleans. But the tension that has built up, especially between the African-American public and the police, due to several past events, was subject of many debates during my stay. There is also an element of political satire in these cases, which can also be interpreted as a cynic relation to the mentioned "disrupters", like the police and politicians, where they actually adapt to the political life, tolerates it and henceforth reproduces it (see also page 25). The "disrupters" tolerates the deconstruction, and inversion (Navaro-Yashin 2002:4; Žižek 1997). This means

that the performers make fun of the problems, but meanwhile they are in many ways accepting of them too.

According to Van Gennep, the third and final stage in the rite of passage would be this *reassimiliation,* in which I pose that for many participating in the types of community events described here, this is a very abrupt transition, as the events often dissolve very quickly and efficiently. The participants go back to their everyday lives, and thus back to their insecurities and struggles. As the crowd moves away from the area a quick clean-up of the streets follows performed by a cleaning crew. For instance, on Mardi Gras Day when the police and the cleaning crew equipped with cars and horses will at the stroke of midnight rush into the streets, pushing the crowds away from the public spaces. At this point they also reassimilate into a state where they are in constant preparation for the next time they will experience these community events once more. This is very well exemplified by the activities and resources many invest in preparations for these events, making costumes, floats, decorations, saving money that they can spend there, buying drug for the occasion, and so on[32].

This political satire serves not only as a factor to create reactions of joy and laughter, but can moreover indicate a sense of "powerlessness" in the people, which was often stated to me by my informants. One man in his forties told me; "I don't vote anymore, on anything. There's just no point. Things won't get better just 'cause we vote for a black man, or a woman. It's all the same shit, and it will be the same shit in the future too." But inside the sphere of the community events they do create a sense of self-empowerment, resisting the structures they feel have brought them harm, as I will show by delving deeper into how the violence in New Orleans was handled.

Ghetto Life and Racial Profiling

The "police brutality" and "black on black violence" were often categorized and expressed as interconnected issues of the "culture of violence" in performances. These issues were also seen as a collective problem. Often the performers or my informants would express a lack of trust in the police because of events in the past. Or they would tell me about their previous history with crime, and dealings with law enforcement. My understanding was that this "pride" of criminal histories, and often the pride of being raised "on the streets", in "bad neighborhoods" or in "the ghetto," was part of separating oneself from "the other". In these

[32] The preparations in themselves would make an interesting study, but for reasons of space I have had to leave these details out.

cases that could be the more the privileged residents in the city. They would express a strong sense of the character or identity it builds to survive the kinds of struggles it could imply growing up in these areas. The majority of the people I spoke with who grew up "in the ghetto", as they would put it, would state this biographical fact early in conversations, emphasizing this signifier of their identity. If they were born and raised in New Orleans, they would very often state in which Ward. Where they grew up were symbolized through identity markers, often aesthetically through tattoos or clothing. For instance, one of my informants had a tattoo of the state of Louisiana on his arm, with the number of the Ward he grew up in beneath the figure. When one gained understanding of the meaning of these identity markers, on could ascribe socio-economic characteristics based on which ward individuals lived in. For instance, being raised in for example the Seventh Ward probably meant that they came from a "tough" background, that they were raised in a high-crime, low-income neighborhood. Even though this depiction of "ghetto living" can be untrue, they might be from decent families with working-parents with stable incomes, as Ulf Hannerz showed in his work on "ghetto-dwellers" in Washington DC (1969: 15-16). If they were from the lower Ninth Ward that could mean the same as with the Seventh Ward, but one would also instantly consider the possibility that this person might have lost a lot during Hurricane Katrina.

Nevertheless, looking and acting as one was raised in the "ghetto," by for example, adapt to a specific «ghetto style» when one is African-American, could make one vulnerable to racial profiling by the police[33]. For instance, in New Orleans, this style is exemplified by wearing hoodies, white tank-tops also known as "wife-beaters" or elaborate hair weaves, gold caps on teeth[34], sagging pants and so on. When driving with one of my informants we observed two African-American men dressed to the mentioned descriptions that were being pulled over by the police. Seemingly, they were just walking on a commercial high-end shopping-street. My informant said; "Well, who do you think the police are gonna pick up, them or us?" Even though racial profiling is in theory illegal, it is a subject of great concern for many African-Americans in New Orleans. The issue is often related to greater tensions between the police and African-American population, which can be observed not only in New Orleans, but all over the country. In the next part of this chapter I describe a politically loaded Mother's Day parade, where the participants emphasized and communicated the tensions

[33] «Being ghetto» is a term my informants used when one would act like one was poor, or had very little. It could denote an aggressive "ghetto behavior" which was seen as inappropriate, often by white informants. For instance, when I broke my coffeepot I improvised a home-made coffeemaker, using a spatula with wholes, a cup and a filter, which was held up while pouring the water through by a tube of hand lotion. My informant told me that it was one of the more "ghetto things she had ever seen." Informants could say; "that's so ghetto."

[34] Also known as "grills."

surrounding "the culture of violence" and the issues of racial profiling. The killings that I now will describe were catalysts to a heated focus on violence in the parades. The cases also received international media attention.

The Racially Loaded Killings of Three Boys

The case that received the most media attention, both in the U.S and internationally, was the shooting and subsequent death of 17 year old African-American Trayvon Martin. Trayvon was walking home late February 26th, 2012, through the gated community he was temporarily staying, in Sanford, Florida. George Zimmerman, a Hispanic-American, who was the neighborhood watch coordinator in this community, reported Trayvon to the police saying that the boy was acting suspiciously. After Zimmerman hung up the phone with the police there was an encounter between the two that ended in Trayvon being shot in the chest by Zimmerman at close range. This shooting and the details around it immediately created a media storm and various debates on race issues and the role of the Neighborhood Watch Organization[35]. I suggest that it subsequently served as a catalyst to the heated attention the next shootings in New Orleans received by my informants. Even though the cases mentioned here never received the same national and international attention as the case of Trayvon's death, they were important matters for many New Orleanians.

Few days after Trayvon Martin died, on March 1 at dawn, an African- American 20-year-old boy named Justin Sipp, and his brother, was pulled over by the police while driving to Burger King in what the police referred to as a "pro-active traffic stop." His brother was driving the car, and was dropping Justin off at a Burger King in Mid-City before he was driving to a different Burger King for his work. The situation escalated and shots were fired from both the brothers and the police. The details of the episode were blurry in the news and newspapers, despite the public outcry from both the Sipp brothers' family and the public to get the full account of the incident. Both the social media and some of the newspapers started using the term DWB when describing the case. This wordplay on the official term DWI[36], Driving While Intoxicated, means "Driving While Black". The context for this term is the supposed racial profiling of black drivers in America. This is a very sensitive and potent debate which was ignited over forty years ago and is part of a bigger debate on the "criminalization of blackness" (Geiger-Oneto & Scott Phillips 1-4:2003). At the scene two

[35] Neighborhood Watch is an organization consisting of community volunteers that patrol streets and are encouraged to report crimes and suspicious behavior to the authorities.

[36] Some jurisdictions use the term Driving Under the Influence (DUI).

officers were shot, allegedly by Justin Sipp. Earl Sipp was shot in the leg and Justin Sipp was shot dead by three bullets[37] (The Times-Picayune 2012).

Mother's Day

While the public was still waiting to receive a more detailed account of the incidents, yet another young boy, 20-year-old Wendell Allen, was shot and killed by the police during a marihuana raid in his mother's home. He was unarmed; wearing only jeans and sneakers at the time. The 5 children he was babysitting were left inside the house while he was shot outside. Two weeks later no one had any answers yet to what had actually happened at this particular shooting, and Mother's Day was coming up. Occupy NOLA and the blog NOLA Anarcha, an African-American anarchistic oriented blog about New Orleans, were posting frequent comments about the incidents[38]. They pronounced that in celebration of Mother's Day the group United New Orleans Front[39] would sponsor a parade. It would be arranged to go from the old meeting spot for slaves, Congo Square, to City Hall (The Times Picayune staff, NOLA.com 13.03.2012). The sponsors urged everyone to bring a picture of a loved one to the parade, and publicized a case list for the issues the parade would march for. These included; the deaths of Justin Sipp, Trayvon Martin and Wendell Allen, the shooting of Earl Sipp and for "all those maimed and murdered by the NOPD and those unjustly incarcerated", and lastly for the "victims of black on black murders[40].

The group was seemingly a predominantly African-American coalition of far left-wing oriented organizations and activists. The people were gathering around the benches of Congo Square. Most had brought signs with slogans like: "R.I.P Trayvon, Justin and Wendell, we will never forget", and "We demand Justice" "Stop Black on Black Violence, Now". Occupy NOLA members were present and were there not only to participate in the Mother's Day Parade, but were selling socialist newspapers, filming for Occupy The Stage[41].The lady that I

[37] After an internal investigation that lasted for weeks the report said that the police officers at the scene was not wearing their bulletproof vests and that they were working overtime. The newspapers reported at the end of April that the investigation of the shootout had ended and that the boys had been pulled over for using an inactive license plate light.

[38] A segment of the «Occupy movement» based in New Orleans which sprung out from a protest movement in New York, "Occupy Wall Street." In New Orleans they occupied an area near City hall for a short time before the organization was forced to retreat by the police, when I started my fieldwork they were developing a space inside what seemed like a warehouse, and were very active in the creation of different workgroups and political demonstrations.

[39] Comprising several community activist groups.

[40] NOPD is short for the New Orleans Police Department.

[41] Occupy the Stage is the workinggroup of occupy NOLA, a cased based community engaging in different activities al over the city.

was holding a big sign with was there to also promote a defense against cuts at a maternity wing at a hospital. We started discussing the parade route, and whether or not the police were going to be present. We were both unsure if the parade permits were paid, and if the parade was perhaps illegal. People were holding different signs with pictures of police brutally attacking a girl bashing her against the pavement. This was an incident where an autistic girl was handled very roughly by police at a Mardi Gras celebration a couple of years before. Meanwhile the police cars were starting to line up in front of the gates to the park.

Though this was not a traditional second line parade, the Mother's Day parade used several recognizable ritual elements that felt familiar to the participants, the walking, the music and use of improvised instruments, like an animal horn. This shows that "parading for peace" was a theme that was also implemented on parades outside the second line communities, and was organized by a different party than the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs. We organized the line so that the bigger signs would not overshadow the smaller ones when we started marching. A female priest stepped up in front of us, blew an animal's horn making a loud hallow siren call, and started said a prayer for us to stay safe that day.

Figure 8. - On the steps of City Hall – "Stop Killer Cops."

The crowd started to form up into a line and we started walking. As we marched in a fast pace towards City Hall it was almost quiet amongst us, except for the sounds coming from the ones that were calling out mantras that were easy to follow for the crowd; "What do we want?" The crowd answered "Justice!" They yelled back "When do we want it?" The crowd replied "Now!" Cars were trying to cut in front of us; a man lifted up his sign higher into the air and stepped right in front of the car fast. He shouted; "Can't you see we're walkin' here?" He turned around when the car fully stopped and shook his head, and said: "God damn!" As mentioned, this type of conflict often rose between the cars and parade participants, as the parade routes often cut through central roads.

As we reached City Hall people were gathering at the stairs. Mothers of young men and women that had lost their lives due to violence were taking turns telling their stories in the microphone one of the leaders of the march had brought. A mother spoke about the spiral of violence in her neighborhood, leading to the murder of her son, and then his girlfriend the next day, probably "because she saw something, or knew what was going on," and therefore was perceived as a threat to the killers. We then shared 30 seconds of silence for the dead. In this moment, participants started to cry, and hold hands, or comforting each other. This I suggest was again an attribute of liminality, resulting in the collective empathy that can derive from communitas. A young woman was called up in front of us and she grabbed the microphone:

"This song is called The Unexpected. It was originally written about Hurricane Katrina, and it tells a story about the storm but it's not really about that storm, It's about the storms that are going on right now… the disaster that is the murders and violence that are happening in our city…. I lost my brother at 16 in a drive-by shooting… Things like this, it's gonna catch you by surprise and off guard but you have to continue to press on…

She began to sing:

The Unexpected

"Who would have thought that on that day there would be a storm?
And reminded us to not take life for granted
And to appreciate the good times that was shared
And to be grateful for the ease for most
And to hold on to those we love the most…

Now those things have changed
It seems that life will never be the same
Take a look around
What was no more is strange now
But just remember trials only make us stronger
And that a big rain produces a bigger sun
So show no fear in the cloudy days…

For everything happens for a reason
That's' both good and bad in each season
So don't even worry about tomorrow
For joy will come after sorrow
Just know that hope wins…"

In the lyrics of the song, the girl is trying to express that if one prevails through the tougher times and struggles, there will always be better times and joy again in the future. It should be noted that no one working at City Hall would come out to meet the Mother's Day parade that day.

Contested Landscapes of the Streets

The community events of street festivals and parades, in this particular case the Mother's Day parade, turns the streets of New Orleans into contested landscapes. New Orleans based anthropologist Helen A. Regis, argues that the parades, and as I would add, community events more generally, transforms these urban landscapes and spaces and creates "alternative social orders" (1999). In this particular event the participants demonstratively takes over the street and power over it from those that do not participate and use the street for other non-parade purposes; like the drivers of the disruptive cars, the police and the criminals. In this they are making the procession a ritual of resistance and inversion, containing elements portraying "a more ideal and safe community", where the streets are theirs, the social relations and solidarity is heightened and they are safe (Beezly, Martin & French 1994: XV). The control and power they have over the street is only symbolic and temporarily within the ritual phase of liminality, and is a type of anti-structure (Turner 1969, Low 1996).

The act of walking for a cause, or taking it to the street, becomes symbolic as taking issues to the streets. It becomes symbolic of what the participants want their everyday lives to be; safe and joyous. It presents itself as a political comment on the current state of affairs in the city. In taking their issues and insecurities due to violence to the streets, and in making them public, they are resisting both the police and the criminals. Both the police and the criminals are "disruptive" forces that cause insecurities necessitate everyday struggles, although the police of course are often successful in «protecting and serving" the citizens. As mentioned, many respect the police. The criminal gangs are somewhat presenting an alternative order to the police, in offering a "culture of violence" as being rewarding for younger gang members. So, the police and the criminals can represent powers that are both portrayed as potential root causes to the insecurities and struggle the participants of the parades experience in everyday life.

What is curious about this parade is that it takes the form of a political protest, utilizing some of the organizational formations of a second line, but there is a lack of music and dance in the marching. Here they moved the musical segment to the end, when people are standing still on the ground of City Hall, taking up that particular space to gain attention, although they failed to get any visible response from the politicians inside the building. These forms of parades are typical in political demonstrations, community events and festivities in other societies and countries too. Anthropologist Jack Santino explores the Right wings' public protests and parades in Northern Ireland and South Boston, to describe how symbols at different events can point to the same phenomenon. Not only are they protesting the powerful government, but they are also resisting the influence of other parties, so in the case of Ireland, for instance, the Loyalists are sharing the same style of protest as the Republicans (Santino 1999: 516-527).

In the mothers' day parade the participants are often from the same neighborhoods, classes and backgrounds as the "violent criminals". Both the criminals and the participants in the parade are battling with the police in certain cases, but they are as in the two parties in Ireland, also contesting each other. The criminals are threatening the safety of the parade participants in their everyday life, especially when moving in the streets, and the parade participants are threatening the criminals' status and way of life, by trying to symbolically "take back" the streets in which the "culture of violence" is dominant.

According to Victor Turner, within liminality where communitas may occur, society appears unstructured, and individuals as equals. The people that are experiencing and actively engaging in community events in New Orleans are changing status in that moment; they are

active agents in creating the idea of better and safer lives. They are in the *rite of passage* transitioning and separating themselves from the "disrupters" that have generated crisis in their lives (Turner 1969).

From Violence to Performing Battles – a Different Approach to Parading for Peace

"Today, it ain't about shootin' a gun, nah. It's about being pretty"

- Big Chief Tootie Montana

-

An alternative way of performing and dealing with violence to what I have showed already is presented by the continuing evolving traditions of the Mardi Gras Indians and their parades. The Indians have always had their friction with the local police, and are still to this day not willing to pay for parade permits as the other parade Krewes or clubs does[42]. They have also had a long history of violent clashes between the different tribes. The Mardi Gras Indians, or the Black Indians, are like the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs; benevolent societies. The tribes are built up by hierarchical principals based often on family lines. They are also spiritual units. The Mardi Gras Indians have experienced a major growth in memberships after hurricane Katrina, as many younger members have become more active and involved. "Because they knew now what could be lost, and now they see how important it is to keep it", as one informant told me. While it is hard to get access to the groups, and therefore to gain any inside insight, one can still observe them everywhere in New Orleans. Some days they will mask at their own events, or more commonly at other community events where they are hired to perform. If there is a festival or a parade there is most likely at least one masked Indian at the scene. The Indians mask and show off their new suits on the culmination of the carnival season the Mardi Gras Day or "Fat Tuesday", and on "St.Joseph's Day" also called "Super Sunday", a couple of weeks later. There is one Super Sunday celebration for the Westbank and a separate celebration on the Eastbank.

[42] Mardi Gras Krewes is written with a "k", not the usual "c".

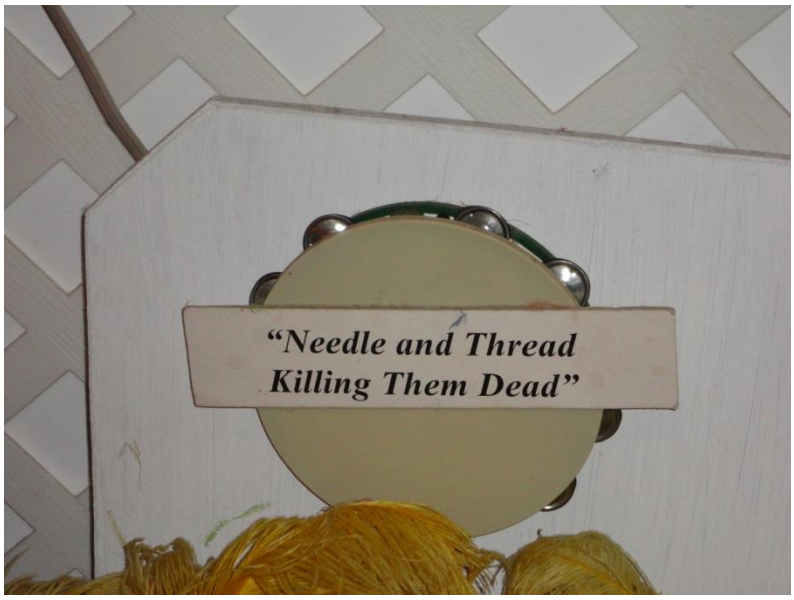

Figure 9. –Mardi Gras Indian Tambourine with slogan at the Backstreet museum.

The Mardi Gras Indians wear big elaborate suits, and this tradition can be dated as far back as the 1800's (see Chapter One). Although the exact origin of the culture is uncertain the common belief is that the Native Americans aided black slaves in escaping and learning how to survive in the bayou, and the Native American slaves and African slaves started to form relationships inside the slave quarters[43]. Later on they started meeting on Place des Negros, now known as Congo Square. Many of the slaves had Sundays off and met there to trade and to celebrate events, have their religious ceremonies and to play music together. There an elaborate multidimensional culture arose from the multicultural and multiethnic socialization. And you can still see its traces of cultural and religious heritage today, as many of the inhabitants in New Orleans still practice folk magic, hoodoo, vodou and keep alive traditions of the Mardi Gras Indians[4445]. The Indian tradition is therefore said to be a tribute to the Native Americans that the African slaves grew so close to (Turner 2009). The parades are therefore also expressions of cultural continuity, the participants' identities and heritage as Afro-Creoles or African-Americans. The streets they move in are also *locus* of these heritages and memories.

[43] Bayou means the swamp, or slow-flowing small river areas. These types of landscape areas around New Orleans, and around in Louisiana is often called the bayou.

[44] Vodou is a syncretic religion, based on the belief that there is a creator God, and is expressed in the form of worship of spirits that are subservient to the creator, also known as *loas*. Every *loa* is responsible for a particular aspect of life.

[45] Hoodoo is also a syncretic form of folk magic, but is not a religion. Hoodoo is also known as conjure, and is similar to vodou in that is it based on traditional African-American folk spirituality that developed from West African, Native American, and European spiritual traditions.

Every year the Black Indians make a new suit in collaboration with a whole sewing team. Making these amazing elaborate suits, hand-sewn of patterned beads and feathers is a great task, and those that wear them take great pride in doing so. When the Indians dress up in their suits and paint their faces it is called "masking". The suits are worked on in secrecy before they reveal them at the end of the carnival season, which is the end of lent, on Mardi Gras Day. The Indians also make out musical bands and have specific chants and songs, many of them which are well-known in New Orleans (Turner 2009: 39-59).

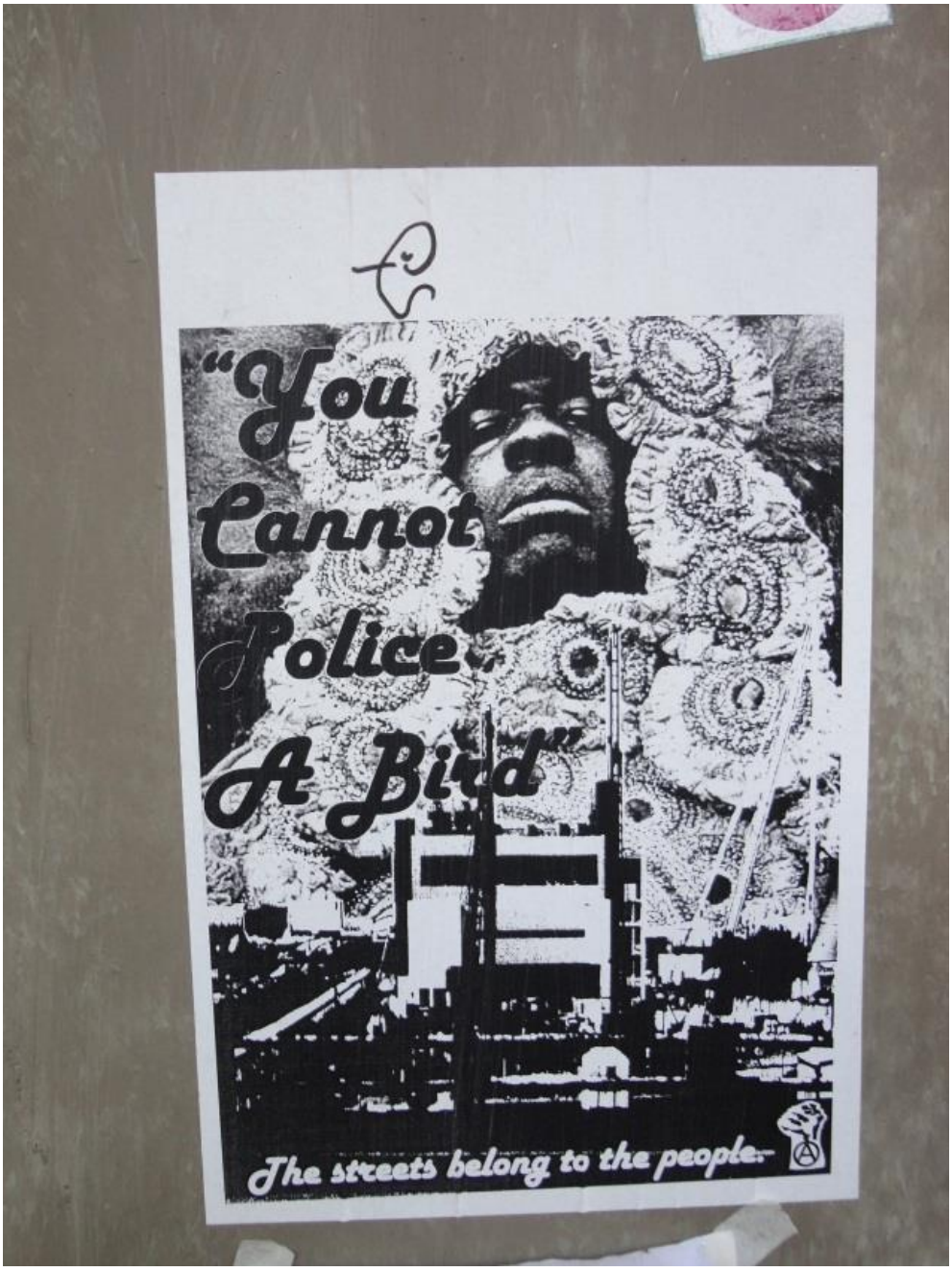

Figure 10.-Poster- You Cannot Police a Bird –The Streets belong to the People.

Figures 11&12 – Mardi Gras Indians revealing their costumes on Super Sunday.

Historically, the Indian's parades were often violent as tribes would "bump into" other tribes, and debts and conflicts were settled, with disastrous results. This violence proceeded till the 1960s, when the late Big Chief "Tootie" Montana took the first step in transforming the ritual and parades to become non-violent. He famously said; "I was going to make them stop fighting with the gun and the knife and start fighting with the needle and thread." Now this violence between the tribes is a thing of the past, and in time they have transformed the ritual into a taunting performance of a "battle" when they meet other tribes during the celebrations, as they show off and compete on who has the "prettiest" suits. Many have fake weapons beaded and feathered as accessories, and the beading of the suits very often depicts battles between tribes and other parties (Sublette 2008).

The parading tribes will then move around in the streets, mostly in the poorer or working-class neighborhoods, drumming and chanting their traditional chants and tunes, and people will come out to see them. These chants and songs run in generations, and they have rehearsals regularly to improve their musical performance, and style of African drumming. They are spiritual to the Indians, connecting them to the spirits of their generations and past, as mentioned (Turner 2009).

The tribes are hierarchically organized, with the Big Chief being the highest leader. He is often a father figure not only for the tribe, but is often highly respected in their communities and neighborhoods. There are a selection of various supporting second chiefs, queens, and princesses. The most important and visible roles in the "battle" is that of the Spy boy, Wildman, Drum boy and the Flag boy. There can also be "second flag", a "third flag", and so on. During the days where many tribes are masked, the tribes will meet, and that is why the Spy boy, will be in the frontline on the look-out for "trouble". He is usually dressed in a lighter suit than the others to enable him to move faster in case of danger to warn the others. When he sees another tribe he will signal to the Flag boy, which in turn will let the Big Chief know that there is another tribe ahead by using his flag, and will then advise him about his movements. This flag is decorated in feathers and beads, and when these rituals used to be violent and many of the Indians carried real weapons and guns, one would touch the flag if they had the intention of "getting into trouble" (Turner 2009). The Wildman will then clear the path for the Big Chief by yelling "ooooaaaao, get out da way," and move people to the side by pushing them or waving his decorated wand around him to make space for the battle to begin. He can get quite aggressive in this, as I noticed once by being jabbed in the back by his wand while the he was screaming, "wooooooaaaaaoo," loudly into my ear. This proved to be quite efficient, because I in turn jumped to the side and out of the way, quite startled. The Big Chief will then dance and confront the Big Chief of the other tribe, or the crowd and the other tribe will yell "Let'em pass" and it ends for the time being. If not, the battle begins. Different linguistic elements and expressions usually come into play at this point, typically derived from African dialects and Creole French. Some phrases would be used more often than others, for example; "no ombaou", meaning "I will not back down." They would scream loudly to the crowd "I'm the prettiest bird ya'll came out to see, I won't back down," before the Big Chiefs would spiral into a ritual play where they mock each other and the others'costumes. "I'm the chief on fire, you cannot police a bird, I am the Big Chief, and I won't back down, I'm the prettiest Big Chief anyone's ever seen. I'm the one you all talk about," and similar phrases would be yelled out. They do this while they "strut" and display their most impressive poses, showing off the detailed needlework of different parts on the costume, one more elaborate than the last. They will get more and more aggravated, jumping and dancing up and down, running back and forth to make it seem as if they are getting ready to attack, making the crowd cheer and yell out, also commenting on the costume. The battle ends often by a sign of respect; the Big Chiefs take off the masks, or smile and exchange greetings, before they move on down the street to the next potential battle.

Many of the elements in these performances are what Turner and Thompson refer to as "relationships to the past", and one can observe the strong connections to similar expressions in not only African traditions and religions, especially deriving from the Kongo, but also to Haitian Vodou, and Afro-Caribbean traditions. They claim that the sequin, beading and feathering, that make up the aesthetic display constitutes a three-sided process; first, it displays relationships of memory, second, it is a performance and and third, it forms a type of surrogation, as the flag, especially explicit in Haitian Vodou, would symbolize the "coming of spirits", and their immanent presence at the ritual. The flag in the battle signifies the same coming of their ancestors' spirits for the Indians (Turner 2009, Thompson 1983, 1993).

The Mardi Gras Indians have taken their own "culture of violence" and transformed it into something else; a battle on who is the "prettiest" or more aesthetically beautiful. But tensions still arise when the tribes meet the police. Which is an issue of great concern, but one informant said "I haven't heard of anything happening between the birds and the police, except those signs that are all over, the "you cannot police a bird", I guess they're still fighting, but at least there hasn't been any major clashes the last couple of years." During my fieldwork period, the Mardi Gras Indians started to have their own stated "parades for peace", and became actively engaged in the same way as the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs had been that parade season.

Change in Making? – Concluding Remarks

By actively engaging more members in the Mardi Gras Indian tribes, which has through their new traditions of battling over who is "prettiest», recognized and transformed their own issues and role in reproducing a "culture of violence", they have not only created safer rituals, they are developing and reproducing these traditions rather than violence. The parade-participants are constantly in a flux between law and tensions with the actual and potential "disrupters". In the next a New Orleans jazz funeral will be described in detail. This ethnographic case will further illustrate and help accentuate my argument about liminality as a space to express pain and sorrow, and develop a shared, collective joy among the participants as they "take it to the streets".

Chapter 4 - Rest in Peace, Uncle Lionel Batiste – A Jazz Funeral

When the shadows of this life have gone,
I'll fly away;
Like a bird from prison bars has flown
I'll fly away, Oh Glory
(I'll Fly Away - Hymn by Albert E. Brumley 1929, played at the funeral)

Introduction

During my fieldwork I was privileged enough to partake in a truly momentous jazz funeral. This was a celebration of the life of a very famous and well-known musician from New Orleans, Uncle Lionel Batiste. In this chapter, I will describe this jazz funeral, which due to a rainstorm was divided in two parts, spanning over two days. By exploring the jazz funeral tradition, and the following second lines' mobility in the landscape of a historically important neighborhood in New Orleans, I will explore the diverse expressions of sorrow and collective joy in the liminal stage of the ritual. This neighborhood presents as I suggest, as *locus* of cultural memory and heritage. Opening this chapter there are thick descriptions of these two events, in which I have examined the meaning of the neighborhood these events take place in, the Treme. The funeral ritual is a key to understanding how people deal with sorrow and grief in New Orleans. By generating a space where communitas and collective joy occur, these second lines transform contested urban landscapes, and simultaneously serve as an emotional outlet for the participants. Professor of African American religious history, Richard Brent Turner, has identified four clear ritual roots in this ritual, stemming from the different migration patterns first described in Chapter One. First, there are the West African Yoruba transformative rituals that are often depicted as journeys. Second, there are the burial traditions of the brass bands and Benvolent Societies of New Orleans, which are traceable to the early days of slavery. Third, one can observe the expressions of what Turner calls the "Black church", meaning the Christian expressions of congregations that are predominantly African-American. Finally, one can observe some influences from the Haitian diaspora, which can involve performances and visual displays of vodou and the "spirits", also known as "loas". These spirits can often be related to the same deities in Catholicism, also known as "Saints" (Turner 2009).

New Orleans Jazz Funerals

The New Orleans Jazz funerals are famous celebratory rituals. Traditionally, during the first part of the ritual participants will mourn the loss of the deceased openly, while during the second part, the funeral will transform into a joyful celebration. The importance and meanings of this ritual are complex, and runs deep in the history of New Orleans. While parades have been a part of social life almost from the beginning of the development of the city, the jazz funerals grew out of a slave-culture formed by the slaves' African religions synchronizing with the Europeans' Christian religion (see Chapter One). The slaves would perform a slow procession to the burial grounds. Then when the burial was over they would form a second line, and sing and dance to upbeat tunes.

The expansion of the funeral ritual included influences from their ritual inheritance from Africa, predominantly West-Africa. The diaspora from Haiti also had its' influence on the ritual, and the expansion of the religion of vodou and the folk magic of hoodoo is sometimes traceable in the parades. The funeral symbolizes not only death and mourning for the participants; it can also symbolize a rebirth. For many, death will mean a homecoming to Africa. In Yoruban dances, for instance, one can see the same dances as the second liners perform. They may play and dance with a sexualized expression, or imitate rebirth movements. In this funeral some women were "dancing out" the motions of a birth. They did this by thrusting out their pelvises, or by bouncing up and down with their legs spread apart (Turner 2009, Regis 1999).

The funerals are organized according to the deceased's' personal beliefs and values. To my knowledge, Uncle Lionel was a Christian. Therefore the traces of vodou religion were not as evident, as in other funerals that were sometimes mentioned by my informants. On several occasions my informants spoke of the famous funeral of a vodou priest, where thousands of participants were to have seen a belonging of the deceased floating in the air over the casket. As mentioned in the previous chapter these funerals can be quite popular, especially if the deceased is either very young, or very famous.

Figure13. - Painted big-drum presented at the funeral

"We are gathered here today to celebrate and to send our friend home."

The summer weather in 2012 was occasionally disrupted by heavy rainstorms, and the rain seemed particularly hefty that day as I ventured north of The French Quarter. I was walking up to the neighborhood called Treme, and saw that a crowd had already gathered in Louis Armstrong Park. I joined them and we moved slowly into the theatre where the ceremony would take place. One by one, we received the memorial cards that had been printed out for the occasion. It was printed on thick expensive glossy paper showing Uncle Lionel in one of his best suits on the front. The text inside the memorial card included a summary of what the deceased had accomplished in his lifetime, mentioning his musical influence, and the extent of his big family. It also contained a short sentence praising him for his role as second line Marshall at the parade during the Molde International Jazz Festival in 2011, the day after the 22 July terrorist attack in Oslo and Utøya, Norway. I had met Uncle Lionel several times in Molde when I was a little girl volunteering at this jazz festival as a flower girl welcoming the musicians at the airport in my national costume, or *bunad*[46]. He used to front our daily parades during the festival for many years.

[46] A "bunad" is a Norwegian traditional celebratory clothing.

As I walked up the stairs to the entrance and could hear the tones coming out of an organ. I caught the last verse of the hymn "I lay My Burden Down"; "*Since I lay my burden down, I'm gonna shout and sing forever. Glory glory, hallelu*[47]*. Since I lay my burden down.*"

The dark concert hall was lit with dimmed blue beams on the staircase, and the scene was slightly lit up where his family sat on chairs on the left side of the stage. On the right side sat Kermit Ruffins, a very well-known musician locally, laid-back on his chair playing classic New Orleans songs and hymns on his trumpet. Some other musicians accompanied him in some of the songs, sitting behind him in the darker part of the stage. They had already been playing for well over an hour. There was a bass-player, an organist and a drummer; the organ being the most noticeable sound in the room, playing very sharp and loud tones from its pipes.

This was the third day of viewing, and it had been almost two weeks since Uncle Lionel passed away after a short period of illness. There had also been a big second line a week before the actual funeral where several hundred people danced in his honor. The turn-up was massive at all the events following his death; a true homage to the legend that he was and the important role he had played in the New Orleans music-scene. In these next paragraphs I will take a look at the Treme where the funeral took place. Uncle Lionel grew up, and lived and played music in the Treme his whole life.

Down in the Treme

Hangin' in the Treme
Watchin' people sashay
Past my steps
By my porch
In front of my door
...
Down in the Treme
Just me and my baby
We're all going crazy
Buck jumping and having fun
(Down in the Tremé - John Boutte)

Uncle Lionel Batiste was born in 1912 in the Treme, and was an important figure in this neighborhood all his life. Like many other musicians that grew up in the Treme, the sense of

[47] Short for «Halleluja».

pride of belonging to his neighborhood was expressed through identity markers on his clothing. For instance, he wore slogans from the Treme on his hat, or just "Treme" as an emblem on his jacket the times I saw him before his passing. He was a member of the Treme Brass Band, one of the most famous brass bands in New Orleans. They were often hired to play at the second line parades and festivals.

There had been events in the Treme in Uncle Lionels' honor almost every day; everything from barbeques to small jam-sessions was organized for anyone who wished to partake in this public grieving process. The Treme was not only the home of Uncle Lionel, it is an epicenter of African-American history in the Southern United States. Some of the greatest musical legends of modern times, like Mahalia Jackson, Kermit Ruffins, and many others grew up in this neighborhood. The residents of Treme have great pride in what they called their "cultural inheritance". I was told that it is quite common for anyone that lives there count themselves as "performers", musicians" or "artists". Several Mardi Gras Indian tribes are located in this neighborhood, and it is quite common for the residents to be members of Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs[48]. Second lines would often pass through the streets during the weekends. An old man I spoke with at a local liquor store said: "This is it, this here, this neighborhood, is New Orleans. This is the heart of our culture." It is also the one of the first neighborhoods in the United States where people of color were allowed to buy land. Remarkably many of the first to buy land here were free women of color (Pontchartrain 2010).

The City Planning Commission outlined the boundaries between 72 distinct neighborhoods in 1980. But many of my informants would contest these boundaries, and say that the map was not completely correct. The Treme is a small neighborhood, and The City Planning Commission defines the boundaries of Treme as being Esplanade Avenue, North Rampart Street, St. Louis Street and North Broad Street. But what the residents define as the Treme seemed to be based on who belonged to the community, so the boundaries became unclear. The indistinct boundaries of what constitutes the 17 "wards" are also contested. Most residents of the Treme identify with and say they belong to the Sixth ward. The Wards are the political districts that are used for dividing the city in local and state elections, and in other assessments of for instance property or poverty levels (Crutcher 2010).

The first time I visited the Treme was a couple of days after my arrival, on Mardi Gras day. The whole neighborhood was alive in the streets. A friend showed me around and told me stories from the last years that he had been living there. We were waiting for the Mardi

[48] For discussions on the Mardi Gras Indian Tribes and the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs see also Chapter One and Three.

Gras Indians to come out from a house on the corner next to the local Blackstreet Museum[49] while he was drinking heavily. I asked him if it was safe for me to walk around in the Treme alone, and he answered;

> *"It's all in the way you walk, if you walk like you know what you're doing nobody will fuck with you, and if they know you like they know me, they'll take you in. It takes me 45 minutes to take a five minute walk in this place, and I always come home with some food in a doggy bag, 'cause that's just the way it is here. I'm never moving again, I love the Treme. But you can never fucking sleep here, not one god damn night of sleep, and almost every Sunday there's a second line walking past your window. You can't sleep here. There's always music, someone practicing. I usually stay up, get fucked up, for most of the week, and then I just pass out for about 24 hours once a week. But I never miss my job.*"

He offered me a drink of his Jameson bottle and bumped my arm to get my attention again.

> *"You're gonna go crazy for this place, you should move to the Treme. Ooooh, and the second lines, girl, I'm not kidding you; 10 year old black kids shaking their booties and getting off their faces drunk. Getting down, dancing past you with whiskey bottles, it's fucking crazy. One thing about coming to New Orleans is that you'll become an artist, for sure. Everybody thinks they're artists here, especially in the Treme. Or they at least start some project, like me, I started playing the trombone. It's so hard, blowing my cheeks up like that, it fucking hurts like hell. And I suck at it. And everybody takes care of each other here. If you get too drunk, they'll help you home. And girl, same goes to you today, it's Mardi Gras, if you get fucked up I'll take care of you, you can sleep on my couch, and I'll hold your hair up if you throw up. That's what we do here in the South, especially here."*

In this conversation, my friend highlighted the artistic aspect of living in New Orleans; where the transformation into "an artist" is significant. For the inhabitants of the Treme music is a way of life. Children are especially are encouraged to get involved with music and second lining here. Several of the houses and buildings are legendary "places of music", where famous musicians lived and infamous performances and rehearsals had taken place. There was great respect for these homes, and walking with anyone that lived in the Treme was similar to getting a history-lesson of New Orleans. Not only did they speak of the impact Hurricane Katrina had on the landscape, but they also spoke about the musical, religious and

[49] A museum dedicated to Mardi Gras Indian and second line artifacts.

historical events that had occurred throughout the neighborhood. On my first visit my friend seemed to point in all directions at the same time;

> "*There's that place where famous Joan de Lacriut was shot. That place was totally destroyed during the storm. That house is really a vodou-shop. I think Dj. Davis*[50] *lives there, in the same house where rebirth Brass Band used to rehearse. Brad Pitt's*[51] *house is there, and over there, that's where the best record ever made was recorded. On that corner Nick Cave*[52] *got arrested, he says there are ghosts in his house making him beat his wife."*

The Treme can be almost eerily quiet until you meet clusters of people outside a building or the very run-down church, known in the travel guides as one of the ugliest churches of the South. At times you can hear the loud outbursts of the sounds of someone practicing their instruments. Sometimes you would see tourists wandering close to the Louis Armstrong Park, where it seemed safer than in the rest of the neighborhood, which had a bad reputation. The whole neighborhood is thus an important locus of collective and cultural memory, in which the residents take much pride. After this Treme Neighborhood detour, I will now return to the case of the jazz funeral of Uncle Lionel Batiste.

Presenting the Body - New Orleans Style

The concert hall was filling up with fans and friends of Uncle Lionel, and the occasional curious tourist. The music started to get louder. The family was still on the stage, some of them talking, some crying, and some laughing. I sat down and took in the sight of the open casket where his body was lying on display. The casket itself was in front of the stage, and was guarded by a man and a woman in blue suits, one on each side. A man came out on stage and told us through the microphone that those who wished to say their last goodbyes to Uncle Lionel were welcome to do that at that point, and we were told to form a line up the staircase. "We all been lookin' at Uncle Lionel for days now, so you don't have to", he added. People came one by one, and waited in line to walk pass the casket, and I did the same. Soon almost everyone attending had walked past him, some more than once. There was a red rope held up by two golden poles stopping anyone from touching the display. Around him were several

[50] Famous local musician, makes satirical political songs and one of the characters of the HOB show «Treme» is based on him.
[51] Hollywood actor.
[52] Famous rock musician.

bouquets and garlands of flowers with ribbons on them. As we were waiting to pass the body I heard a man say very loudly to his friends; "When I die, ya'll better second-line".

As the line slowly allowed me to take a better look at the man himself, I found myself stunned by the meticulous display of his body and surrounding artifacts, like his second line suit and drum. I knew from a previous performance, one of his last, that he used to be a tailor, amongst many other things, so he was always in a well fitted suit. New Orleans style could be described as very eclectic and colorful. Feathers, vibrant colors, seemingly random relics and vodou artifacts can often be seen on clothing, on hats and incorporated in hairstyles. "Anything goes here", my informant Miss Foxy Red told me once while we were people watching in the French Quarter and a man wearing a cowboy on which he had glued on a toy gorilla, a plastic glittered bird, three big feathers from different birds, a bowtie, a naked Barbie doll spreading her legs, and a beaded spider. Everyday style and clothing in New Orleans are not only identity markers, but often matched the parades in their sheer lavishness.

As mentioned in the first chapter, the meticulous styles of the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs are very noticeable. Uncle Lionel certainly fit this carefully planned fashion the day of his funeral too. He was dressed in sparkly accessories of different kinds. New Orleans is said to be the "birthplace of *bling"*, a common term popularized through hip hop culture and indicates big, flashy, sparkly and embellished ornaments and accessories (Dyson 2006:158).

The deceased's suit for the occasion was brown, with the pants in lighter color pant than the jacket. Uncle Lionel was also wearing one of his bowler hats and his signature watch. He was a very small and skinny man. His watch seemed too big, dangling from his wrist so that it fell loosely into his palm. Fittingly, one of his famous sayings was; "I've got time in my hand". On his hat there was a little spider pin, and on a beaded string he had a little drum-figurine lying on his chest. Next to Uncle Lionel's' guards there stood an old lady wearing a tight blue and silver checkered sparkling disco bodysuit. She was yelling incomprehensible things, apparently very angry or upset for reasons I was never privy to, while pointing and waving to the spectators. Meanwhile, the music became increasingly louder. The band started to play the famous Christian gospel hymn "I'll Fly Away" over and over. Some of us sang along and swayed in our chairs.

The Peak of Sorrow

A woman in a bright yellow tight fitting dress that had been sitting on the stage together with the rest of the deceased's family stood up slowly. She raised her arm high up in the air,

and I could see the tears running down her grimacing face as she started to move. Her dance became increasingly elated as more of the family joined in. She stamped her foot to the ground hard, several times, while crying loudly. The lower part of her body swayed in circular motions slowly. She was now shaking her head in the same tact as the rest of her movements. The woman continued to have her eyes closed or fixed on the ground. The others on stage danced, and cried and some held each other as they moved to the rhythms of the music.

His eldest siblings were sitting in the front row. His sister was crying, and his brother was tapping his foot to the floor with the beat of the drum. I had seen him a couple of times before, dancing energetically despite his old age, with the street performers in the French Quarter. He had his usual bowler-hat on, impeccably dressed with matching shoes and tie. The music and singing calmed down again for a little while, and some of the family members sat down. Once again, the music became faster and louder. The family rose together and walked off the stage, while most of the audience was still dancing, waving their umbrellas and whatever else they had brought with them of staffs and ornaments. Many had brought their own creations of staffs with glittery pictures of Uncle Lionel on top, or pictures of him framed with feathers, glitter and beads. The participants were wearing colorful outfits, some were wearing all white.

The Ceremony Begins

The family went behind the stage and came out again while the audience stood up to receive them[53]. The rest of the ceremony, they sat on stage while the priest, notable members of the Treme community, and friends of the family gave their respect and praised Uncle Lionel in short speeches. A friend of Uncle Lionel said she had danced to the beat of his drum for all of her life. The priest told the story of how Uncle Lionel taught him and his friends how to second line dance when they were kids. The ceremony included segments of dance, both performed by the whole family and a modern dance performance of a younger family member. They spoke about the Sixth Ward, the Treme and the status that Uncle Lionel had in that community of the neighborhood. Several spoke about how his style of drumming had been very influential in the development of brass music in New Orleans. At the end some of the family members held each other while looking down at Lionel from the stage, some crying and shaking their heads, before they started calmly to dance or sway to the music.

[53] I will not present a full detailed description of the funeral, since the family of the deceased requested privacy for the duration of the ceremony. I therefore took no notes, recordings or photographs.

During the entire ceremony the mood shifted back and forth between sorrow and joy. At times, it seemed as if people were crying and laughing at the same time.

After the funeral ceremony there was supposed to be a second line following him to his final resting place. But the heavy rain was a problem as you cannot burry anyone when it is raining. As earlier noted, New Orleans was built on swampland, partly below sea-level; the other part is just slightly above it. So people have to be buried above sea-level in raised tombs. During rainy weather the tombs will fill up with water, causing the casket to float.

Second Lining in the Rain- Resisting the End of a Good Party

At the end of the ceremony, Lionel's band, the Treme brass band appeared in the doorway and proceeded to parade down the aisles of the theatre, playing a heavy beat on Amazing Grace. Some in the audience were singing along:

"Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.
(John Newton:1779)

Towards the end of their round in the theatre, the Treme Brass Band started blazing a very upbeat hymn as they walked down the aisle and passed the body. The whole room was on their feet dancing, and people were raising their umbrellas and hands in the air as they started following the band outside. I lingered for a moment since the ceremony did not appear to be completely finished. As they had told us many times during the ceremony they might have to reschedule the second line and the burial, so they were stalling by playing more music. But the people did not seem to care. A man announced that there would be a second line and the burial the following Monday. But we could hear the party was going on outside. Most of the audience probably did not hear that announcement. I decided to join the people outside the theatre. There the band was still playing underneath the staircases which lead up to the theatre.

Outside the entrance, a small group of people were singing Mardi Gras Indian chants in a small circle underneath an umbrella. People were dancing or just waiting around to see what happened. As usual there was confusion about what actually was going on, and if the parade was going at all. The rain was pouring down heavily, and the spray from the water reflected in

the light over the musicians. We could still hear the organ playing inside the theatre when the band all of a sudden started forming the first line and the second line making up the big crowd was following quickly. The grass had already turned in to a muddy mess and people were dancing very energetically to the rhythms of the well-known Rebirth brass song "I feel like Funkin' it up" The lyrics are easy to follow, and is quite catching; "I feel like Funkin' it up, I say we, we're on the road". "Funkin' it up on the road", can be interpreted as moving forward while dancing to funky music in the streets. This particular song is often played when the musicians want to elate the mood in the crowd. Because of the very hard and faster rhythm the song will almost without fault induce more energetic dancing and participation.

Figure 14.- Smiling man dancing in the rain

The switches between happy songs and mournful songs are pivotal to the mood and tradition of the jazz funerals. But I was surprised, expecting the music to be sorrowful first, then, after the body had been laid to rest it would be up-beat. At this funeral and the second lines, there were noticeable shifts between musical moods which seemed improvised. The

bands would play a slow procession-song, and the turn the mood around in the crowd quickly by playing something upbeat. Then they would turn the mood in the music around again.

Figure 15. – Second lining under the highway.

We moved around the streets of the Treme, and down to the area which is called the Faubourg Marigny. The rain flooded the streets, and the second line participants were wading through water up to their knees. The rain would not cease. People were now falling over, tumbling down as they could not see where they were dancing or walking. Some took very nasty falls and were helped up by random strangers and helped on their way; some were supporting people that had fallen holding them up while dancing. The rain was so loud at times it drowned out the sound from the band. Whenever we tried to talk to each other we just ended up not understanding what the other said. I noticed an old man that almost fell down in what I presumed was a pothole, and I asked him if he was ok. He answered;

> *"As long as we keep dancing, girl, I'm good. This is a blessed day. I ain't evah danced in a second line like this. I've second lined for 56 years, I live in the Tremé, and I ain't evah seen anythin' like this. We ain't evah gone through with it with this kind of weather before, I'm sure of that. Ain't nuttin' like this, no, sure ain't."*

That day, we second lined for almost four hours. Supposedly it took longer than usual because of the rain, and the fact that people seemed set on dancing no matter what for long periods of time. The man falling down in the pothole seemed to be in an elevated state, as many of the others who were dancing were. The rain did not seem to bother them; neither did the physical difficulties of moving in great masses of water. I suggest that this is part of the sentiment of communitas which is closely linked to being in what anthropologist Edith Turner poses as "flow" or "zone." EdithTurner writes; "When in the state of "flow" and "zone", people say the self is surpassed; we are in a different dimension of human experience" (Turner 2012: 50). I will present further analysis of these states later in this chapter.

We had moved close to the French Quarter, turned and went straight up so that we could dance underneath the highway passes where the rain would not bother us that much. Dancing Men were on top of roofs on the other side of the street, dancing away as the crowd passed, and people paused to cheer them on[54]. The second line moved into a local Community Centre where people toppled over on the slippery floors. A woman in front of me did a pirouette and fell flat on her stomach, smashing her head hard to the ground. She got right up again with help from those around her, and to my surprise she was still trying to keep the beat with her feet when she got up. This woman might have experienced what Edith Turner calls "surpassing the self." In her pain she still tries to dance. Not only is the woman who fell in emotional pain from mourning Uncle Lionel, she most likely is also in physical pain. But yet she keeps dancing. I argue that this is an element of what communitas may present itself as, the loss of ego, where the collective joy surpasses and perhaps even transforms the woman's' or the other participants pain.

People were now cramped into a small hallway and danced their way into a small pub with a little stage. Some of the musicians got up on stage. However the mood and the music seemed to dissipiatate and the parade dissolved quickly. When I got out on to the street again I waded slowly through the water. The rain had stopped and the people were spreading out in every direction. As always, the magic of the moment had been fleeting, and the silence left behind was only broken by the sound of the thunder and the clatters of a distant tambourine.

[54] Dancers hired to raise the mood and dance at community events. Some of them are advocaters of second line culture.

Figure16. - Dancing Man dancing in the rain on top of bar roof

The Third Second Line – Part Two: Following Lionel to His Final Resting Place.

The weather had dramatically changed to a gleaming and steaming heat on the day of the rescheduled burial, as it often does in New Orleans. The second line was to start at the funeral home in the Treme, where people could view the body of Uncle Lionel once again. I never got in to the building itself, but from what I heard and later saw pictures of, it was quite a sight. He was no longer in his casket, but was displayed in full vigor, now standing up with his cane in his hands and his sunglasses on. He was dressed in a different suit than the last viewing, with beige pants and an eggshell colored jacket, with a brightly colored tie around his neck. In front of him were displayed a pair of his black and white second line shoes, and a little stool with one of his Treme Brass band hats on. Behind him was a fake street sign, showing the way to Charbonnet, the street where the Funeral Home was located. All around there were flowers and plants, and pictures of him. People that were coming out from the funeral home seemed confused whether it actually was Uncle Lionel himself, or just a wax-doll.

Figure 17. – Woman with Treme and Uncle Lionel paraphernalia.

Outside the public had started to gather, along with street vendors, musicians with their instruments and people selling beer and water from big coolers on wheels. It was getting extremely hot that day. I stood next to a corner shop together with some old ladies that were having one of the most common conversations people would have at the parades. We were discussing the route, when the parade was supposed to start and the usual puzzlement over why the parade was late. The parades were always late, or at least they seemed to be. We were discussing which direction the parade would start going when it would finally start, when a man walked by. He was in his second line gear; a shiny all white suit, but he had removed the

jacket. He also had a big cane, bedazzled with shiny mirror-like beads and decorated with big white feathers. Like most of us, he was sweating profusely. One of the old ladies smiled at him and said to all of us; "Well, it's a good day for a second line, hah?" I shot in; "It is, just wish it wasn't this hot today, and it's still early," knowing that the peak of the days' heat was several hours away. He smiled, turned towards me and did a little bouncy dance step. "Aaaaah, you just wait, till we start and you get into that musical trance," he said. He did a little pirouette while he was holding his cane out to the side, and giving me a big smile. His other hand was doing the motions of what I know as a "jazz-hand", wiggling his fingers for a moment.

This trance that the man in the suit mentioned, and in the case of the previous second line, can be characterized as a state in the liminal stage of the ritual where one loses oneself to the music. When you reach this stage you do not care if it is too hot, or if your feet hurt, or if someone steps on you, as exemplified in the two participants that fell down during their dances in the rain. In these moments the dancers seemed to be uplifted to a state where the things around them or physical pain did not matter, and it was the people around them who had to make room for them. In his religious studies of New Orleans second lines, Richard B. Turner called this "being possessed by the dance", and exemplifies this by the circles of dancers which will appear at these second lines. Here the dancers fall into a trance-like state which will be expressed in very energetic dancing, where people will dance with big movements (2009:96). Edith Turners' terms "flow" and "zone" are also fitting for this phenomenon, which is strongly connected to communitas. One of my female informants would describe her dance performances as putting her "into a zone", where she would forget who she was, her everyday troubles and "just be in that moment" (2012). When communitas occurs, the sentiment of that state can often be related to "flow" and being in a "zone" as they are all states where collective joy and togetherness with even strangers can be felt. Edith Turner uses sports as an example of "being in a zone," when things are going well in the game and everything seems to go the right way. When a team is playing well together, and is experiencing a "positive flow", or being in "the zone" together, there is a loss of ego and "the self is surpassed" (Turner 2012: 50-51). While Richard B. Turner and Edith Turner connected this trance-like state of dancing and listening to or playing music to being spiritual, my informants spoke of music and dance as being outlets for frustrations and as a time where they could forget their troubles and enjoy the company of others. In the following liminal stage of the funeral ritual, the second liners experienced a trance-like state, where they were in a "zone", together "in dance". In this case they experienced a togetherness also sourced in

sorrow and grief they felt after the loss of a community member, which was transformed into moments of collective joy, as I will show in the following paragraphs.

At this point in the funeral, people started forming a line which makes up the procession, and were getting ready to dance. That means that they will drink fluids, and make sure that they are not restricted by hot clothing or loose objects, like purses or cameras, these are examples of what happens in the pre-liminal stage. We heard the first beats of the drums from the Treme Brass Band. The man in the suit and I started to move with bouncy steps, and relocated deeper into the crowd; and by doing so we were entering the state of liminality. All of a sudden the parade had started to move. The police cars were driving in the front paving the processions' way through the crowd.

The music was pacing up the beat and we started to walk, or "*roll with it"*, and dancing down the street. It is custom during the parades to stop at different places of importance, memories and meaning, like bars, that were special to the deceased. As I mentioned in the first chapter, "places of special meaning", and where music will be played, are quite important to people in New Orleans, and everyone has their favorite places. While we paused the people started to chat amongst themselves. The band was still playing and people would at each place form a ring around those that dance more energetically than others. Some lit up cigarettes or joints, and some tried to buy a bite to eat, or something to drink. The band started to move forward again, and the mass of people somehow became a procession once more.

The second line was back at the funeral home. We paused there, before we started to move in a different direction than the last time. The heat was getting intense but people were getting more and more involved in the dancing, and some of us were singing along to the lyrics of the songs that we knew, or thought that we knew. The Dancing Men were getting on top of fences and cars as they were making their performance more visible to the people. Some of us stopped and looked at them for a while. An old lady, dancing beside me, paused as she yelled "yeah, yeah, yeah" in the beat of the rhythm the Dancing Man was hitting with his feet. The occasional stilt dancer would pass. They are part of the second lines and are dressed and masked in elaborate suits, with often frills flowing from it, making the movement is the dance intensified. Similar stilt dancing can be seen in Africa, Haiti and the Caribbean, as for example the stilt dancing traditions of the Moko Jumbi which is believed to have originated in West Africa and brought to the Caribbean through the slave trade. The Moko Jumbi dancers are thought to represent God's power and is spirit guarding and protecting people from evil (CaribbeanMuseum.org 2013).

We moved upwards again and paraded under the highway as we danced. We paused more and more often. This is the same highways as I mentioned in chapter two, that had previously been built over an area important for the African-American community. The second liners, as mentioned, re-appropriated this space by setting the parade routes underneath the highway instead of "giving in" and changing them. At this point the music was very upbeat, making even the frailest of the old people bounce in tune with the rhythms. Vendors were standing on the sides of the parades trying to sell things out of their cars. Many of the participants that were carrying cameras ran to the front or climbing up rails and similar objects to take pictures of the band, the dancers and the enormous masses of people. Some even ran on top of the bridges we were walking under to get pictures from there. I was getting squeezed into the more active part of the parade, where the more active dancers were being cheered on and I danced more freely myself. A lot of musicians had brought their instruments, playing apart from the official band. People were carrying small cymbals, rhythm eggs, or similar small instruments that were easy to carry and play. Many were also playing on improvised instruments, like bottles or pieces of metal that they were beating. We could clearly hear the police cars signaling that we were going too far into the street. The police were trying to keep the line away from the cars that were waiting for us to pass so that they could get to wherever they were going. The echo underneath the highway was almost drowning out the sound from the band. The sound from the masses and the clapping from the participants were overwhelming. I found a bench to stand on, and climbed up so that I could see the whole procession, and was amazed at how it seemed like one big mass that moved up and down in waves in the rhythms of the brass music. The small tribes of Mardi Gras Indians were surrounded by their drum players that were playing their chants. Most of the Indians were not wearing their enormous suits, but were dressed as the rest of the crowd. They did as they do in bigger parades, and paused to gather in small circles with those playing the rhythm instruments. One would be doing the solos of the chants, while the rest followed in the chorus. They were following a different beat than the rest of the masses. They were also surrounded by very aggressive tourists and journalists with large cameras that were bending down and pushing into the circle. Their lenses were poking in between the Mardi Gras Indians.

A group of women were now dancing in a section of the parade. They were fanning each other with their big feathered and beaded fans, and thrusting their behinds in and out in an almost aggressive and sexual manner. Some were bending their knees and bouncing hard up and down almost reaching the pavement with their behinds. Two of the women reached for the walls of buildings, and one had her hands on the pavement performing what is known as

"bouncing." This is a popular style of music and dance which invokes repetitive thrusting of the pelvis so that the behind will freely move up and down. The dancers will do this by letting their knees and ankles move very loosely, and it seemed to be easier to "bounce" when one was holding onto something[55]. Anthropologist Helen A. Regis interprets these sexualized dance moves in second line parades as being strikingly parallel to the dances in Haitian rituals. The spirit of Gede, the vodou deity, or *loa*, of fertility and death will possess the dancers and make them dance in a sexualized manner similar to the style of dance in the second lines. The same resemblances occur in the organization of the parade. Some elements and roles played out in the second line are quite similar to the spirits which are invoked, and possesses participants in vodou rituals and the Haitian Rara carnival season' parades in Haiti. For instance, the Grand Marshall in the second line, which holds the second line in place and in order, has the same qualities as the Haitian spirit of war and fierceness, Ogun (Regis 1999:487, McAlister 2002).

Ending the Second Line

The parade was suddenly under clear skies once more and soon stopped at a large grass lawn. This was where the rest of us would stop and the family and the carriers of the casket would continue up to the cemetery. The casket was carried as the band was playing a slower and more "dragging" procession song. The people walked in a slower motion, pulling their bodies and feet slowly forward to the rhythm. The dancing had stopped. People were now pushing twice down on their foot that moved them forward, before slowly dragging the rest of the body forward, and then repeated the motion with the other foot. A man sang very loudly on a hymn, with long the shaking tones of his voice carrying over the sound from the band and the crowd. The police cars were surrounding the area making the traffic go another way, but playing the sirens loudly, and the crowd was getting annoyed at them. An old lady yelled "Quiet! Show some respect." A couple of police-cars drove past with their sirens on their way to someplace else.

People were now getting confused as to where they were carrying the casket. People were asking each other over and over "where they going now?" The band played one more short upbeat tune, and then all of a sudden it stopped. Parts of the crowd scattered around, apparently walking back to the Treme, or back to their homes. I started to walk back the same way we came from, under the highway-overpasses, and listened to the silence that followed.

[55] Bounce is a popular dance style, and I attended several bounce competitions and concerts. "Sissy bounce" is a sub-culture within bounce consisting of homosexual African-American dancers and musicians performing "bounce." One must be quite skilled to manage these movements in the correct manner.

No one was cheering, talking or dancing any more. The people who were talking spoke in a very low voice, accompanied by the echoes from the bells on a Mardi Gras Indians' feet in waves, as the wind took the noise in another direction.

This quiet, confusing and seemingly spontaneous disbandment of the parades was common. I always wanted to ask people questions after the parades, when things had calmed down and we could actually hear each other without screaming. The crowd seemed to break up into pieces in a very short amount of time, and spread in all directions. Initiating a random conversation with someone seemed pointless, as they were always in a hurry to leave and get back to whatever they were doing or their jobs. That in itself was interesting, as it sometimes felt like the parades was just something that people did, like lunch or going to the hair-dresser. As mentioned, during the funeral the collective joy and collective grief is openly expressed in rapid shifts, people go in and out of different "zones", and are experiencing the effects or attributes of communitas.

Concluding the Funeral

While comparing the jazz funerals and performance traditions one can see the traces of the African and Haitian diaspora, as well as the deceased's values and beliefs, including those pertaining Christian man and a proud member of the Treme neighborhood and musical community in New Orleans. I have tried to portray the shifts between the collective joy and sorrow in this ritual. As well as explore which processes of communitas, I have connected communitas to phenomenon that are similar to "trance-like" states, or experiences of "flow" and "zone" within the liminality of the ritual, while the participants dance and are experiencing the music. I have also depicted how important the specific neighborhood the second line parades moves in, the places the parade paused at, and that all of these places were an essential part of Uncle Lionels' life and identity. The funeral ritual is of course complex, many processes happen at the same time. But with this chapter I have showed how the people in New Orleans take their sorrow to the street and transform it to collective joy in the liminal stage throughout the funeral ritual.

Chapter 5 - The "Gentrification" of Bauche Street

Introduction

In New Orleans different parts of the city has undergone different processes of reconstruction after hurricane Katrina in 2005. The eminent "clean up" of Bauche Street, which is often referred to a "success story," or as an example of "gentrification". The Bauche Street neighborhood, which consists of the street itself and the nearby streets, constitutes just a prime examples of how communities, partly through community events, have transformed the streets to become "safer and better" in New Orleans. This positive change one can observe happening in The Bauche street is explained in the local media and by some of the residents on the street, as being the result of a process of "gentrification". However, there are negative and positive consequences of this process, and the term "gentrification" is used with both positive and negative connotations relating to what actually happens as a result of this process. In this chapter gentrification is analyzed from a different perspective than in chapter two, when I delved into aspects of the "eviction of the poor" from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Gentrification is generally understood as a dynamic which emerges in urban poor areas when there an increase in property values and a new form of urban planning is commenced, which will subsequently lead to a shift in the residential patterns. In most cases, this means that the poorer residents of the area will be "displaced" or "pushed" to other urban areas. Bauche Street has undergone several changes, but the businesses that have developed on the street are not owned by neo-liberal large-scale venture capitalists, as opposed to many other areas in New Orleans, but the owners are often the locals themselves[56]. The Bauche street community utilizes community events to create closer ties between the members of the neighborhood, and to produce what is called a "healthy local economy." The businesses on the street reproduce "traditions" of music, festivals and parades and several art forms through financial incentives, as opposed to the other areas in the city in which the residents feel that the businesses are opposing the "traditions" (on traditions see Chapter Two). There is a great effort invested in these community events and to improve everyday life for the residents on the street. There are also elements of anti-crime incentives in the neighborhood community, which is focused on rehabilitating and integrating the criminal offenders, or substance abusers that live on the street or in the surrounding areas. This leads to both a feeling of increased safety for the residents, and it creates positive life changes for the agents that I have refered to as "disrupters", like the criminals. At the frequent community

[56] For previous discussion on neo-liberal capitalism, see Chapter Two.

events, the "togetherness" of communitas, as suggested by Edith Turner, seemed to create permanent positive changes to the neighborhood community, and the economy and "traditions" thrived within this sphere.

This last chapter will explore different strategies residents use to create a "better, safer and healthier" neighborhood through community events, which is exemplified by the "gentrification" of Bauche Street. By strategies I mean the first implementation of the word as stated by Michel Foucault in "The Subject and Power"; that being "means employed to attain a certain end" (1982). I will introduce two of my informants who go to these community events, and show why they are engaging in these activities. I have described aspects of their personal biographies, in which they have communicated past struggles and insecurities. I suggest that as they developed as performers and artists, and engaged more frequently in different types of community events, that they have experienced emotional outlets and personal progress, which in turn have transformed their lives for the better.

Welcome to Bauche Street

Bauche Street is located in one of the low-income "unsafe" areas of Uptown. It is close to the areas where two of the cities' bigger universities are situated, and what my informants would refer to as "the ghetto". What was once a business street and well-known in the city for offering a wide selection of services, started to deteriorate in the 1960s, and continued its physical and economic decline during the 70s and 80s. Businesses closed down and were not maintained. The street and surrounding areas were considered by most New Orleanians as extremely unsafe. One of the most crime-ridden public housing estates in the United States was in the vicinity, and the people who had the means to move did so during this period. Since the majority of those that moved from the 1960' and onwards were white residents, this is often referred to as part of the "white flight" of New Orleans from certain urban areas (Lauria 2010).

In 2005, when Hurricane Katrina swept in over the city, 5-7 feet of floodwater seeped into the buildings on Bauche Street. Significant amounts of work and resources were needed to rebuild, and most of the street was left to wither. In the early years after Katrina this street had high crime-rates, there were a great deal of drug-related activities on the streets and in the surrounding neighborhoods. The street was considered to be unsafe for anyone to move freely in. The local media pointed to several processes at work which explained the increase in crime in Bauche Street; the low property values making it possible for low-income buyers to

settle, there was the public underage drinking by college students that lived around and in the campus area, and a significant number of squatters left in the houses abandoned after the flood. Furthermore, the street is not far from a big section of the Salvation Army's half-way houses, which could have contributed to the higher crime level, according to some of my informants. But some of the inhabitants wished to transform the street into a better place for them to live.

What is Gentrification?

The discussion of post-Katrina gentrification was indeed a subject of concern for New Orleanians, and the local media[57]. The few times I asked about "gentrification" I received responses that were short and ambiguous, one informant said; "I don't know what gentrification means, if it means that you want a nice and safe neighborhood, I guess that's it. I don't know if I would call gentrification racist." Gentrification means in most cases a rise in property values, which in turn will generate a general higher socio-economic level amongst the residents in the areas in question. As my informant communicate when speaking of gentrification, in New Orleans, the process gentrification was often connected to discourses on" race" and "racism", and was related to issues concerning the lower-income or poor African-American class of residents. The social media and newspapers would both focus on the consequences this had for lower-income families, but they also took into consideration that gentrification was as part of a bigger "clean-up" of the city. It was believed by the inhabitants of Bauche Street that crime would decline with the rise of gentrification, and this would result in not only safer streets, but also the possibility for economic growth. Gentrification also could imply a "beautification" of the street, as my informant Mr. Francais stated;

"When they cleaned up the streets they also make them nicer, and they fix up the old buildings. Bauche Street is starting to look really good compared to what it used to look like. I wouldn't even park my car there before."

Political scientists David Gladstone and Jolie Préau have written extensively on how tourism leads to development of gentrification in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina (2010).

[57] I will not here include a discussion based in the rich body of anthropological work written on urban gentrification processes, but mainly focus on the local understandings of the process. I do this with the full understanding that this is part of a bigger issue, but I am forced to limit my thesis to the local level.

Although they have based themselves on extensive field research and statistics, I would argue they have failed to look at gentrification as a whole in New Orleans. Indeed, in New Orleans gentrification is happening independently of tourism in many neighborhoods. Gentrification cannot be reduced to property values and economic statistics, in many ways it is also about beautifying streets while rebuilding and creating safer neighborhoods in a post-disaster context, and creating stronger ties between members of different communities. The people are reclaiming the streets that were destroyed and taken over by what I have previously referred to as "disrupters", and in this process there are "gentrifying tendencies", as it is part of "cleaning up" the streets from crime, corruption and violence. Although in many areas in New Orleans, what was called "the eviction of the poor" is resisted and communicated through the kind of community events that I have discussed in this thesis. However, on Bauche Street the participants of community events are trying to change the "culture of violence" that is so often connected to the poverty; not by excluding the criminals, but finding alternative ways to handle these issues. These alternative ways seemed to be handled through treatment of the "criminals" and "substance abusers, by rehabilitating them and trying to reintegrate them in the community, often through providing them with jobs. Gladstone and Préau argue that gentrification is simply a commodification of urban spaces, and that streets are "transformed" to attract tourists. They also claim that New Orleans is missing the "creative class", for instance "local entrepreneurs", which would make up the "gentrifying" population. However, I would argue that on Bauche Street, the business owners are indeed gentrifying this area on a local and small scale. But these business owners are doing this on other terms than the tourism industry, or other neo-capitalist ventures that are developing their projects in the city. Gladstone and Préau are however correct in saying that the gentrifying tendencies have pushed out the lower-income classes from most of the areas the tourists frequent, and that the "tourist bubble" as they call it, is expanding. They also include historic preservation of buildings as a gentrifying link to tourism, which is not untrue. But on the other hand when I spoke to the locals, the preservation of historic buildings was also important outside of the "tourist bubble". The buildings are more than just tourist attractions, but "places of meaning" as previously discussed in the Second Chapter. On Bauche Street, the buildings were often connected to childhood memories for the inhabitants, as many of them had families that had lived there for generations. Most importantly, Bauche Street is far from any "tourist bubble". I would argue that the gentrification of the Bauche Street had nothing, or very little to do with any big corporate take-over, or any tourist development. The gentrification process is a result of a communal effort to "clean up" the streets and make them safer for the residents of the

neighborhood, and as a result make a local small-scale economy flourish and the street is "beautified". It is worth noting that Gladstone and Préau's article was published only three years after Katrina, and the authors had perhaps yet to observe the full consequences of rebuilding New Orleans after Katrina. Nevertheless, I believe that the authors have in part ignored the roles that the neighborhood residents and communities play themselves in this process of gentrification, and that the gentrification has a broader meaning in New Orleans, than just commodification of urban space and increased property values.

From a Crime-Ridden Street to a "Healthy" Community

There has been a steady change in this streets ever since the community of residents got together to create a safer neighborhood. They did this by creating stronger social relationships within the community, creating work-places and economic growth and by improving co-operation with the police.

In 2007, two years after hurricane Katrina, a section of the street was declared as a cultural district, making it one out of only 63 other cultural districts in the state of Louisiana. This was intentionally done to create what was then coined as "cultural development and community revitalization". With the status of being a cultural district, change and economic growth would be easier to develop with several tax incentives, and by implication the properties would spark an interest with entrepreneurs and private house owners. The only parameters of development would be the actual limits of space and the rules established by the overlay district[58]. The physical confines of the street would not allow for bigger businesses to settle without extensive demolition of newly sold private houses. The businesses that would settle there were mostly on a smaller scale than in most part of the city. The Louisiana Cultural Districts program used tax incentives, such as historic tax credits and tax breaks, for artists to spark a different and a smaller scaled economic growth than one could see in other parts of town (Clark 2013) [59]. It would also be an incentive for artists and performers to settle and develop in this community. This made everyone on the street determined to work for the same goals, to integrate and rehabilitate the criminals, and rebuild a street where people, the arts, and traditions could flourish. Bauche streets also have a Community Center, run by both volunteers and a couple of full-time workers. They will offer not only information to any

[58] Overlay districts allows for the application of specific regulations to a distinct geographic area. The geographic area will in this case warrant special consideration due to a unique situation or practical difficulties.

[59] The primary goal of this initiative is to spark community revitalization based on cultural activity though tax incentives.

visitors, they will arrange community meetings, community out-reach programs, activities for children, art projects and so on. The community Centre also offer job-hunting classes, computer classes and any form of courses that could help a resident to cope when experiencing adversity. In addition, they hosted Al Anon meetings, and arranged several anti-crime incentives, for instance[60]. One project the Center ran was designed to help criminal offenders get back on their feet and get jobs and housing after being released from prison.

Noise

Bauche Street is in many ways unique in the regulations introduced to restrict entertainment business' opening hours and sale of alcohol in order to secure a "healthy growth" in both economy and in the traditions and development of various art forms. In practice the regulations means that any business, bar or pub in the area is prohibited by the overlay district to for instance have packaged liquor sales. Bars can host live music, but not karaoke, DJs or adult entertainment. Restaurants can host bands, though the music cannot be amplified. The bars' opening hours which are shorter than those in other commercial streets are set by the overlay district. Such measures which are supported by most residents on the street, ensure an economy where the locals will not have a problem with the businesses as long as the regulations are practical and followed (McNulty 2011).

However, in many parts of the city, regulation of noise and opening hours of bars and places where music is played is seen as a "crackdown" on what my informants would refer to as "their culture", and was seen as a negative consequence of the "gentrification" process. When I asked one of my friends about the current local debate noise-regulations of a famous live-music street in the tourist area French Quarter, he said; "This is New Orleans! Don't like the noise? Then get the hell out!" This is one of the issues I would have liked to make further enquiries about, but it was not until the City government suggested regulations of a popular live-music pub a few weeks before I left that the debate seemed become more prominent. However, residents on Bauche Street did not seem to mind the noise regulations, since there was a seeming balance achieved in what the businesses wanted and what the residents wanted to achieve with controlling the noise. The noise regulations were not as strict as other places in the city, so that live music could still flourish, but the music would stop early enough in the evening so that the residents would not be bothered by the noise when they were trying to

[60] Al Anon, or AA, are support groups for recovering addicts, also known as "Alcoholics Anonymous."

sleep. Businesses were also directly investing in art and community events, so it created a sense of support of live music and the traditions of festivals, and so on.

This discussion on noise regulation reveals several processes and elements of social distinctions. As suggested by Pierre Bourdieu, taste is for instance developed through understanding what is pure taste and what things or actions that may be considered "vulgar". Taste is an expression of *habitus,* which can be understood as the "embodied culture", or world view that henceforth influence the actions and choices of an agent, which the agent acquires throughout his or her life. These dispositions are generated through the agents' life when engaging in a dynamic relationship to surrounding social conditions. According to Bourdieu, "capital" may be acquired in the forms the forms of economic capital, cultural capital, social capital and symbolic capital. He claims that agents are spread in a "social space" (Bourdieu 1972, as quoted in Wilken 2006). When agents have similar cultural capital, they are closer in that social space. Social space in the case of illuminating these issues of discussion on Bauche Street, may be the realm of the street itself, but can of course be extended to other spaces beyond "physical space" in other cases, according to Bourdieu (1989). Most of the business owners are already part of the neighborhood on Bauche Street before the economic growth happened, and may have a shared or have similar "capital" to the rest of the residents, so there is no open conflict on what is considered "in bad taste" when it comes to regulating the noise, or different traditions. According to Bourdieu, this also contributes to keeping and symbolic power relations in place in the city, taste is what unites people in the same "class" and subsequently separates those that are not (Bourdieu 1979). In other parts of the city, the business owners, or the city planners or the government that are imposing restrictions on for instance, noise-levels are considered "outsiders", and do not share the same "cultural or social capital" as the residents in those areas, and this is why they have different opinions on what should be allowed, and how noise should be controlled. Taste is also expressed with the expression of distaste, or not approving of other's taste. On Bauche Street, I suggest that the neighborhood residents perhaps have generated representations of its own "taste", where noise is approved of, as long as it does not become "uncontrolled". To appreciate the importance of the traditions one must share the understanding that the residents have of them, and bigger venture capitalists, or urban planners, would be in a too distant "social space" to be able to do so. Controlling the noise is positive for the residents, it is in their interest to do so, but all the while they still experience that their traditions flourish. There is therefore a sense of there being what can be referred to as "controlled noise" and

“uncontrolled noise”, according to what is in “good taste” or “bad taste” for those with similar cultural capital in the neighborhood.

Economic Growth

From 2009 there has been a boom in business activity on the street, and a total of 10 new businesses opened from 2009 to 2010. According to the residents, there was constant construction work, and new small colorful shop-windows were popping up. The community events in the form of markets and festivals, followed as a result, often sponsored by the new small businesses to create publicity around them. Gradually, it seemed the residents were warming up to the “New Bauche Street”, and the comunity events became more frequent. During the period of my fieldwork there was an increase of participators at each event. In the summer of 2012, two new businesses were up and running on the street. The restaurants were growing in popularity, and were getting good reviews in the local newspapers. The new restaurants seemed now to reach a wide range of the population by focusing on a varied culinary spectrum. In addition to the restaurants and bars, a comic-bookshop opened, and a bicycle shop, a juice-bar and a painting-goods store and finally a garden center made. The street was now eligible for visitors not only looking to eat (McNulty 2011).

The community events centered on local entrepreneurship and community activism, and were organized by volunteers and the business owners. The posters marketing the festivals bore imageries and slogans of what was good about having a “healthy and vibrant “economy in place, and positive imagery of an engaged community that was present in the streets. These often featured pictures of children having fun with their parents at events, or in the local park. The local art was also highly exposed on posters, inside the businesses and on some of the gardens and walls.

Safety

The police had become much more active in patrolling the neighborhood before the businesses started to flourish, doing drug busts and arrests, and in general being visible in a larger extent than before. This would make it more difficult for potetntial perpetrators to commit crimes on the street in public. The police would be closer at hand and could therefore get t a crime scene faster. The police’s visibility in and active engaging with the community would also help build up relationships of trust with the inhabitants, and perhaps for some create a sense of stability and safety. This was especially noted by business owners in the

area. One female politician running for office was especially focused on Bauche street, and arranged for the community to get together for several causes, for instance the public anti-crime night-time walk, which was called "Taking Back the Night". However, there were still problems with drug distribution in those houses that were still left abandoned after Hurricane Katrina. The residents called this "the problem of blight."

The Community Events

There are markets and festivals on a regular basis on the busiest section of the street. The promotion of these community events were rarely publicized in any bigger media, but in smaller free local papers or on posters around the surrounding neighborhoods. The markets would have smaller stages with musical segments, and the events would happen quite often. Local art and crafts would be sold, and some of the local businesses would set up food stalls. The festivals were bigger, and would take up a big section of the street. Several stages would transform the street into one big block party[61]. In order to understand what community events do and how they help create a sense of belonging and solidarity among residents on Bauche Street, I once again return to the terms of Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner. In the transitional or liminal phase of the festivals, communitas occur, and its manifestation enforces and enhances the community feeling after the festivals are over, after the participants have *reassimilated* to their everyday life. So, in the community events I have explored so far, the participants return to everyday life, feelings of insecurity and struggles after the event, despite the efforts made during the event in trying to portray positive change and togetherness. However, something else happens on Bauche Street. The communitas the participants may experience within the festivals and markets seems to be extended, or as I suggest even transformed, into a more permanent sentiment of what Durkheim notes as "solidarity" between the residents which is carried onto everyday life after the events are over. The participants are actually generating positive and more permanent changes to what was once an unsafe street, and feel safer and closer to a "better neighborhood" outside the liminal phase of the ritual. The Community Centre works to include the individuals or criminals that might have caused the residents insecurities and struggles in the past. The Center and the festivals create arenas where the "criminals" might interact with the other residents on different terms

[61]Block Parties are large public parties in which members of a single neighborhood participate, and are common occurrences in the United States.

than in a conflict situation. This is well illustrated by one of my informants, the recovering drug-addict, Mr. Bouncy Bling.

Introducing Mr. Bouncy Bling

I meet Mr. Bouncy Bling outside a convenience store at a festival on Bauche Street. His golden grills covering his four front teeth shine towards me as he says hello and hands be a small envelope. "It's a CD" he says, "Fo' free, sweetheart, but I am of course open to all donations and good will from my people." I asked him what kind of CD it was. "Oh. It's a collection of rap from the streets. We make hip hop to get kids off the street and into music instead. We all be thugs, tryin' to make it, you know." He ties up his dreadlocks on top of his head and tries to hand a CD to someone else. "I'm just out here, spreading the word. It's a good project, youth development and all of that."

The CD is part of a project some of the youth programs in the city collaborated on, and was a side-project of one of the bigger organizations Silence Is Violence. Mr. Bouche had been active in this music project ever since his friend was shot as a result of a drug-deal gone turned sour a couple of years before. He was refereed to this project at a visit to the community center on Bauche Street. He had realized that if he were to continue his "life on the streets", he would follow his friend to death very soon. By taking control of his own life, he had managed to get a part-time job through a youth program, and he was doing his music on the side. "It's therapy, you know, playing and writing", he told me. He said that the music was an alternative to violence; "Now, we fight with our words, and the beats." And that many of his "brothers" that was involved in the music project had been in and out of jail, spiraling into what most likely result in decay and death, either by drug use or violence. For them, it seemed like getting involved in this music scene created a possibility for an alternative network of people and friends that were not involved in crime anymore. But within that arena they still could share the same experiences and pain; there was a sense of community inside the sphere, a sharing of the same struggles. He told me his father never had the same network, never got the help that he needed, and that he consequently had not seen his father ever since he went to jail when Mr. Bouncy was 11 years old. His mother was an alcoholic, and had never managed to keep a job for very long. "Life was stealin', girls, sex, drugs. Never could hold a job, never could get off the pills and the crack. I don't know what changed, but getting into the music did something to me", he explained.

Now Mr. Bouncy Bling goes to festivals on a regular basis, spreading the word about the project and trying to get people to listen to the record that he gives out for free. He enjoys walking around the festival grounds, talking to people and sometimes improvising small rap-performances together with other musicians that he meets there. He has developed his rapping skills, and hopes that music will lead to a career in the future. I will now depict one of the community events on Bauche Street where one could observe some of the processes at work in "gentrifying" the street and creating a "better and safer" neighborhood.

A Community Event Takes Form -Dancing Together and Living Together

It was getting hotter in New Orleans as the Bauche Street festival was taking up the whole lower part of the street. The heat bounced of my head as I tried to find my way through the immense and extremely dense crowd that moved slowly from one side of the street to the other in a sluggish procession. Sometimes there was a sense of order to the pathways between us, one line moving towards the end of the street, the other one the other way leading them to the Soul Stage. The smells from the different stands comes in waves, the broth from the catfish boil being the strongest, overtaking the whole area with its pungent and spicy steam. The Soul stage had attracted a small crowd, some of them sitting on the chairs that they have brought with them, some on the pavement. Many of the songs performed were religious. The audience sang and clapped along to the rhythm. The front singer raised her hands and thanked God for the beautiful day that He had brought us all, and said, "I never believed after Katrina that we could manage to rebuild our community, so much was lost, but we made it! And we're gonna keep on keepin' on, thank you to all of you for making it happen. Thank God."

I moved on slowly with the crowd to the second stage, which was in the middle of the festival, placed in a side-street making a little open space in front of it where people could dance. The band walked up on stage, and started setting up their last pieces of equipment. The bass player tuned his instrument with a couple of brushes over each of the strings. The trombone player blew up his cheeks and tried to wipe of his mouthpiece with his sleeve. The lead singer was a small African-American man with long dreads. He signaled to the sound technician to raise the volume on his microphone by pointing up into the air. He nodded and finally seemed content with the sound after a couple of checks. More people joined our little crowd in front of the stage, but there was still a lot of room to dance in front of us. Some move to the side escaping the burning sun and perhaps sit down on the curb or on one of the small stools that belong to the pizza-restaurant that we are next to. The band huddled together,

and with a final go-ahead signal from the drummer, the lead singer screamed into the microphone; “Waaaaaaaaooooooooo!” Then he fell to his knees bellowing the last of his breath into the microphone.

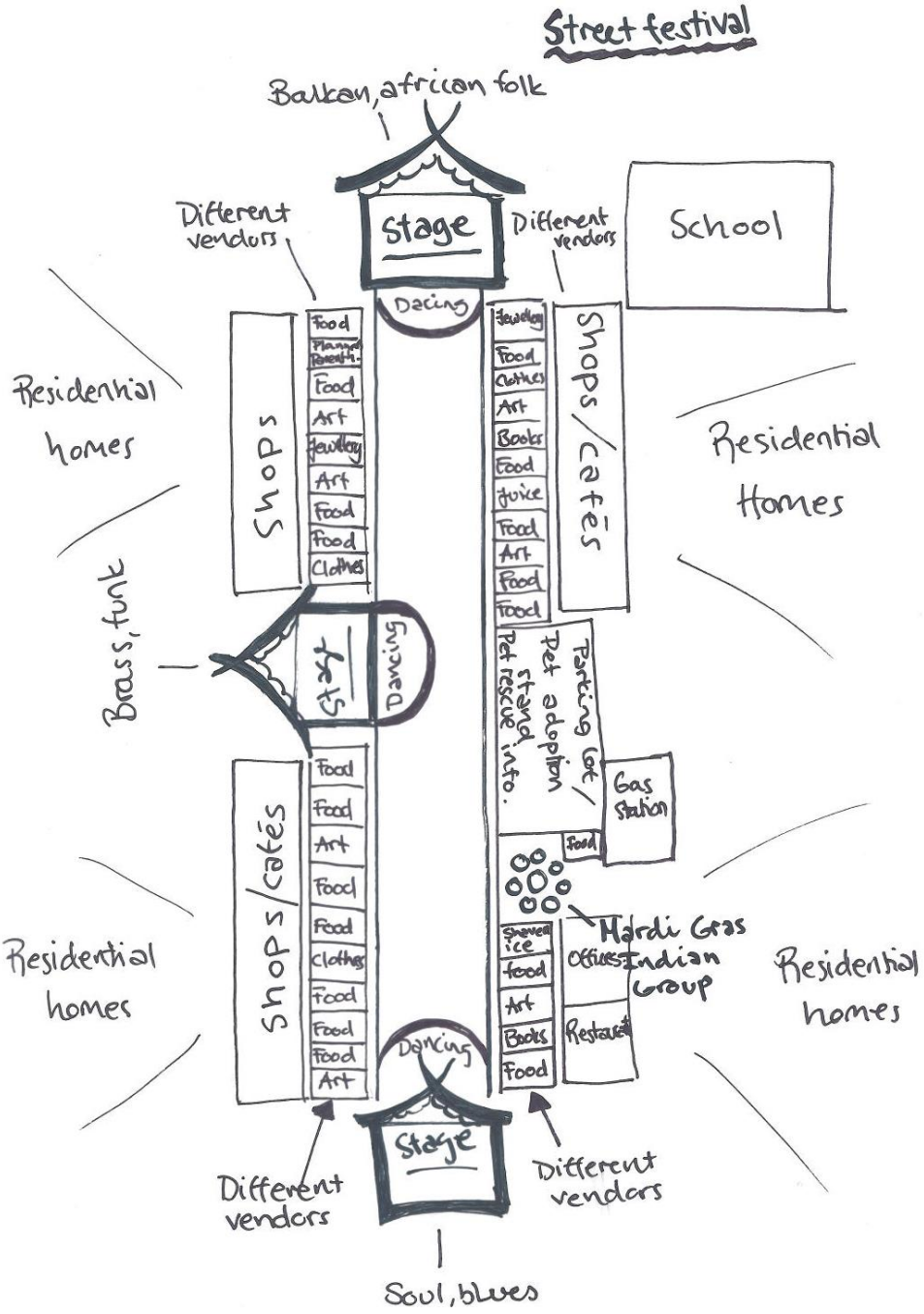

Figure 18.- Drawing of The Bauche Street Festival 2012

The band joined him in an up-beat funk tune as he gets up again and starts moving around on stage. He kicks out into the air, gets down in a squat at every beat from the sneer drum and sings along. It does not take long before the first individuals start to move closer to the stage, and start dancing. More and more people join in. Some were already drunk and moved

staggeringly to the music, and stumbled from time to time. After a couple of songs the dancers started to communicate between them; some start dancing together, sparring in the dance, showing their best moves and provokes or eggs the other to show even better moves. Even though they are seemingly strangers to one another, they leave the dance battle smiling and cheering each other on. This is I suggest an effect of the communitas of the moment, where the dancers are engaging in collective fun, and are as I posed in the previous chapter, in the "zone" or are experiencing the "flow" of the music and interaction between them. They are equals in this moment, it does not matter who they are, which ethnicity they belong to, or what their socio-economic background is, and they do not separate themselves into those categories in those moments. They are as Victor Tuner would put it "betwixt and between" these social categories one may experience as part of everyday life, and in many ways they are forming new categories; neighbors, fellow-beings, and so on. Communitas is in this moment a form of ideological community, as a "blueprint" of what they would like society to be (Hambrick 1979).

Figure 19. - Dancing Man waving his fan while dancing.

Dancing Man ran out into the crowd, and people stepped back, making room for him. The Dancing man is one of New Orleans' most familiar faces, and he appears at almost every event and festival. More specifically he is called "Darryl Dancing Man 504", and is the founder of the project "Heal 2 Toe". After evacuating before Hurricane Katrina hit, Dancing Man returned to the city. His "alter ego" started to appear after he noticed that the people, especially the kids, needed someone to pass on the second line traditions in the community, when most of the inhabitants in New Orleans were in deep anguish after the hurricane. He saw that the style of second line dancing needed to be taught to the children especially, so that the traditions would not get lost with the elder generation. He is now volunteering to appear at community events and festivals. He is also teaching the second line culture and dance to kids, and organizing public free "Brass exercises" for the public in different parks (Frenchmenstreetmusic.com 2012). He usually jumps into crowds dancing and involve the crowd by teaching them his moves, or just playing around with those that already know the second line style of dance. Most of the time, one could see him wearing his "Dancing Man" sash, and was usually carrying his feathered cane. Like most second line Grand Marshalls, which basically denotes one that teaches and advocates the pleasures of second line dancing and culture, the sash goes across his chest and his hand-sewn in a shiny fabric. He usually wears simple t-shirts, with shorts and comfortable sneakers on. His energy and love of dancing seemed contagious, and he always manages to stir up a little crowd that wants to join him. At this festival he danced for a long time, even making himself a little room at the side of the stage nest to some trash cans where he danced for a while staying in the same stop transfixed with his glare on to the curb. He then regained energy and jumped into the crowd again. He was sparring with a girl that had brought her hula-hoop out onto the dance space with her. She swayed in circular movements with her body, slinging the hoop around her, while still managing to bounce her feet up and down to the rhythm of the music. Dancing Man moved around her, sometimes stopping to use his feathered cane as a fan, and kept pushing a slight breeze in her direction. All the while more and more people moved in closer. Dancing Man started jumping higher and higher until the lead singer got down from the stage. He bends down to the ground and Dancing man jumps over him. Then Dancing Man gets down and the singer screams into the microphone again before he jumps over him. They continue with this for a while, jumping over each other in turn. Then someone brought out a stick that they held up at their own shoulder height. Dancing Man halted, laughed, and then picked up his speed and jumped over the stick too. On the sidelines I urged my companion, Diva Fire, to join in the dance. She jumped and did a little pirouette before she smiled, and

gave a high-five to Dancing Man. She moved closer to the stage and started to sway freely to the music, making big circular movements with her arms.

Introducing Diva Fire

"I just dance it all out…"

-Diva Fire

Diva Fire red, whom I will refer to as Diva, is a young woman and a new resident of New Orleans. She was drawn to the city for its vibrant music scene, the popular burlesque troops and alternative fashion, and most importantly she moved to the Crescent City for the man she believes is the love of her life. She is a beautiful woman, attracting attention from men wherever we go, and she is always groomed to perfection. Spending hours every day on her hair, make-up and style builds up her performing personae, as she sometimes works as a dancer in a burlesque troop. The type of burlesque she performs grew from performances in the circus, in salons and at the cabaret from the 1860's in the United States, although the traditions stems from the Italian *burlesco*[62]. It is a humerous and occasionally mocking type of variety show which often includes elements of striptease. Curling her long luscious long fire red hair and leaving bobby-pins in, creating the perfect Hollywood-glam look, is not only a way to cultivate her looks, but she wears her hair like her grandmother does in the old photographs she has of her from the 1940's. It makes her happy when people say she looks like her grandmother. She loves that part of her day, when she is left alone to prepare herself for performances and work.

Diva started to do burlesque performances in her teens, although life has not always been simple, she has always loved burlesque and kept her interest in performing. She has several bad relationships behind her, and she has developed health issues that have grown worse in the last years. She has two children she has left behind with their father in another city, knowing that her health and mental state would not enable her to be the mother she would have liked to be. Performing in New Orleans does not pay enough for her to live solely on that, and she has not performed for a while but has helped out at shows in other ways by "stage managing". So she takes on smaller jobs, in stores and as a waitress to make ends meet. This leaves her without any health insurance, and she is debt because of her chronic illness.

[62] Burlesco literary, dramatic or musical work intended to cause laughter by caricaturing, mock or joke, the term derives from the Italian *burla* – a joke, ridicule or mockery.

When she needs to go to the emergency room she drags it out, hoping that the pain will pass and that she does not have to go.

Living from paycheck to paycheck, and not even meeting her payments her monthly bills takes a toll on her. She argues with her new boyfriend a lot, and the physical pains grow stronger when she is in emotional distress, especially when she cannot sleep. She gives up the expensive medicines that her doctors are prescribing to her, "they make me so high I can't function, let alone work or perform," she tells me. By smoking illegal marihuana she feels she can function better in her everyday tasks, and she manages to sleep better and eat more. The other part of her life, the acts of performing and actively engaging in community events is what seem to make her happy. She loves to go to the festival, to dance, eat and talk to new and interesting people. She loves the fact that she can dance so freely in front of the stages, and calls it "letting go of all the bad stuff" when she enters what she calls the "trance of the dance". Making people laugh, cheer and dance is what she enjoys so much in her own performances. She believes that dancing helps her; she says;

"...If I don't get my feel-good fix or get to dance, I get grumpy and I feel my body and life almost sours. When we go to the festivals, I just dance it all out. Especially here on Bauche Street, it's such a good vibe here."

By performing and going to community events she has met new friends. She says she has become "part of a culture and a network, even though I'm the new girl". When I asked her why she liked performing so much, she answered; "I think it gives me a boost, my confidence grows when I'm on stage and nothing else matters when I'm up there and part of it." I asked her "Well then, why haven't you performed for a while?"

"After I had my babies it got harder, I don't feel as secure in my own skin as before, I used to have this perfect body and now my perfect little belly looks so bad"

I said, *"Well, burlesquers don't seem to care, all the other girls have flaws, or should I say; they're completely normal. But they do it anyway; even the really big girls look so sexy up there."*

"Yeah, I know. That's what's so great about it, that it doesn't matter that much what you look like, they're all sexy when they get up on stage. Especially here in New Orleans it seems like the culture is a bit more accepting of the different body types. I know it would do me so much

good to do it. I really should start performing again. I keep getting ideas for bits every day. Every time I hear music, or when I see someone else dancing I get inspired."

Diva Fire decided to participate in photo-shoots and was planning to dance in a collaborative performance right after I left. After the rehearsals she seemed very elevated and would not speak of her illness, which had been very consuming in every conversation we had, for period I knew her. I asked her "does it feel good to start performing again?" She answered "I haven't felt this good in a long time. Dancing just makes me happy."

The story of Diva Fire illustrate the inclusiveness of community events, and how she feels that participating, especially when dancing, feels as if that activity serves as an emotional outlet for her. She also illustrates to the positive aspects of developing as a performer, as also illustrated by the example of my informant, Mr. Bouncy Bling. It seemed as if they both had experienced struggles in their lives that were somewhat "relieved" by actively engaging in community events, music and dance.

Community Activism

As I left Diva Fire dancing with her peers, I moved on further down the street people were lining up to look at all the dogs that ASPCA (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) had brought for possible adoptions. In front of them vendors were selling homemade food and clothes, and a bit further down there was a purple truck with an enormous line in front. People were saying that they had the best po-boys[63] and hand cut French fries with fresh paprika aioli there. The easiest way to get into a great conversation in New Orleans is to start up by talking about food. Next to them were the stalls for Planned Parenthood, and an organization trying to raise money for clean-up after the BP-oil spill. I walked into one of the side-streets which would have led me into one of the rougher parts of the city and met Mr. Bouncy Bling.

Concluding Remarks on Bauche Street

As I have shown both Mr. Bouncy Bling and Diva Fire have their own personal struggles. They use community events where there is performing, music and dance involved as emotional outlets, and they both feel that participating is transformative for their own lives. They feel togetherness with the others there, and create networks and relationships that are

[63] A type of French baguette with different fillings.

positive for them. They feel better, and improve themselves and the community by playing music, dancing and so on. The liminality throughout the community events, creates spaces where they feel free for a moment in time, and they forget their everyday struggles in those moments.

The Bauche Street community seemed to have found a middle ground, even though they have set-backs with crime. This "togetherness" felt in liminal situations, was also extended to the communities' handling of their criminals and the law enforcement. Since the community center offered different classes and therapy work-shops to deal with some of the crime on the one hand, and that the community also co-operated with the police which frequented the street more often than before on the other. Politicians had become involved early to "clean up" the street, and there was a sense of positive change that was connected to gentrification outside the tourist realm.

Conclusion – The Continuing Struggle for New Orleanians

As I am writing this, yet another pending investigation of a shooting is in the making in New Orleans. During the 2013 Mother's Day parade 19 people were shot. The youngest victim was 10 years old, the perpetrator was 19. While New Orleans is a wondrous and glorious city, it has a dark side that increases the struggle many have already faced in New Orleans after Katrina. Rebuilding New Orleans after Katrina was for many a possibility for a positive renewal and economic growth. But for many, rebuilding New Orleans still is a struggle against poverty and crime. I have suggested that the high frequency of community events in New Orleans illuminate a tendency that New Orleanians are in need of emotional outlets, and that they in that time of liminality in which they engage in when participating, may generate a sense of communitas. I was constantly fascinated by the almost paradoxical reactions to grief, trauma, death and sorrow, as I was generously let into the social space in which these emotions are mediated and then transformed into moments of collective joy. However, putting this phenomenon into words is a difficult task, as much of the communication is non-verbal; yet it is felt by everyone present. The communitas which happens within the liminality of the community events, has a fleeting nature, and is quite complex and multilayered in its expression. Therefore I argue that the work of exploring communitas is not yet done, as communitas is different every time it occurs, as the contexts of the events are different every time, and may be experienced differently by the participants. However, what I observed was certain commonalities in what communitas could entail in the community events in New Orleans, that being sentiments of collective grief and sorrow, the easy communication of personal and collective insecurities and struggles, the easy transformation of these "negative" sentiments into moments of collective joy, collective empathy and feelings of having undergone an emotional catharsis. I have also explored attributes of communitas that are "trance-like", and which can be described as being in a "flow" or zone". The traditions of different forms of community events, like the second line parades and the festivals, are also enhancing traditions, and reproducing them. They do bring the past into the present, through the expressions and pride in the past of the participants' ancestors and their traditions. There is also a sense of all the traumatic past being commemorated and subsequently "let go of" by the participants, not through forgetting, but by portraying and expressing a sense of pride in having "survived" these struggles.

I have suggested in the last part of the paper that communitas can also create communal empathy and solidarity that surpasses the realm of the community event ritual, and may extend to the social space of everyday life, as in the case of Bauche Street.

In the first chapter I introduced the traditions of New Orleans based on a small historical outline, so that the reader could better understand the development of the traditions that I have used as cases in the thesis. Here I described the location of the city which makes it vulnerable to the natural elements. I depicted the migration patterns which arose when Louisiana and New Orleans was being populated, and the consequences of the transatlantic slavery, which make up the context of the traditions we see today, as the second lines and the Mardi Gras Indians. I also mentioned of the development of tourism in New Orleans.

In the second chapter, I described some of the events that happened during and after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. I introduced some aspects of how people express the memories of Katrina, and how rebuilding "places of meaning" was important for the communities to begin a process of rebuilding not just buildings, but people's lives too. I also explored some of the sentiments of "betrayal" of the government authorities and organizations that some of the residents expressed. Here, I also explored the need to get together after the storm, that communitas was generated in the aftermath of the flood amongst the survivors.

In the third chapter I explored how violence was considered to have become "harder" in post-Katrina New Orleans. I depicted how several occurrences of crime and violence were communicated at community events, and gave examples of the tension between the police and the participants of these festivals and parades. By focusing on the local discourse on the "culture of violence" in the streets, I have showed how the streets are contested between three parties, the participants of the community events, the criminals and the police.

The fourth chapter is a description of a jazz funeral held for a beloved community member, where I explored the shifts between communal sorrow and pain, and to moments of collective joy within the liminality throughout the ritual. Liminality is an attribute experienced by engaging and participating in the ritual. Here, there was also an exploration of the importance of the neighborhood the parade "rolled" through, as loci of memory for the residents, and how the second line will stop at "places of meaning" for the deceased to honor his or her memory.

In the fifth and final chapter there is a discussion on what the process of gentrification can mean for residents of post-Katrina New Orleans. By using the example of Bauche Street I suggest that "gentrification" means more than just the rise of property values which subsequently means an exclusion of the poor, but that it also will imply a "clean-up" which

means “beautification” of the street, as well as resolving conflicts surrounding crime, drug use and trade, and violence on the street. Bauche Street is portrayed as a success story of “gentrification” in New Orleans, and by exploring how the process of creating solidarity between the community members through organizing community events, I suggest that this has created positive permanent changes, also to the lives of two of my informants.

The future of New Orleans not only lies in the future of tourism, as Media and financial scholars will have you believe, it is the hands of the community members, that so evidently love their city and are willing to collaborate and create positive changes. The continuing focus by residents like Darryl Dancing Man 504, on new generations being schooled and trained within the traditions are pivotal to what will happen with the second line and Mardi Gras Indian traditions in the future, as the wisdom of the community elders might not be passed on, and these traditions may wither away with time. But there is a sense or renewal and vibrancy, as the second lines, the festivals and the musical traditions seemed so key to the community pride and solidarity that helped New Orleanians back on their feet after Hurricane Katrina. One can only hope that the incentives the communities showed in solving issues of crime and violence will help in the long run, and that there is a brighter future ahead for the new generations of New Orleanians. If there ever was a city that could persevere through these struggles, it must be New Orleans.

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