A City with Two Faces

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

The identity of the Caribbean as a territory is a veritable bricolage of cultural forms. Since Columbus' mistaken arrival in the *West Indies*, these islands have become home to Spanish, French, Dutch, British, African, Indian and Chinese immigrants, alongside its Aboriginal inhabitants. Despite the massive diversity that can be seen in these islands, there exists one common cultural expression that has persisted for the past 200 years throughout the Caribbean and Latin America. This celebration is Carnival.

Trinidad is the southernmost island in the archipelago that composes the Caribbean. Carnival is celebrated in many of Trinidad's towns, the biggest celebration being held in its capital city, Port-of-Spain. This research thesis looks at Carnival in Port-of-Spain as a complex urban entity that ritualistically re-energises and reclaims the city's streets. Through ecstatic celebration, the festival engenders a strong sense of *communitas* and collective identity, annually reinventing itself and occupying a liminal space between the Ordinary city of day-to-day living and the Extraordinary city of mythological complexity. As the festival moves through the city along its annual Parade Route, it creates an urban narrative which exists invisibly during the year in the city's collective memory.

Through a combination of descriptive text, scholarly research and experiential mapping, *A City with Two Faces* outlines the transformative qualities of Carnival in the streets of Port-of-Spain from its largest temporary urban forms to its smallest manifestations in syncretic masquerade archetypes.

Acknowledgements

Dedication

For those who have felt those drums in the street.

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INTRODUCTION

'Our Father who has given us this art
So that we can all feel like we are a part of this earthly heaven… Amen
Forgive us this day our daily weaknesses
As we seek to cast our mortal burdens on your city… Amen'[1]

The word Carnival is derived from the Ancient Roman expression: *carne vale* which means *farewell to flesh*. This festival traditionally celebrated a temporary state of excess and indulgence before the rigor of the Lenten fast. Across the Catholic world today, Carnival can be seen in Europe, North America, South America and the Caribbean. In Trinidad, the celebration of Carnival occurs each year on the Monday and Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday. On these two days in towns across the island, the city is overtaken by masqueraders in elaborate costumes, music trucks stacked with speakers blasting heavy bass rhythms and vendors selling aromatic homemade foods in temporary shelters built for the festival period. The celebration is like no other and has inspired the birth of other Carnivals in the world, including *Notting Hill* in London, the *Labour Day Parade* in New York and *Caribana* in Toronto. Trinidad's Carnival has broken away from the Catholic faith as a yearly festivity and has been embraced by the country as a national festival of emancipation.

My own fascination began one Carnival Monday morning in south Trinidad. After hours of dancing, I crossed the main Promenade of my hometown. I danced past the entrance of my old high school, the public library, and other sleeping monuments that had shaped my memory of that place. I was in ecstasy, bathed in mud under the rising sun when I was overcome by the power of that moment. I was not merely dancing for the thrill of it. It became very clear to me that through that dance, I was declaring to these places and people - that this road and city were mine. What I did not realise then was that my mornings dance had forever

[1] Quote from Calypso, High Mas by David Rudder, 1998.

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changed my relationship to that place. And so it became clear to me that through Carnival, each year my self and my people were actually reclaiming our territory in an apotropaic rite. We were entering into a mythic part of ourselves which wordlessly understood our need for this rite. The years that followed up to this study were dotted with similar experiences that have coloured my understanding of the way in which people celebrate the places that they live in.

These experiences have led me to ask: *What is this strange power that Carnival has over people?* This festival is one of the oldest and most prolific urban celebrations common to countries and cultures around the world. Surely a street celebration as widely and vigorously celebrated as this one must profoundly connect with something integral to human beings and their cities. Through this thesis I have discovered that the power of Carnival does not arise through disguise or through the exhibition of flesh as is commonly thought. Masquerade instead is a sophisticated form of dissimulation which brings the actor closer to what Mikhail Bakhtin calls one's *'second life'*[2]. Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian philosopher and literary theorist, in his book *Rabelais and His World*, discusses in great detail the *Carnivalesque* world, as seen through the novels of Francois Rabelais. He describes the way in which *carnival celebrates temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order… hostile to all that was immortalised and completed.*[3] In line with this vision, we can see that the power of Carnival lies in emancipation from our mental bondage of ordinary roles, behaviour and propriety and in creating a space within which that second, extraordinary self can reveal itself. Through masquerade, the reveller bypasses inhibitions or preconceived notions of identity in order to reach what Barbara Ehrenreich, in her book *Dancing in the Streets, A History of Collective Joy* calls a *'sacred climax of the rite'*[4]. In this book, Ehrenreich discusses the history of ecstatic rites celebrated by mankind since primitive times. She considers the need for human beings to experience collective ecstasy. Ehrenreich examines the evolution of ecstatic behaviour in cultures around the world while considering changing attitudes toward these rites. In this vein, she discusses the change in people's acceptance of ecstatic ritual through the evolution of the Greek God Dionysus as a

manifestation and indeed a celebration of man's wild urges, into the Roman God Bacchus, a manifestation and celebration of wine, drinking and excess. Through the process of civilisation, Ehrenreich says, mankind repressed his wild ecstatic nature. Today, carnival is perhaps the last remaining vehicles of public ecstatic celebration from man's earliest memories. It continues however to bid *farewell to flesh*, as the reveller, in that moment of ecstasy transcends boundaries of flesh and temporarily experiences a fusion of place, time and collective. Derek Walcott, the Nobel Prize winning Caribbean author and poet wrote:

'Every year we dance and sing
And every year we kill the king
Because the old king must be slain
For the new king to rise again.' [5]

This sentiment fully expresses the rejuvenating nature of this ritual festival, which through collective ecstasy re-imagines the city each year. The days of ecstasy bring about the death of old values and energies and signals thereafter the beginning of a new cycle.

Understanding this experience inevitably leads to a second question: *What is the effect of this extraordinary drama on the way that we see our world and our city?* Joseph Campbell states in *The Power of Myth* that, *'A myth is a public dream; a dream is a private myth'*[6]. Considering this in conjunction with the ideas presented by Samuel Kinser, in his book *Carnival: American Style: Mardi Gras at New Orleans and Mobile*, that *'Carnival is a way of dreaming together, publicly and responsively...'* we begin to see Carnival as a ritual of re-immersion into mythic consciousness. The city is the landscape within which the mythic dream is played out and certain places within the city inform that ritualistic passage into mythic consciousness. Each neighbourhood, major landmark and public square in the city carries with it layers of memory and association. The collective experience of these places along the parade route orchestrates the reveller's experience of the ecstatic celebration. From the festival's African religious traditions, the

importance of the parade route lies in Carnival's apotropaic nature. As the bands of masqueraders move through the city along the route it is felt that they cleanse the city of bad energy and evil spirits. Sarah Bonnemaison, a professor of Architecture and an urban theorist who looks at festival urbanism, in her essay *City Policies and Cyclical Events*, analysed the Halloween parade in Greenwich Village, New York. In this essay she outlines changes in the parade route and examines the effect of these changes on the overall festival. Her analysis of the route emphasises the importance of street sizes, the character of the neighbourhoods and their location along the route in building the experience of the festival. Since the yearly parade route of Carnival in Port-of-Spain roughly follows the same path each year, within this thesis I look at the way in which the spatial morphology of the city informs the narrative of the festival.

The unique manifestation of Carnival in Trinidad arises out of the confluence of many different cultures. The 27 islands that comprise the archipelago that is the Caribbean is a strange meeting place of disparate populations from around the world. The aboriginal populations of these islands are a tiny fragment of today's ethic composition, most of whom are mixed race; their very blood a part of the ethnic bricolage that makes up this archipelago. The descendents of white Europeans of Spanish, French, Dutch and British descent remain the remnants of a long past aristocracy. African, Indian and Chinese descendents also remain there; third generations who know little of their motherlands but still remain in some way torn between their ancestral legacies and present identities.

Carnival has evolved to incorporate all of these cultures. Each year the Carnival procession through Port-of-Spain's streets physically reassembles and re-imagines these fragmented histories. This *'restoration of our shattered histories'*[7] is what Walcott says is the underlying sentiment to *Antillean Art*[8]. Mircea Eliade, a Romanian philosopher in his book, The Sacred and the Profane outlines the necessity for sacred space within the world in order to locate a point of orientation for the religious man. He also describes the power of the sacred in organising space and cosmicizing a territory. Part of this is the performance of rituals that sanctify space. Festivals, he says create sacred time within a profane world. These ideas

describe quite aptly the role of Carnival in Trinidadian society. The historic root of the festival is as a celebration of emancipation. Within a post colonial society this is extremely important since each year the people of the country celebrate their emancipated freedom and ritualistically they re-imagine what that freedom means.

As a means of understanding Carnival in a more experiential or conceptual manner I looked at a great deal of poetry and fiction. The Dragon Can't Dance by Trinidadian writer, Earl Lovelace offered great insight into the historical drama of Carnival and the significance of the festival to the everyday man. In addition I also looked at West Indian folklore to better understand the myths underlying masquerade character types. What I found however was that regional literature brought to light a dramatic and carnivalesque expression that paralleled the nature of the festival itself. Magical Realist writing is a genre initially popularised in Latin American countries. With time however its prevalence can be seen in varying degrees throughout the Caribbean and even in West Africa. This style of writing is typified by *'poetics of excess[9]'*, which involve massive exaggeration and superimposition of unlikely situations. Many have theorised that this genre arises out of this cultural re-assembly of disparate histories and occurrences. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the Columbian novelist says that the *'crucial problem has been a lack of conventional means to render our lives* believable' within New World literature*. The West African connection is interested since much of the slave population in the New World would have come from West Arican territories. Born from connected threads of historical experience, I consider within this thesis that the Carnivalesque genre of writing may come from a similar cultural imperative that has given birth to Carnival in the Caribbean and Latin America and which is expressed in Yoruban masquerade. Thus, the festival in Trinidad interpolates a mythic expression of the region's disparate cultural histories.

Central to this thesis is the dualistic identity of the celebrated city and the immense power of the festival in creating the locus of a place. Aldo Rossi, the influential Italian urban theorist, in *The Architecture of the City* introduced invaluable principles that have guided my understanding of the way in which

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people perceive their cities. The concept of genius locus along side the significance of urban artefacts in shaping the evolution of cities has greatly influenced my understanding of city space. Collective memory he says is embodied in the layered experiences which urban artefacts come to represent. Similarly, the repetition of the festival each year through the city, has transformed the identity of certain places in Port-of-Spain. The term *urban ephemera*[10] introduced by Mark . Schuster in the book *Imaging the City*, refers to *'events that are organised, momentary, repeated urban public presentations. They include parades, festivals, celebrations, outdoor performances and rituals of all kinds'*[11]. Within this context, *'signature ephemera'*[12] are introduced as festivals that have grown intrinsically with a city and have shaped the identity of that place. These are festivals of national pride which defy restrictions of money, time and practicality each year in favour of an evanescent period of ecstatic joy. This thesis therefore embraces Carnival as the *signature festival* which has shaped the identity of Port-of-Spain.

Port-of-Spain is the capital city of Trinidad and Tobago. No larger than 10.4 square km in area, it is the political, financial and cultural centre of the country. It houses most central government offices as well as the head offices of two of the largest banks in the Caribbean and recently hosted the Fifth Summit of the Americas. What is truly unique about this particular Caribbean city however, is that since it was deigned the capital of the country in 1784, Carnival has been celebrated in its streets. Carnival is the largest cultural festival in the country, drawing thousands of locals and tourists each year. Although it is celebrated throughout Trinidad, its size cannot be rivalled by any other Trinidadian town or Caribbean territory. In the beginning of this process, I set out to describe the transformation that occurred in Port-of-Spain on festival days from the city's ordinary usage to its festival usage. As the study progressed however, it became clearer to me that the festival is not simply a two day explosion of activity. The festival, though evanescent, is performed and executed each year through the cooperation of ministries, organisation and thousands of individual people. Although the official Carnival celebration in Trinidad lasts two days, the Carnival season extends to roughly two months before this time. In fact preparations for the festivities begin many months

before. Most Carnival bands for example begin selling costumes from as early as July the year before. Erection of temporary venues and stages in the city begins two months before the festival and the sound of steel band orchestras practising at their Pan Yards increase nearing festival time. Recognising this second level of infrastructure throughout the city led me to consider Port-of-Spain as a single city with two identities. The first identity I refer to as the Ordinary City. This is the place of government buildings, commercial streets and linear time. The second identity of Port-of-Spain I refer to as the Extraordinary City. This is an almost animistic place of music, masquerade and cyclical time. This thesis analyses the form of the Extraordinary city, its history and its undulating methods of devouring and transforming space. Although my focus is on the form of the Extraordinary city, a significant part of this work also considers the intertwining relationship between the two faces.

This thesis, *A City with Two Faces* proves that street festivals are a unique urban situation in which participants create their own spatial narrative of their city. Being a native Trinidadian myself and a student of Architecture, the thesis has come out of an inevitable curiosity about that relationship between the urban form of the city and that of its festival. That narrative is constructed through experiences of spectacle which revolutionise the way in which the actors perceive their environment. In the case of Carnival, this construction is performed through a chaotic and often inverted experience of democratic public space, where the street becomes a stage and buildings becomes a backdrop and where each person is of equal stature. Since Carnival is a yearly ritual, this re-enchantment of the city along a singular parade route, each year creates a profound urban experience. In order to understand this phenomenon, this thesis considers the evanescent forms of the festival to discover the mechanisms through which it transforms public space. This thesis also looks at the city of Port-of-Spain and the spaces within it that have become dedicated to Carnival year-round.

Understanding this relationship is necessary for the growth of Port-of-Spain at a time when it is rapidly developing. Without seeing the aged, refined and ingenious ways in which this city has integrated its ordinary and extraordinary

faces, Port-of-Spain stands to lose centuries of its own experience. The value of these places does not lie in glamorous attraction or tourist dollars. Rather their importance in society remains as community based creative engines which every year unite the city's people in singular celebration. With modifications to the parade route being considered alongside the construction of a new main judging point, this thesis creates a new understanding of the urban form of Carnival so that improvements and modifications to the festival space can be done with greater understanding of what the physical articulation of the festival really means. As a broader concept, this thesis aims to convey the power of festival in sanctifying public space. In a time when people are increasingly estranged within their own cities, the festival is an essential vehicle for connecting people with their neighbourhoods. The analysis of the festival in this thesis offers a framework of mechanisms which are transformative. From these lessons new Carnivals and festivals can be born in places all over the world.

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Form & Structure

A *City with Two Faces* is organised in four chapters. Its configuration first introduces a broad analysis of festivals around the world, before looking at a specific analysis of Port-of-Spain's Carnival. This structure considers the innately human impulses toward celebrating space. The analysis of Trinidad's national festival considers its celebratory form from its most permanent forms to its most evanescent.

Each chapter of this thesis is followed by a collection of artwork which I have made in the last two years. These paintings are all abstract in nature and have arisen out of a need to represent the festival experientially. They are primarily acrylic paintings as well as a collection of conté drawings. Each of these pieces in some way builds upon the sensual experience of Carnival in Port-of-Spain, in a very personal way. They articulate the all encompassing nature of the festival in transforming the city into an extraordinary place. The first collection is called *J'ouvert* which refers to the early morning festival that occurs at dawn on

Carnival Monday morning. Using conté on paper, these pieces give an impression of the more dark and primal celebration of Carnival. The second collection is called *Farewell to Flesh*, which is derived from the literal meaning of Carnival.This collection is of acrylic on canvas pieces which reflect on the individual experience of Carnival. The final collection is called *Mas*. The word *mas* is the popular abbreviation of masquerade in Trinidad. These pieces are all acrylic paintings which focus on masquerade in the city, reflecting on the transformation of places during Carnival.

The first chapter in this thesis is called *City space and Festival space*. Within this chapter, I analyse the form and expression of three major international festivals in order to establish a set of parameters with which to analyse Carnival in Trinidad. The celebrations I have chosen to analyse are *Il Palio* in Sienna, *Gion Matsuri* in Kyoto and *Las Fallas* in Valencia. My analysis of these festivals brings to light the repetition of archetypal forms between folk festivals. Each festivals manifestation is comparable in the way the current city is made extraordinary. With the example of Il Palio, the structure of the society in historic neighbourhoods is fundamental to the festival as is the square in which the race in enacted. Similarly, in the Gion Matsuri the massive wooden floats are based on events centuries before and reminiscent of neighbourhoods that no longer exist in the same way today. Las Fallas shows the incredible impact of collective celebration through its simultaneous spectacles throughout Valencia. This chapter conceptually outlines the nature of urban ephemera in order establish a way of understanding the transformative power of Carnival in Port-of-Spain.

The second chapter is called *Parallel Stories*. This chapter traces three epic histories that have led to the present manifestation of Carnival in Trinidad. The first history follows the ancient origin of Carnival from its Pagan roots, into its integration with the Catholic calendar and its emigration to the Caribbean through French colonialists. The second history follows the African tradition of religious masquerade, most specifically through West African Yoruba culture and its transition through slavery into the Caribbean. The third history considers the social and cultural impact of Hindu and Muslim traditions on the form of Carnival

today. These influences were brought to the Caribbean with indentured Indian workers in 1845. It is necessary to trace these histories separately in order to understand the significance of their confluence within the Caribbean.

The third chapter, titled *The Extraordinary City* considers the form of the festival city of Port-of-Spain. The most significant organisational tool which articulates the form of the festive city is the Carnival route. This section therefore analyses the route while considering the nature of the places that it envelops. This route analysis follows one particular bands experience in Port-of-Spain during Carnival 2009. It considers closely the spatial morphology of the city alongside historical information and personal experience in order to give an enriched sense of the Extraordinary city. This analysis is accompanied by a set of experiential drawings of Port-of-Spain which describe the liminal space between myth and reality that Carnival occupies. In some ways they are the endpoint of this research, as they synthesise the research material with my artistic experimentation during this process.

The final chapter of this thesis is called *Anatomy of the Festival*. This is a largely graphic dissection of the festival. Through an analysis of photographs taken along the Parade Route, this chapter isolates the repeated elements which constitute the festival's form. By reflecting on masquerade types, location of the audience, the movement of music and the location of stands and barricades, I have outlined the way in which each of these phenomena transform public space. This chapter considers the small parts which make up the festival that are often overlooked.

Illus. 1.1

[a] Fallas Festival, Valencia [b] Gion Matsuri, Kyoto [c] Il Palio, Siena [d] Carnival, Port-of-Spain

CHAPTER 1 : City Space & Festival Space

'The urban environment is constantly changing. Permanent alterations are the result of new buildings going up and others being demolished, streets being widened or straightened, new neighbourhoods being developed. No less significant, however, is the way in which the shared public space of the city is altered on particular occasions, such as for festivals of ceremonies, when temporary effects transform the familiar to underline the significance of given events. This process of temporary and permanent change is true to all cities.' [1]

Parades let people reclaim urban spaces not just as a place of work but to renew their relationship with the environment. By animating all senses, parades change people's relation to the city, letting them look at the city in a new way. Parades allow all different groups of people to get together in public in an important way, crossing all political, economic, religious and ethnic barriers. There are very few events in the city that do that.' [2]

As human beings, we have created a physical world that reflects the collective legacies that shape each of our cultures. Our cities, though physically little more than cells of activity and habitation under a set of accepted codes hold a higher ideological significance to each inhabitant. The city in a more enriched sense is the modern plain upon which man exerts his desires and actions. The city contextualises the life of the inhabitant, pulling on the basic propensities within each individual and making their life somewhat different than it would be anywhere else in the world. This is the power of the overlaying of city histories. In older cities centuries of collective experience shape the city as well as the behaviour of the citizen. Rather, as Aldo Rossi discuses in Architecture of the City, urban artefacts can contribute to the locus of the city, and eventually affect the overall identity of the place.

'One can say that the city itself is the collective memory of its people, and like memory it is associated with objects and places. The city is the locus of the collective memory. This relationship between locus and the citizenry then becomes the city's predominant image, both of architecture and of landscape, and

[1] Nevola, F. (2007). Siena : Constructing the Renaissance city. (New Have ; London:Yale University Press) p 1

[2] Kugelmass, J. (1991). Wishes come true: Designing The Greenwich Village Halloween Parade (The Journal of American Folklore, 104(414)), p 443-465.

as certain artefacts become part of its memory, new ones emerge.
In this entirely positive sense great ideas flow through the history
if the city and give shape to it.'³

This is also true of urban celebrations. In certain situations, as in Port-of-Spain's Carnival, where the festival and the city have grown together, infused with one another, the festival can take on a pivotal role in the society's consciousness, ritualistically reclaiming public space. 'Signature ephemera' as discussed by J. Mark Schuster⁴, are urban events which over time have come to directly inform the identity of a city. These types of celebrations are often deeply linked to the underlying myths which constitute each place, taking on the weight of a kind of civic religion. Mircea Eliade in the book The Sacred and the Profane, speaks extensively on the role of festivals in immersing the individual into mythical space and time in order to re-affirm connection with the sacred world. He also describes the power of the sacred in organising space and cosmicising the territory. Part of this is the performance of rituals that sanctify space.

'Religious participation in a festival implies emerging from ordinary
temporal duration and reintegration of the mythical time reactualized
by the festival itself. Hence sacred time is indefinitely recoverable,
indefinitely repeatable… With each periodical festival of the previous
year or in the festival of a century earlier; it is the time that was created
and sanctified… of which the festival is precisely a reactualization.'⁵

It is this attitude to time that Eliade says distinguishes between the world view of religious and non-religious man. It is this attitude which distinguishes the world view of those who cyclically participate in signature ephemera. It is this periodic breaking through from linear into circular time that modifies the existential attitudes that surround Trinidad's Carnival in the was that Eliade describes religious man.

'…for religious man of the archaic cultures, the world is renewed annually; in other words, with each new year it recovers its original sanctity, the sanctity that it possessed when it came from the Creator's hands… the way in which a reality came into existence is revealed by its myth.'[6]

And that

'…the festival is not merely the commemoration of a mythical event, it reactualizes the event.'[7]

Street festivals are one of the oldest forms of public gatherings between the mutual inhabitants of a community. Their significance in shaping the way that we map our own ideological relationships to the physical city is often underestimated. In a modern world where technological efficiency is commonly held as the highest form of human accomplishment, the street festival is overlooked for its unsophisticated and often guileless traditions. Yet, their impact on our own psycho-geographical associations is undeniable. This phenomenon of ritualistic re-imagining of our world is prevalent in many societies. The aboriginal Walkabout, paints quite a beautiful notion of sacred spatial pathways. Below is a quote from Songlines by Bruce Chatwin describing aboriginal spatial ideology:

''He went on to explain how each totemic ancestor, while travelling through the country, was thought to have scattered a trail of words and musical notes along the line of his footprints, and how these Dreaming-tracks lay over the land as 'ways' of communication between far-flung tribes.
A song, he said, 'was both a map and direction-finder. Providing you knew the song, you could always find your way across the country.
And would a man on 'Walkabout' always be travelling down one of the Songlines?

In the old days, yes' he agreed. 'Nowadays they go by train or car.'[8]

Although not a festival exactly, the idea of the Walkabout represents an important relationship where sacred mythological space can be outlined and re-affirmed in the physical present-day city. These ideas of ordinary and extraordinary space are prevalent in many cultures around the world. In order to further understand this concept of sacred or extraordinary space versus ordinary space this chapter considers this concept across different cultures. In his essay on urban ephemera and their effect on pubic space and identity, J. Mark Schuster presents another idea of "signature ephemera". These are a type of 'temporary urban phenomena that are indicative of and native to a particular place'[9]. Like Carnival in Trinidad, the following case studies are all signature ephemera that they have been performed for centuries within these cities. They are all unique to these places and have significantly shaped the identity of the city. This is important because they represent a very different kind of urban ephemera than a corporate parade or even an ethnic food festival. The festivals in these case studies are in some cases cosmogonic in nature, but in other cases, they create and ritualistically reaffirm myths of the society and the cities in which they are enacted. These are celebrations that truly embody the values of the society and which repeat each year as a cyclical event in the city's calendar. Together, they create a holistic understanding of the extraordinary city as a phenomenological world of festival experience that exists alongside the ordinary world of day to day activity.

The first case study considers the Gion Matsuri in Kyoto, Japan. This festival has existed in Kyoto since the 800's AD. The second is the Il Palio, a horse race in Siena, Italy. Beginning in the 15th century, this significantly shapes and also reflects Siena's socio-geography. The third study is on Las Fallas in Valencia, Spain. This is a fire festival that dates back to Pagan times but which became popular in the Middle Ages. It becomes clearer after looking at these places the nature of the signature ephemera in its impact on social organisation, urban re-imagination and the temporary creation and an "anarchism of space"[10].

'Then what is the anarchism of space? ... The environmental facilities surrounding these pre-modern theatre structures, including the streets, maintained their primary functions as independent entities in everyday life, but when their stages came to life the environmental elements around them were radically transformed, altering space and making it quite extraordinary. The anarchism of space is this quality, the ability to transform ordinary space into something extraordinary.' [1]

Gion Matsuri (Kyoto, Japan)

The Gion Matsuri, more formally called the Gion Rites, occurs each year throughout the month of July, reaching its peak in a parade on July 17th. There are two parts to the festival, the religious festivities and the street parade. Today, although the festival's form has been largely gentrified from its past form, it still manages to overtake the streets once a year. The parade involves the pulling of large and heavy wooden floats that are roughly shaped like boats through the streets of Gion. They are elaborately decorated and often have small theatrical performances played out on them.

Gion Matsuri began in early Kyoto when the city was the victim of many terrible floods. With this flooding came terrible destruction and the spread of plagues. In 869AD, the Emperor, in an attempt to quell the fury of the gods, ordered the performance of a festival be performed to honour the deities. A description of the early festival is given below:

'In addition to the services held at the shrine (of the deity), Urabe had a group of people circulate through the city carrying a replica of a gigantic halberd, the symbol of the ruling clan. Halberd is hoko in Japanese, and later the word (boko in yambboko) came to denote the mobile stages that include a central staff on which objects signifying weapons, ships, the moon, and so forth are displayed.'[2]

The service became an annual event and was accepted in throughout the whole society. The festival however served two different roles in Kyoto.

[1]Soeda, H. (1973). Festivity and the City: Mobile Stages of the Gion Festival. 2 (3&4, Concerned Theater Japan), p 194

[a]

[b]

Map [a] labels:

YAMA–HOKO MAP

山鉾建ての位置

Oike-dori
Aneyakoji-dori
Sanjo-dori
Rokkaku-dori
Takoyakushi-dori
Nishikikoji-dori
Shijo-dori
Ayanokoji-dori
Bukkoji-dori
Takatsuji-dori

Horikawa-dori
Aburanokoji-dori
Nishinotoin-dori
Shinmachi-dori
Muromachi-dori
Karasuma-dori
Higashinotoin-dori

En-no-Gyoja Yama
Suzuka Yama
Hachiman Yama
Kuronushi Yama
Jyomyou Yama
Kita-Kannon Yama
Koi Yama
Hachibenkei Yama
Yamabushi Yama
Minami-Kannon Yama
Arare-Tenjin Yama
Urade Yama
Toro Yama
Kikusui Hoko
Hohka Hoko
Kanko Hoko
Shijokasa Hoko
Tsuki Hoko
Moso Yama
Naginata Hoko
Kakkyo Yama
Hakuga Yama
Niwatori Hoko
Ashikari Yama
Fune Hoko
Ayagasa Hoko
Abura-Tenjin Yama
Tokusa Yama
Haku-Rakuten Yama
Taishi Yama
Iwato Yama
Hosho Yama

Map [b] labels:

Oike-dori
Shijo-dori
Karasuma-dori
Kawabata-dori
Kamogawa River
Yamaboko Procession

illus. 1.2
[a] Location of Yama-Hoko storage locations
[b] Diagram of Yamaboko Procession Route

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'In this way the collective energy of the masses, which manifested in orgiastic religious frenzy, presented a threat to the ruling regime, came to be integrated into an officially recognized religious event.'[3]

The masses used the festival as a means of *'creating their own space and time'* in which they could overturn social roles as a means of religious and psychological action whereas the religious festival was more important to the upper classes alongside the exhibition of their wealth during the festivities. Only after the ruling class had defined the date and title of the festival as the Gion Rites, were the masses able to refine their own festival in order to outwardly conform to the prescribed pattern. Once this outward display was met, the masses were able to construct a temporary world of their own invention in which to practice their rituals.

The main element in this yearly performance is the large wooden floats called *yamaboko*. The form of the *yamaboko* known today was established in the fifteenth century. They were built by a lower class of social outcasts who performed simple entertainments like juggling and singing popular songs. As the festival became more popular, there were as many as fifty-eight *yamaboko* that would move through the streets. Each of these stages while moving along the streets would have liver performers acting out plays. As it evolved, the rites at the shrine became of lesser importance than this large street celebration. The *yamboko* meandered through the streets without a set pattern of travel.

During the fifteenth century, from 1467 to 1477, the Onin War was waged and the city in response to conflicts morphed from its grid based system (modelled after the Chinese capital *Ch'ang-an*) into a collection of gated and protected blocks called *machi*. Each *machi* was centered upon its streets, which became avenues of commerce. There were to associations that managed the coexistence of the separate blocks called the *shimo-gyo* (lower half of Kyoto) and the *kami-gyo* (upper half of the city). After further social turbulence in the years that followed, against recommendations that the Gion Festival be abandoned,

illus. 1.3
Photograph of Gion Matsuri in Kyoto

the festival continued, but now each *yamaboko* coming to be associated with a different *machi*. The festival continued to grow based on tax collection that made the construction of the *yamaboko* possible. The richer *machi* adorned their *yamaboko* with Gobelin tapestries and French brocades. Despite the avenue for the upper class to showcase its wealth and extravagance, the other *machi* also participated in presenting the best that they could, in competition with the others. From 1600-1800 a decline in the *machi* system occurred, leading to a major thoroughfare being inserted through them. The city's form was thus regularised back into its grid pattern.

Although tourism has now become the main reason for the occurrence of the festival, its evolution has reflected some deeply significant aspects about the Kyoto culture.

> *'This kind of anarchy created a new class that maintained its own specific kind of collective imagination. The Gion Festival thus originally served as a point at which the collective imagination of the people of the city cold be focused clearly. Perhaps this is one of the principal functions of the festival as a phenomena in general…'[4]*

Hiroshi continues to describe the still existing benefit of the festival in its current condition:

> *'In the first place, the yamaboko with their immense size and ponderous mobility, are still able to violate the ordinary environment of the streets. Secondly the way the yamaboko are born anew each year, their temporariness, intimates that they still maintain an instantaneous but not inconsiderable impact. Thirdly, the flexibility of the organs that still exist in the midst of the town to house and shelter the yamaboko, those establishments that store the collapsible yamaboko and play an important role in the festival by transforming themselves from ordinary houses or shops into extraordinary sites for*

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illus. 1.4
Yamaboko detail showing tapestries and decorations

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illus. 1.5
Ornately decorated Yamaboko dragged by a group of men

the materialization of the festival, indicate the immediate involvement of the people of the machi in altering their urban environment. With these three elements, the festival, the way I perceive it, seemed quite free from both architectural functionalism and the ordinary or everyday structure of the city. I saw with my own eyes and I was led to imagine how with this festival people might have rejected the ordinary function and meaning of their city environment and created a temporary, anarchic environment pregnant with possibilities, how, by doing so, they for the first time regained the meaning of their own space.'[5]

It's perpetuation in the city however, regardless of its tourist aims still maintains its function as a festival that for a short time captures the collective imagination of the city's people.

The early form of the Gion Rites as a carnivalesque vehicle for social expression is quite similar to the evolution of the African Carnival in Trinidad. The involvement of the lower classes of Gion in a creative engine which for a time defined their freedom from a constrictive class system is mirrored in the early Carnival. The ideas Soeda outlines of *'anarchism of space'* is the central focus of the extraordinary city. The importance of the streets as veritable stages for a moving theatre is a powerful factor of both Carnival and the Gion rites.

Piazza
del Campo

Porcupine

Female Wolf

Caterpillar

Giraffe

Dragon

Goose   Owl

Unicorn

Forest

Tower

Seashell

Eagle

Panther

Ram Valley

Wave

Snail   Turtle
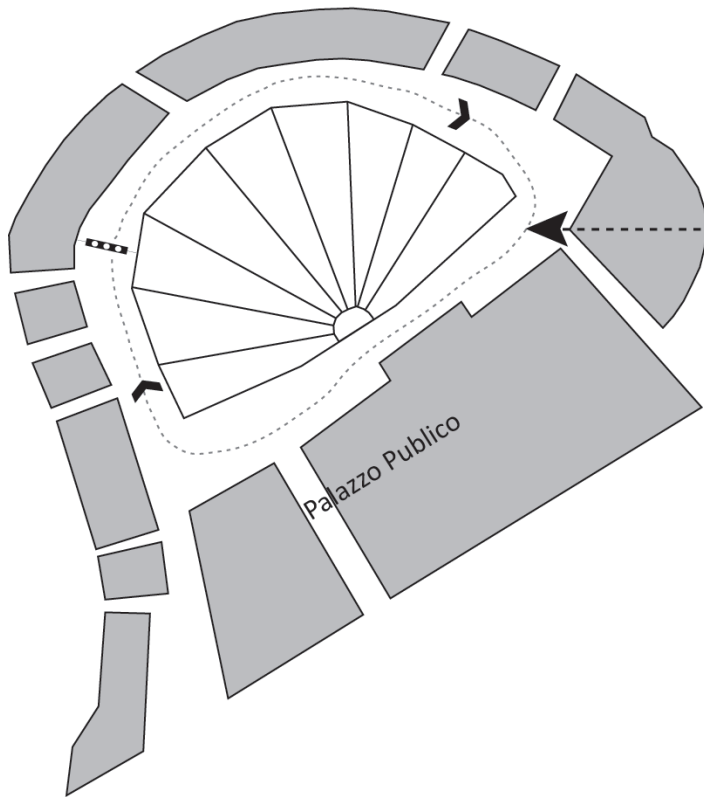
[a]
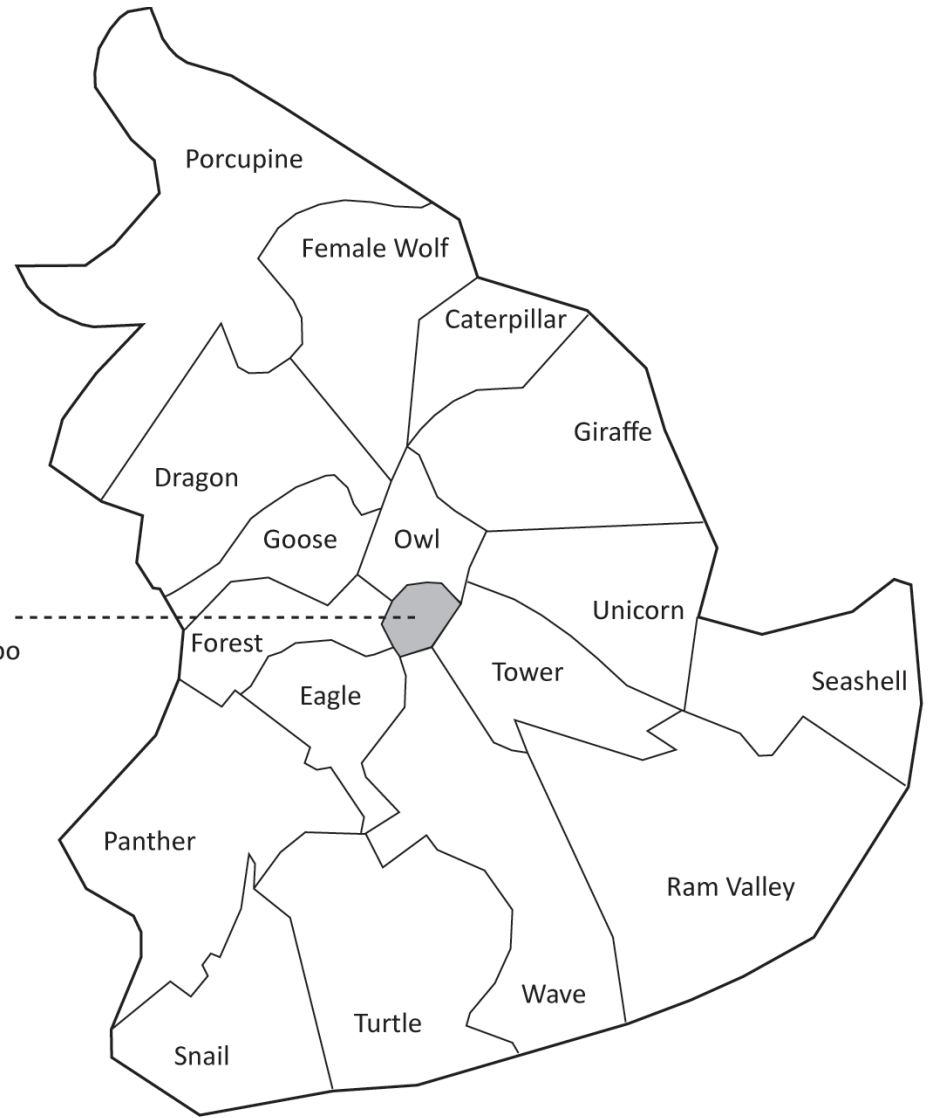
[b]

illus. 1.6
[a] Plan of Piazza del Campo showing race circuit
[b] Location of Piazza del Campo in Siena

'The 14th century storyteller of the Trecentonovelle, Franco Sacchetti, tells of one Alberto di Siena, who borrows a nag from a friend in order to go out of the city. The nag had a mind of its own and had no wish to leave the city. When they reached the gate, the horse refused to go a step further and so Alberto is forced to turn around; the animal then happily trots back to the city centre and to the Campo… The Piazza del Campo was the natural pole of attraction of Siena…The horse without a rider like the traveller, pilgrim, merchant or honoured visitor, followed a natural pathway that was carved through the dense urban fabric of the city…' [1]

Il Palio
(Siena, Italy)

Palio di Siena, or simply *Il Palio*, is an annual horse race that involves three circuits around the Piazza del Campo at the centre of Siena. The winning prize is a banner dedicated to the Virgin. There are two race days: July 2nd in honour of the local Madonna of Provenzano and on August 16th in honour of the Assumption of the Virgin. Piazza del Campo is a large sloping piazza that is roughly shell shaped. Its surface is divided in nine facets that are paved in a fishbone red brick pattern and demarcated by travertine lines. The nine segments were made to represent the nine *novesco* or noble families that were responsible for the building of the piazza. The square used to be the meeting point of three small hill towns. It also marks the social center of Siena in front of the Palazzo Pubblico.

The race was conceived in August 1492 after much social unrest when the *Nove's* (old ruling class) returned to Siena, after years of expulsion. The race was also intended to mark a feast day to Mary Magdalene on July 22nd. The race originally marked the privileged axis through the city by its course which ran from the city gates to the Campo in the center. The race eventually came to be run in laps around the Campo. The race occurs twice a year, on July 2nd as well as August 16th, each race being held between 10 horses. The two races facilitate each of the seventeen neighbourhoods to allow a steed to compete.

It is important to note that this race and feast time is not merely a contest for the fastest horse. It is rather a fierce competition between rivalling neighbourhoods or *contrade*. Siena is composed of seventeen *contrade*. These neighbourhoods developed initially as military posts to defend the city during

[1] Fabrizio Nevola, Siena: Reconstructing the Renaissance City, pg 91

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illus. 1.7

Photograph of Il Palio horse race in Piazza del Campo

its years as a Republic. Today the *contrade* are integral pieces of Sienese social structure. Each is a *'quasi-totemic symbol'*[2] which carries its own colours, symbol and myths. As well as being a symbolic kinship, each *contrada* is also a corporate entity as they maintain their own political and economic relations. Each horse in the Palio represents the hope, passion and vengeance of a different *contrada*. The Palio is therefore more than a yearly festival. It is a yearly outpouring of this *contrade* culture physically onto Siena's streets.

Both races are marked by weeks of rituals that occur before the race and which contribute to the escalation of energy that explodes throughout the city on the days of the races. Three days before the race, horses are selected by lot. The horses are voted upon and put forward by the *contrade*, the aim being to find ten evenly matched horses. That evening the beginning of six trial races begins, ending on the morning of the Palio. On the morning before the race, each of the 10 horses that will run that day is taken to the church of each *contrada* to be blessed. The *Corteo Storico* preludes the horserace. This is a 700 person procession of people wearing reconstructed 15th century ceremonial garb through the Campo.

The race itself, although lasting only about 90 seconds, is of course the major spectacle that all of these ceremonies lead up to. A week before the races, the Piazza del Campo is covered in layers of earth and a temporary race track shaped around its longest circumference along with temporary fences and stands. During the race it is common for horses to fall and lose their jockeys. Interestingly, it is the horse that wins the race, even if it has thrown its jockey. The winner is determined by the first horse to reach the finish line with its head dress intact. Winning the race however is not simply a matter of the best man winning. Underlying the entire festival is a byzantine web of *partiti* (deals). Large amounts of money are passed between *contrada*, based on alliances and negotiations with other jockeys and captains. The winner therefore is the victor of political manoeuvring, financial negotiation and pure luck.

It is important to note at this point that the festival's influence in Sienese social relations continues throughout the year. For example, Earlier in the year, each *contrada* begin negotiations with prospective jockeys outside of Siena. The

illus. 1.8
Crowds gathered in Piazza del Campo showing support for their contrade

illus. 1.9
Photograph of horses in Piazza del Campo

contrada that will have horses represented in each race are decided at a meeting during the year between *'captains'* of each, presided upon by the mayor of the city, where horses are drawn by lot. Many of the rituals of the race are overseen by local government therefore giving the impression of the festival as a kind of civic religion.

> *'Of the diverse interpretations of the Palio, most require little discussion: that is chaotic ('the world's wackiest horse race'), corrupt (the world's crookedest horse race'), an ancient survival, a revival for the benefit of tourists, a religious devotion, a paramilitary expression, a sport, and others. Perhaps the only point on which almost all agreed is that the Palio reproduces – whether by continuity or by reconstruction- cultural patterns of 'medieval' Siena, namely the three centuries of glory of the Sienese Republic before its defeat in the mid sixteenth century.'[3]*

The most significant similarity between Il Palio in Siena and Carnival in Port-of-Spain is the atmosphere of rivalry and competition. Like Il Palio, the formal actions of Carnival in Port-of-Spain are based upon folk competitions. During these competitions individual, bands and neighbourhoods invest countless hours and a great deal of money in order to win as a matter of national pride. The rivalry creates tension that makes ecstatic release possible.

illus. 1.10:
Map of Valencia showing public spaces and
a schedule of Fallas events

MARCH 13th (Saturday)
At 02.00 p.m. Mascletà (sound fireworks) Plaza del Ayuntamiento
At 10.30 p.m ."International Folk Parade" Plaza del Ayuntamiento

MARCH 14th (Sunday)
At 02.00 p.m. Mascletà (sound fireworks) Plaza del Ayuntamiento
At 06.00 p.m. Closure ceremony of the "CHILDREN'S NINOT EXHIBITION"

MARCH 15th (Monday)
At 08.00 a .m. Plantà (setting up) of all "FALLAS INFANTILES" (children's fallas)
At 02.00 p.m. Mascletà (sound fireworks) in the Plaza del Ayuntamiento (City Hall Square).
At 06.00 p.m. Closure ceremony of the "NINOT EXHIBITION" (adult's figurines).
At 00.00 a .m Plantà (setting up) of all "FALLAS" (adult's fallas)
At 01.00 a .m. Fireworks on the Paseo de La Alameda (between Exposición Bridge and Las Flores Bridge).

MARCH 16th (Tuesday)
At 02.00 p.m. Mascletà (sound fireworks) in the Plaza del Ayuntamiento
At 04.30 p.m. From the stage outside the City Hall building, Awards Ceremony for Children's "Fallas".
At 01.00 a .m. Fireworks on the Paseo de La Alameda (between Exposición Bridge and Las Flores Bridge).

MARCH 17th (Wednesday)
At 09.30 a .m. City Hall building, Awards Ceremony for "Fallas"
At 02.00 p.m. Mascletà (sound fireworks) in the Plaza del Ayuntamiento
At 04.00 p.m. First day of the Flower offering to our Lady of the Forsaken ("Virgen de los Desamparados") along Paz street and San Vicente street thousands of falleros march towards the Plaza de la Virgen.
At 01.00 a .m. Fireworks on the Paseo de La Alameda

MARCH 18th (Thursday)
At 11.00 a .m. Homage to the poet Maximilano Thous , at the monument in his honour located at crossroads of Sagunto street and Maximilano Thous street. After finishing, a "Mascletà" will be staged.
At 12.00 p.m. Homage to the "Maestro Serrano" , taking place at the monument dedicated to his memory in Reino de Valencia Ave. After finishing, a "Mascletà" will be staged.
At 02.00 p.m. Mascletà (sound fireworks) in the Plaza del Ayuntamiento
At 04.00 p.m. Second day of the Flower offering to our Lady of the Forsaken ("Virgen de los Desamparados") along Paz street and San Vicente street thousands of falleros march towards the Plaza de la Virgen. The flower offering finishes around 1 a .m. in the morning.
At 01.30 a .m. Nit de Foc, the most important fireworks display in The Fallas Festival on the "Paseo de la Alameda" (between Exposición Bridge and Las Flores Bridge)

MARCH 19th (Friday)
At 11.00 a .m. On the "Puente de San José" (Saint Joseph Bridge), flower offering made by the "Fallas" Queens and their Courts of Honour in front of the statue of the Patriarch. A "Mascletà" will follow.
At 12.00 p.m. Mass in honour of the Patriarch St. Joseph, in the Cathedral Church, staged by the Central Fallas Council and the Carpenters Guild with the attendance of the "Fallas" Queens of Valencia and their Courts of Honour. Mass sung by the "Cathedral Choir" and the orchestra from the Conservatoire José Iturbi from Valencia.
At 02.00 p.m. Mascletà (sound fireworks) in the Plaza del Ayuntamiento
At 07.00 p.m. Cabalgata del Fuego (Fire Parade) along Colon Street with a spectacular firework show in Porta de la Mar Square.
At 10.00 p.m. Cremà or burning of the Children's Fallas.
At 10.30 p.m. Cremà or burning of the Children's Fallas having obtained First Prize among the Fallas of the Special Section.
At 11.00 p.m. Cremà or burning of the Children's Falla in the Plaza del Ayuntamiento

MARCH 20th (Saturday)
At 00.00 a .m. Cremà or burning all the remaining adults Fallas in Valencia.
At 00.30 a .m. Cremà or burning of the adult "Falla" having obtained First Prize among the fallas of the Special Section.
At 01.00 a .m. Bouquet of aerial fireworks in the Plaza del Ayuntamiento and Cremà or burning of the "Falla" in this square.

Las Fallas
(Valencia, Spain)

La Fiesta de Les Falles de Valencia, informally called *Las Fallas* or *Les Falles*, is a fire festival that is entirely unique to Valencia. Although the history of its birth is not exactly known, it can be traced into the Middle-Ages as a celebration of the spring equinox by burning wooden objects. This evolved into a festival in honour of Saint Joseph, the patron of carpentry. Although the festival spans an entire month of activities, today, the highlight of the festival occurs on March 19th, the Night of Fire ('*La Nit de Foc'*). At midnight on this day, over 750 *Fallas* (large papier-mâché monuments) which are built in public squares each year are simultaneously set on fire all across the city. The event draws vast crowds of up to two million people who flood the streets and squares of the city to see the *Cremá* (ritual of burning the monuments).

This great night is officially preceded by a week of city wide festivities. Each year, from March 14th to the 19th, brass bands perform, fireworks displays are set off, religious processions are held and parades pour out of each neighbourhood. Brass bands sound a wake up call every morning of the festival while at two in the afternoon each day, a fireworks display explodes in each neighbourhood. The largest religious procession is called *L'Ofrenda*. This involves each neighbourhood taking an offering of flowers to the Virgin. Each community's parade involves intricate satirical costumes. These parades differ from the European Carnival in that it is not based on disguise, but rather in showcasing yourself in a competition of individual satirical garb.

The *Falla*, is the central object of the festival. Its significance is deeply rooted in the society of Valencia. The *Falla* itself is a large satirical sculpture that ranges from five to thirty meters in height. It is an ephemeral, often grotesque monument that centers upon a contemporary issue in pop culture. It can focus on a range of topics from political satire to mythical figures and sexual innuendoes.

[1] Costa, X. Festive Traditions In Modernity: The Public Sphere of The Festival of The 'Fallas' in Valencia (Spain).50(4), p 497

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illus. 1.11: Photograph of Falla in a public square

The quotes below allude to the power of the Falla within Valencia:

> '…the Fallas are not just a modern creation but they represent the persistence of ritual and myth in dialogue with present day culture. Tradition is thereby enriched and made more complex'[2]

> 'In the Fallas, the ephemeral art of the monument is central to collective memory: it puts together the ancient and the contemporary in a particular way, which emphasises the cyclical and perishable. The satirical criticism of the monument is able to generate an interplay between the old myths and the grotesque body on the one hand, and the current events of society, on the other. By doing so the ancient art of satire updates an ancient way to move the people which is the center of a popular public sphere.'[3]

This idea of creating a second kind of public sphere is extremely important to the festival since its organisation and execution is based on community support and involvement. Each *Falla* represents a particular neighbourhood. *Falla* associations are long-term voluntary associations that manage and oversee fundraising and building the sculpture. Each association can have up to 200 000 members. There is also a Commission of *Falla*, which is a committee of about 300 members who will orchestrate the events of the entire festival. The most important urban center for the festival however is called the *Casal*. The *Casal* is a kind of community center in which the fundraising activities and communal meals and events are held. On the days of the festival, each parade leaves from an individual *Casal* and at the *Cremá*, each neighbourhood surrounds its *Falla* in it's biggest public square. The square is also very important to the form of the Falla itself. Costa explains below the relationship between the city space and the temporary monument.

> 'This theatre of the monuments is not independent of the neighbourhood square in which it is erected. It is at the centre of a public square which will become that critical square of 'popular judgement' … the square makes the monument but the monument remakes it too with its novel presence. The space and visibility are particularly important, because they are the key to a good burning.' [4]

illus. 1.12
Burning Falla in a public square of Valencia

illus. 1.13: Burning Falla in Valencia

*'The static monuments still have an old power to move people: you feel
an emptiness and then you understand the monument was occupying
a place, it is a renewal: this night we also have died.'[5]*

Each monument is designed, built and financed through the efforts of the entire community year round. The Fallas and their infrastructure invisibly underlie the attitudes of its people year round. The community connects with it and it represents them in the public sphere. It's burning actualises an idea about the dynamic nature of life. Like the image of the phoenix, the festival moves toward a literally explosive kind of catharsis that will burn and give birth to new things.

Las Fallas is obviously carnivalesque in nature. It is an interesting comparison to Carnival in Port-of-Spain mainly because of its emphasis on ephemerality. As a springtime festival like Carnival, great emphasis is placed on birth, life and death. The short lived festival represents the entire life cycle of a Falla, just as the masquerade costume in Port-of-Spain is thrown away at the end of Carnival.

illus. 1.14
Photograph of two men during J'ouvert
celebrations

'Throughout the day the entire colony, which seemed in the gayest holiday attire, literally went mad with joy and restraint was thrown to the winds. In Port of Spain the spirit of the festival apparently intoxicated the many thousands who looked on, and hundreds there were who joined the revellers in their spirit of merriment and gay abandon.'[a]

Carnival (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad)

Emerging from these studies are some basic similarities that build an idea of the Extraordinary city. The most important of these is the dense social networks that develop around each festival. In the case of the Il Palio it is perhaps most acutely expressed in terms of the creation and perpetuation of the *contrada*. The *contrada* both give rise to as well as are perpetuated by the Palio each year. The fierce competition that feeds the festival gives rise to an avenue for channelling the primal urges that lead to the ecstasy of one man or one neighbourhood in triumph over the world. The same is true of the old form of the Gion Matsuri. Through rivalry for expressing the intangible virtue of a *machi*, people become unified in their collective imagination their community. This same idea is supported by the form of the *casal* in the Fallas Festival. Here the poignancy of the urban expression is heightened by the ephemerality of each monument. Watching each monument burn, in the darkness of night is both exaltation and loss. In all cases, the festivals strengthen neighbourhood relations where they all invested in a common expression that unites them year round.

In Port-of-Spain, a similar attitude can be seen in the atmosphere that surrounds Steel Pan orchestras. These orchestras divide the city into neighbourhoods, each orchestra representing the work of each place. It relates to the community identification experienced by the *contrade* where the name of the band itself takes on a quasi-totemic importance. This perhaps arose from the earliest beginnings of the festival when bands emerged from particular estates and eventually neighbourhoods. The sense of comradery created relationships

[a] Quotation from the Trinidad Guardian Newspaper 1933. Taken from The Making of Port-of-Spain by Micheal Anthony.

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illus. 1.15

Photograph of Fancy Sailors on Independence Square in Port-of-Spain

between people who spoke different languages but who were united in the same experience. Though that sense of comradery is diluted today, people still feel a strong association with the mas band that they play in. This extends itself to the types of masquerade which today typify an area. San Fernando for example, in the south of the island is known for its Wild Indian Mas, which mimics American Indian native ceremonial garb. Paramin on the other hand, a small hill town just outside of Port-of-Spain is uniquely known for their Blue Devils. Port-of-Spain is arguably known for Pretty Mas and perhaps Sailor Mas.

Another communal aspect of the extraordinary city is the evolution of dense layers of infrastructure particular to the festival. This is true of each of the case studies, where a communal corporation interfaces with a civic body in order for the festival to occur. In the case of the Palio, the byzantine negotiations undertaken by each *contrada* year-round invisibly make the races real. With Carnival in Trinidad it is the National Steelband Association and the National Carnival Bands Association. It represents a union of the Ordinary city with the extraordinary one where a network of festival planning and strategising occurs invisibly throughout the year.

This leads us to the third element of the *signature festival* that is apparent in all cases. This is the existence of particular buildings or typologies within the city year round, which are entirely dedicated to the festival. In Port-of-Spain these exist as Mas Camps and Pan Yards. These places, though in some ways dormant during the year, become beacons of social activity in the months approaching the Carnival season. Similarly, the *Casal* in Valencia act as community centres during the year. In Kyoto the *yamaboko* are kept in storage houses that become integrated into the city fabric. They are of a particular typology that set them apart from the rest of the fabric. In the case of the Palio, perhaps one of the strongest examples of the continuing presence of the race physically in the city is the representation of the crests and colours of each neighbourhood within the city fabric. This distinguishes the loyalties of inhabitants. This physical presence of the sleeping festival in the city is important in perpetuating its memory within the city. The coming of the festival is therefore heralded by movements and events that occur

illus. 1.16
Photograph of Fancy Sailors on Independence Square in
Port-of-Spain

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throughout the city. In some sense they become virtual stages of activity which begin the unconscious shift in the city from Ordinary to Extraordinary.

What then is the correlation between Carnival and Myth? Many myths are stories, inscribed and retold throughout generations. Carnival however is a festival however that is religious only in its timing. It is not like other feast days which represent patrons or saint. Carnival is a largely secular event which cyclically re-invents itself. Each year the ritual brings the consciousness of the city's inhabitants toward an understanding of their streets and public places as venues and stages for creative expression. The same places are reused each year for the same competitions and events. Panorama semi finals and finals for example have been held in Queens Park Savannah since the inception of the competition. The same judging points along the parade route have roughly been maintained since the parade route was formed in 1967. Many pan yards have remained in the same location within the city for many years preceding the country's independence. The festival's form is physically therefore entrenched into the city fabric with mas camps stretched between the garages of houses and pan yards standing in abandoned lots. The festival's infrastructure hides invisibly throughout the year and the judging points stand silent awaiting Carnival for their exaltation. A shift in the perception of the city occurs through these city stages that reframe the timeless Port-of-Spain to each of its inhabitants. Carnival is therefore very much a different kind of Caribbean myth which has been spun from the density of cultures which have walked its streets. Carnival in the Caribbean is a live, physical re-dancing of Trinidad's multiple cultural myths.

J'OUVERT

DEVILS

From somewhere beyond the head of the street the cries of the Blue Devils come. A band of them: 2 men chained, crawling on hands and feet; restrained barely by their scream-ing companions. Bodies entirely smeared with blue paint, red liquid bubbling from their mouths and dripping down their chins, they dance and menace all around them. The beasts of the band breathe huge clouds of fire into the semi darkness, defeating the morn-ing's light. My eyes follow cries and pointed fingers after a large breath of fire. There is a huge ring of smoke that has risen into the sky, circling and thinning onto itself. We are all spellbound and transfixed – I look at this grey circlet rising and thinning – resilient and stubbornly maintaining its form – much larger than I would imagine possible! But before it disappears the warmth of the fire touches me – a little too closely. A devil is in front of me, menacing me – bubbling that blood I remind myself is fake. He stares malevolently into my eyes and reaches out to grab me to him. Fear – pure childlike fear grips me and with a small scream I dart away.

Personal account, Canboulay Re-enactment
Carnival Friday 2009

Conte on Paper
24 x 36

J'OUVERT

MASK

'When the moment comes for me to take up that mask, and I take the mask and put it on, I become a different being entirely. I never feel as if I am human at all. All I see in front of me is devils! Real! Until a long while after, before I get myself to knowledge again.'

Charles Benet, Personal Account, 1965

Conte on paper
8.5 X 11

J'OUVERT

IBIS

*'I is a dragon. I have fire in my belly and claws on my hands; watch me!
Note me well, for I am ready to burn down your city. I am ready to tear
you apart, limb by limb...'*

Earl Lovelace, The Dragon Can`t Dance

Conte on Canvas
24 x 24

47

J'OUVERT

LAPEYROUSE

'Farewell to the flesh – it's a carne-vale again...'

Carnival, 3 Canal

Conte on Paper
24 X 36

J'OUVERT

SHANGO

'When the Yoruba dance the dance of Shango ... the is not just dancing the language of the Gods; he is, at the same time inventing the deity himself through the dance.'

Antonio Benitez-Rojo, The Repeating Island

Conte on paper
24 X 36

55

J`OUVERT

SAVANNAH SPIRITS

My walls have moved. The limits of my experience have shifted. The houses and businesses that I occupied in past stand silent witness to my passing. Now lining those silent walls of year round city is its own ephemeral mask. My vision undulates. At one moment I cannot see anything but people around me: in masks and ecstatic behaviours. But the next moment a feathered arm has lifted and I can see the Savannah. This movement and shifting and dancing and jostling hypnotizes me. My city I see through these moving frames. For release I look above me. I see blue blue sky and the wings of a Carnival queen.

personal account, 2008

Conte on Paper
24 x 36

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CHAPTER 2 : Parallel Histories

'…the Caribbean is not a common archipelago, but a meta-archipelago (an exalted quality that Hellas possessed, and the great Malay archipelago as well), and as a meta-archipelago it has the virtue of having neither a boundary nor a center. Thus the Caribbean flows outward past the limits of its own sea with a vengeance, and its ultima Thule may be found on the outskirts of Bombay, near the low and murmuring shores of Gambia, in a Cantonese tavern circa 1850, at a Balinese temple, in an old Bristol pub, in a commercial warehouse in Bordeaux at the time of Colbert, in a windmill beside the Zuider Zee, at a café in a barrio of Manhattan, in the existential suadade of an old Portuguese lyric.' [a]

The mythic history of the Caribbean is richly layered with a diversity of cultural motifs. These islands were home to different Aboriginal Indian tribes like the Arawaks and Caribs alongside visiting tribes from the mainland. When the Spanish met this archipelago it was already a diverse region. From the 15th century when Christopher Columbus sailed to the New World to modern times when Trinidad is a thriving industrial nation, the Caribbean has become a bricolage of cultural expressions. Carnival in this sense is the ultimate syncretic celebration of this region, which temporarily creates an experience of the city which makes visible its differing mythologies.

Parallel Histories presents the separate founding mythologies of Carnival and the people who inhabit Trinidad. This analysis will lend clarity to the significance and potency of each cultures belief system and the significance of their confluence in Trinidad's Carnival. The first history, *God of Ecstasy* traces the origins of ecstatic pagan celebrations. This analysis considers the attitudes and traditions which underscore the European Carnival that was brought to the Caribbean by French colonials. The second history is titled *Orisha*. Here, the world of Yoruba in West Africa is revealed in order to understand the mythological and ideological underpinnings of African religious masquerade within contemporary Caribbean cultural expressions. The final history; *Leela* considers the societal role of festivals within the culture of indentured Indian labourers in Trinidad. Through looking at some of the festivals which still occur in Trinidad today alongside Carnival, this history will uncover the integration of Indian Hindu and Muslim

[a] The Repeating Island by Antonio Benitez-Rojo, pg 4

january 2010	february 2010	march 2010	april 2010	may 2010	june 2010
New Year January 1st	**Trinidad Carnival** February 15th & 16th	**Spiritual Baptist** **Shouter Liberation Day** March 29th	**Easter** April 4th	**Indian Arrival Day** May 30th	**Corpus Christi** June 3rd
Chinese New Year Mid March - Mid February	**Chinese New Year** Mid March - Mid February	**Holi or Paghwa** March 12th	**Gelede Festival** March - May	**Chinese Dragon Boat Races** May 5th	**Labour Day** June 19th
Feast of Fools January 1st	**Lupercalia** February 15th	**Bacchanalia** Mid March			
		Epa Festival (Biannually)			
		Vernal Equinox March 20th			**Summer Solstice** June 21st

Statutory Holidays	**Other Trinidadian Festival**	**Pagan Festivals**	**Yoruba Festivals**	

Moveable Festivals:

Gregorian Calendar: Carnival & Easter

Islamic Lunar Calendar: Eid ul Fitr & Hosay

Hindu Lunar Calendar: Divali & Paghwa

Calender of Parallel Histories
based on 2010 calender

july 2010	august 2010	september 2010	october 2010	november 2010	december 2010

Emancipation Day
August 1st

Indpendence Day
August 31st

Eid ul Fitr
September 10th

Republic Day
September 24th

Egungun Festival
September - October

Egungun Festival
September - October

Autumnal Equinox
September 22nd

Divali
November 5th

Christmas
December 25th

Hosay
December 16th

Saturnalia
December 17th

Winter Solstice
March 20th

illus. 2.1
Diagram showing stautory holidays in Trinidad as well as other festivals alongside Pagan and Yoruban festivals. This diagram shows the significance of the springtime and new year celebration across cultures. It also demonstrates the many varied festivals that are held in Trinidad.

beliefs and practices into modern Caribbean expressions.

Although there are many other influences which have traversed the Caribbean waters, these three histories represent the main anchor points of Carnival in Port-of-Spain. These myths have founded the physical articulation, the cultural significance and the form of celebratory characters today which have made Trinidad's Carnival unique from others around the world. The basic thread that is shared between these disparate histories is ecstatic joy and the cultural imperative to engage in festivals to create that communal joy. It is this mutual acceptance of the need for communal celebration that has made the festival as prominent as it is today in Caribbean society.

'In what has been called 'one of the most haunting passages in Western literature,' the Greek historian Plutarch tells the story of how passengers on a Greek merchant ship, sometime during the reign of Tiberius (14-37BCE), heard a loud cry coming from the island of Paxos. The voice instructed the ship's pilot to call out, when he sailed past Palodes, 'The Great God Pan is dead.' As soon as he did so, the passengers heard, floating back to them from across the water, 'a great cry of lamentation, not of one person, but of many.'

'Pan, the horned god who overlapped Dionysus as a deity of dance and ecstatic states, had to die to make room for the stately and sober Jesus. Only centuries later did Plutarch's readers fully attend to the answering voices of lamentation and begin to grasp what was lost with the rise of monotheism. In a world without Dionysus / Pan / Bacchus / Sabazios, nature would be dead, joy would be postponed to an afterlife, and the forests would no longer ring with the sounds of pipes and flutes.' [c]

God of Ecstasy

Carnival, as a Christian construct, has been in existence since the late Middle Ages. Foreshadows of this ecstatic rite however can be seen as early as the 12th century through the Feast of Fools. Moreover, even these pre-modern festivities are predated by Roman Bacchanalia and Saturnalia and the lineage of these hearkens back to Greek Dionysian rites as early as 487 BC.[2] Clearly the history of communal ecstatic celebrations in Europe is ancient. The persistence of ecstatic rites even through Christianity and its formation as carnival in countries throughout Europe suggests that the carnivalesque is engrained into their cultural expression. The arrival of Carnival in the Caribbean came with through a long lineage of French masquerade. It is startling to see that in some ways the Pagan underpinnings of the French carnival have reconstituted themselves in the festival's Caribbean form.

This chapter looks at the foundations of ecstatic behaviours which may have given birth to Carnival as we know it today. By looking specifically at the gods and rituals which have been patrons of carnival (Dionysus, Bacchus & Pan), we see the changing attitudes to ecstatic rites in a world that has further and further repressed ecstatic impulses. Carnival today is part of the Catholic calendar as a Pre-Lenten *'farewell to flesh'*. However the festival in essence remains true to its

[c]   Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy by Barbara Ehrenreich, pg. 57

pagan impetus for communal joy. This French carnival, brought to the Caribbean by French colonials, became the basic form into which other cultures interwove their own versions of ecstatic worship.

Between 1783 and 1797, approximately 14 000 French Royalists and Jabobites[3] flooded Port-of-Spain in a bid to escape the repercussions of the French Revolution in other Caribbean territories like Martinique, Guadeloupe and Santo Domingo.[4] This migration occurred under the *Cédula of Population*, an incentive encouraged by the Spanish who invited fellow Catholic colonials who agreed to be loyal to Spain to move to Trinidad. This significant immigration forever changed the face of Port-of-Spain from a sleepy seaside town into a rapidly growing capital city. When the British conquered the island in 1797, they met an island whose common tongue was French. The French brought with them retinues of slaves and transformed some 85000 hectares of land into successful agricultural plantations. The planters established a thriving aristocratic lifestyle involving, one which involved different divertissements, particularly between Christmas and Ash Wednesday. The French customs of masquerade involved masked balls and promenading between houses by foot and in carriages. One account in a memorandum to the governor of Port-of-Spain in 1881 describes early colonial attitudes toward the celebration:

'In former days and down the period of emancipation of the slaves the Carnival was kept up with much spirit by the upper classes. There are many persons still living who remember the Masked Balls given at St. Ann's by the Governor, Sir Ralph Woodford [who served two terms for thirteen years between 1813 and 1828], and also that the leading Members of Society used on the days of Carnival to drive through the streets of Port-of-Spain masked, and in the evenings go from house to house which were all thrown open for the occasion.'[5]

Another account of the early French carnival stated that:

'I wish Bayley, you had been here in the time of the Carnival;

illus 2.2 (opposite)
Carnival on Frederick Street by Melton Prior (1888)

61
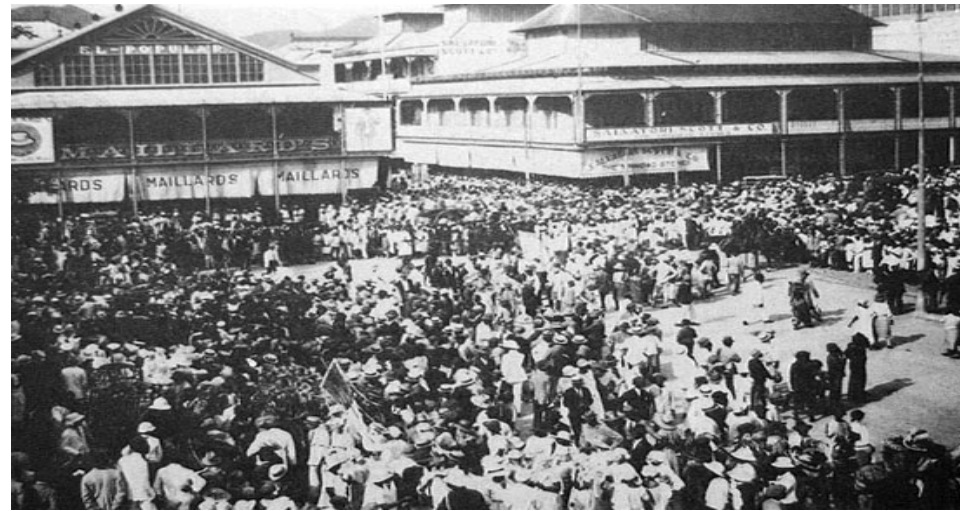
illus 2.3: Historical Photograph of Port-of-Spain: Carnival in Marine Square

(Carnival 1919)

illus 2.4: Historical Photograph of Port-of-Spain: Carnival on Frederick Street

(Carnival 1919)

you have no idea of the gaiety of the place in that season. Ovid's Metamorphoses were nothing compared to the changes that took place in the persons of the Catholics of Trinidad. High and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, all found masking suits for the carnival. A party of ladies, having converted themselves into a party of brigands, assailed me in my quarters and nearly frightened me out of my wits. I was going to cut and run when Ensign, who was with me, not knowing the joke, and thinking they were so many devils come to take him before his time, drew his sword...[6]

The traditional forms of the French carnival have evolved with time and it has merged with African, Indian, Amerindian, South American as well as North American influences. In essence however, the celebration remains intact. Today's *Parade of the Bands* is highly influenced by the French promenade whereas the morning's *J'ouvert* is more reminiscent of the African Canboulay (Cannes Brûlées). The pageant show, *Dimanche Gras* (1946) where the best characters and songs for the season are chosen are also reminiscent of the early French Carnival Queen show and is still held on the Sunday preceding the festival. Masked balls are not maintained in the same sense today. The Carnival season is instead marked by a series of *fêtes (parties)*, whose location and themes become yearly events themselves. Indeed the official structure of Carnival was framed by a combination of French and British influences, who hoped to gentrify the Carnival with its growing African attendance. Over the pages of history, one can see a tug-of-war between the impulses for ecstasy and the impulses for propriety in the evolution of Trinidad's Carnival.

This conflict between ecstatic behaviour and proper decorum is inherent to the festival's nature. In its deepest history carnival was instated as a kind of compromise between the sober Christians and the enthusiastic Pagans. Rome at the time of the Early Christian Church celebrated a number of long, riotous and orgiastic celebrations, including the *"Festival of Joy"* during the month of

illus 2.5: Bacchanalia by Austuste Leveque
(1864-1921)

.65.

illus 2.6: The Bacchanal by Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640)

March. The Bacchanalia and Saturnalia (closely linked to the Lupercalia), involved communal springtime dances and often masquerade. Over many years, unable to quell the spirited exaltations of their congregation, the Church with its growing social and political importance, fixed its own feasts and festivals which would mitigate the extent of the pagan revelries. In 325 AD, the Christian church held the Council of Nicaea, at which time they fixed the date of Easter in conjunction with the Paschal Full Moon and the vernal equinox. Easter today is therefore celebrated on the first Sunday following this moon cycle. The duration of the Pre-Lenten fast was also determined. It is after this time that a pre-Lenten festival was instated called *Carnelevare*[7]. The popularity of the festival increased with time, and was embraced throughout Catholic European countries.

European carnival however was never simply a feast before the Lenten austerity. The essence of the pagan springtime festivities remained part of its rebellious nature. Mikhail Bakhtin states that:

> *'… carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed.'*[8]

This liberation from the established order that Bakhtin describes is the heart of ecstatic communal rituals. Elsewhere Kinser considers that:

> *'Carnival is specifically Christian in its historical origins and it is especially Western in its psychology. It is obvious that carnivalesque exaltation of the body derives some of its force from its whimsical defiance of the Christian spiritual and Western intellectual faiths which rank mind over body, the immaterial over the material, and the inward psyche over outward physis.'*[9]

Before carnival became an official celebration under Christianity, dancing was quite prevalent in religious worship and communal activities in both Greek and Roman times. In ancient Greece, people danced in lines and in circles at all festivities to honour all of their deities. In Roman times too, though often their dances were limited to religious activities, bodily exaltation still had a place in society. In ancient Greece the City Dionysian festival was the birthplace of Tragedy plays. The word "tragedy" is derived from words meaning "goat song"[10]. This is undoubtedly a reference to the satyrs, known to accompany Dionysus. And so the combination of theatre and dance were inspired by Dionysian worship.

Dionysus, Bacchus and Pan can be seen throughout the centuries as re-imaginations of the same deity. The City Dionysian festival was held in the Arcadian Hills of Greece as early as 427 BC. The origin myth of Dionysus is that he was the son of Zeus and the human Semele. Zeus, disguised as a human, fell in love with Semele, and had a secret affair with her. When Hera, Zeus' wife discovered the affair, she dressed as an old woman and convinced Semele to make her lover show his true identity. One day Semele persuaded Zeus to offer her anything she asked of him. When he granted her this wish she asked that he show her his full magnificence. A reluctant Zeus agreed and Semele was burned by his divine splendour, but the child she bore, being part divine, survived. Zeus saved his son and sewed him up in his thigh until he was fully formed.[11] Dionysus therefore is part God and part human, a trait that underlies his worship. Palmer states that:

> *'He was born a second time from the body of Zeus. This is the reason why he is, in a great and complete sense, a god – the god of duality, as the myth of his birth expresses it so beautifully and so truly. As a true god he symbolizes an eternal unity the sublime with the simple, the human with the animal, the vegetative and the elemental.'[12]*

As a god, Dionysus represented wine, nature and ecstatic behaviour. He

[a] Dionysus

(2nd century marble statue)

[b] Bacchus

(Marble statue by Michelangelo 1496-97)

[c] Pan and Daphnis

(Roman copy of a 2nd century Greek original)

illus. 2.7 : The evolution of the God of Ecstasy

illus 2.8: Marble Dionysus Sarcophogus representing a Dionysian procession, possible indicating that
the deceased was an initiate of the Dionysian mysteries

was often described as an androgynous looking man with long dark hair who wandered the countryside with his flute. Dionysus was particularly attractive to female worshippers who danced in his honour. It seems that his purpose as a deity is dual with his worship. Dionysus required that people worship him through dance under pain of madness and death. Dionysus would possess his worshippers when they reached the climax of the dance. An account is given below of the nature of Dionysian worship:

> *'The essential characteristics of Dionysiac religion are an ecstatic spiritual release through music and dance, the possession by the gods of his followers, the rending apart of the sacrificial animal, and the eating of the raw flesh (omophagy, a kind of ritual communion, since the god was believed to be present in the victim). The religious congregation (the holy thiasus) was divided into groups, often with a male leader for each, who played the role of the god. The Bacchae, or maenads, are the female devotees, mortal women who become possessed. In mythology they are more than human, nymphs rather than mortals.*
> *Their mythological male counterparts are satyrs, who are, like them, spirits of nature; they however, are not completely human but part man and part animal, possessing various attributes of a horse or a goat – a horse's tail and ears, a goat's beard and horns – although in the later periods they are often depicted as considerably more humanized. Satyrs dance and sing and love music; thy make wine, drink it, and are perpetually in a state of sexual excitement. On of the favourite sports is to chase maenads through the woods.'* [13]

It is important to note that the worship of Dionysus also included the presence of a large bearded mask which represented the deity. At the sacred wine mixing, the large mask of the God's head would be hung on a wooden column with robes

extending below it. The first draught of wine would be presented to the mask. Ivy would be intertwined in and around the mask.[14] The worship of Dionysus is the only one to include a colossal mask which represented the deity.[15] The mask Palmer says:

> '… tells us that the theophany of Dionysus, which is different from that of the other gods because of its stunning assault on the senses and its urgency, is linked with the eternal enigmas of duality and paradox. This theophany thrusts Dionysus violently and unavoidably into the here and now – and sweeps him away at the same time into the inexpressible distance. It excites with a nearness which is at the same time remoteness. The final secrets of existence and non-existence transfix mankind with monstrous eyes.
>
> This spirit of duality which already distinguishes Dionysus and his realm, in his epiphany, from everything which is Olympian, returns over and over again in all forms of his activity, as we shall see. It is the source of the fascination and the confusion which everything that is Dionysiac evokes, for it is the spirit of a wild being. His coming brings madness.'[16]

Bacchus, the Roman god of fertility, wine and revelry, is the Roman manifestation of the Greek Dionysus. Carried to Rome from Greece, the Bacchanalia was an orgiastic rite held in the forests that was introduced in Rome around 200 BC. Bacchus was the patron of wine, agriculture and theatre. This union of theatre and revelry alongside the sacred necessity for the masquerade is undoubtedly the foundation of Carnival centuries later.

Pan, is the god of shepherds and agriculture. He is a later derivative of Bacchus and Dionysus. He represented fertility and was particularly associated with the springtime festivals. Whereas Dionysus took on the appearance of a man, Pan's form was that of a Satyr, with the horns, ears and legs of a goat. He was a

illus 2.9: The Fight Between Carnival and Lent by Pieter Bruegel (1559)
This painting shows the celebration of carnival in Southern Netherlands. Between the Inn on the left side and the Church on the right side, the painting shows a mingling of religious stoicism with the festival's revelry.

.72.

musician just as Dionysus was and a key part of the Bacchae. He was known to be charismatic, impulsive and amorous.[17]

In later incarnations, Pan formed the figure of Satan in Christian iconography. The different incarnations of each Greek and Roman god is an interesting reflection on the relative importance people attached to ecstatic rituals. In early Greek times it is clear that the need for ecstatic worship was prevalent in society. In Rome, these festivities were treated more as cult like activities, sometimes frowned upon and in some ways less transcendental than the Greek form. Pan however manifests a vision of physical exaltation that, although accepted by the people, was much less venerable than the former Dionysus. The manifestation of Pan as part animal and his further descent into Satan as the epitome of all things evil, marks the high clergy's disdain for physical pleasure. The very foundation of Carnival therefore is held taut between the impulse for bodily exaltation and the solemn roles of daily life.

There is one final precedent that makes up the basis of the European carnival. The Feast of Fools in the Early Christian Church, is the descendent of the Roman Saturnalia (winter solstice festival) and in its in form is a closer relative to Carnival than any other. It shows the tension between what the elite deigned proper and the form of the people's celebration. The Feast of Fools appeared between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries in the Early Christian Church throughout Europe, but was principally celebrated in France. Aspects of the Saturnalia that appeared in the Feast of Fools were the theatrical displays of public buffoonery, masquerading and role reversals between masters and servants. The Feast of Fools was initiated by the lower level clergy of deacons, sub-deacons and priests. During the period between Christmas and New Years, they would dress in women's clothes and perform noisy burlesques in the church, dancing and singing to lewd songs and making mock Latin incantations.[18] The higher clergy did not approve of these festivities in the least and for two centuries attempted to ban the celebration. In 1207, the Pope attempted to ban the Feast in Poland and again in 1400 tried to ban it in Paris. In 1439 it was banned in Basle. But since it could not be curbed and its celebration was no longer confined to the clergy, it was finally

allowed. The compromise made was that the festivity could continue, but was forever exiled from the church compound. In the thirteenth century therefore, the Feast of Fools became a largely secular festivity. This *'"secularization" of communal pleasure…'*[19], as Ehrenreich calls it, took away the spiritual aspect of ecstatic transcendence. What it did do however, was give the festival over to the people. Bakhtin reflects that:

> *'Carnival is no spectacle seen by the people; they live it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During Carnival time, life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part.'*[20]

In France, this giving over of the festival to the people made its celebration part of the community. Confraternities of men would gather year round in order to plan the festival's annual celebration. This passionate dedication to the festival can be seen in countries all over Europe. Basle's Carnival is a particularly successful one, which has carried on in the tradition of the Feast of Fools despite the secularisation of this festival. The pursuit of ecstasy it would seem, is an impulse quite native to the human condition. When the French brought their Carnival to the Caribbean, they brought something that was innately a vehicle for human passion and exaltation. When the African influences blended into its celebration, at times it's form goes back into ancient times, with women in complete rapture like the maenads and with masked men not unlike the satyrs. The spirit of Carnival lies in ancient ecstatic rituals which span all time and belong to all people.

The quotation below is a final reflection on the meaning of Dionysus, the God of Ecstasy. It describes the essence of Carnival and its necessity to humanity.

> *'What is the reason for this tremendous excitement, this deep*

trance? What did this bewildering clamour proclaim? The world man knows, the world in which he has settled himself so securely and snugly – that world is no more. The turbulence which accompanied the arrival of Dionysus has swept it away. Everything has been transformed. But it has not been transformed into a charming fairy story or into an ingenious child's paradise. The primeval world has stepped into the foreground, the depths of reality have been opened, the elemental forms of everything that is creative, everything that is destructive, have arisen, bringing with them infinite rapture and infinite terror. The innocent picture of a well ordered routine world has been shattered by their coming, and they bring with them no illusions or fantasies but truth – a truth that brings on madness.

Greeted with wild shouts of joy, the form in which the truth appears us the frenzied, all-engulfing torrent of life which wells up from the depths that gave it birth. In the myth and in the experience of those who have been affected by this event, the appearance of Dionysus brings with it nourishing intoxicating waters tat bubble up from the earth. Rocks split open, and streams of water gush forth. Everything that has been locked up is released. The alien and the hostile unite in miraculous harmony. Age-old laws have suddenly lost their power and even the dimensions of time and space are no longer valid.'[21]

illus 2.10
Drawing of the Silk Cotton tree from which Gang Gang Sarah jumped. Below are marked the graves
of her and her husband.

76

Gang Gang Sarah was an African witch. Blown from her native Africa one stormy night, across oceans in the darkness she awoke to find herself in the New World. Realising that she was in the small island Tobago, Gang Gang Sarah went in search of her ancestors who had been transported to that salty island many years previous. She arrived in Golden Lane, a small village in rural Tobago and fell in love with a young man named Tom who she remembered as a child back in Africa. They married and lived together for many years and Gang Gang Sarah, the African witch, came to be revered by her children and neighbours for her wisdom and kindness. Tom lived a long, full life and at his death left a bereft Sarah. Having nothing more to live for in Tobago, Gang Gang Sarah decided to fly back to her ancestral home in Africa. With her ancient knowledge of flight, she climbed to the top of the tallest silk cotton tree and leapt. She fell from the great tree's height, too heavy with the island's salt to fly. Gang Gang Sarah died at the roots of the tree and was buried there beside her husband Tom. To this day, two hundred years later, their names are inscribed there on headstones, side by side in the New World forever. [1]

Legends, like that of Gang Gang Sarah, tell a poignant story of the native African in the New World. Her unexpected exile from her ancestral home with the impossibility of going back lingers as a lament. Between eleven to twenty million Africans from different tribes were forced to form a life in the Caribbean in slavery until 1834 and as free Africans forever thereafter. Generations born in the two hundred years of slavery were bound to these salty islands, but echoes of their ancestral past survived the Middle Passage. Folkloric stories, like that of Gang Gang Sarah hearken back to an African oral tradition where mythology, religion and worship shaped their animistic world. It is not surprising therefore to find traditional African practices within traditional Caribbean forms. Capoeira the Brazilian martial art, Rumba the Cuban folk dance and Kalinda the Trinidadian stick-fight, all sprung from the integration of African movements with Caribbean ones. This integration extended into religious forms throughout the New World like the Orisha Religion (Shango) in Trinidad, Voodoo in Haiti, Candomblé in Brazil and Kumina in Jamaica.

Carnival is another such festival which harkens back to an ancient West African past. This historical analysis attempts to reveal the features of African spiritualism that made Carnival an attractive outlet of expression for the African

Orisha

[1] Besson, G. (2001). Folklore and Legends Of Trinidad & Tobago, p 67

Within the left-hand plan, the following labels appear:

PATHS

VODÜNKWE or (CHAPELLE)

CHAPEL

SAKPATA KWE SHRINE

KITCHEN

THE TENT

OGÜ KWE FENCE

HOUSE

HOUSE

ELEGBA SHRINE

BELMONT VALLEY ROAD
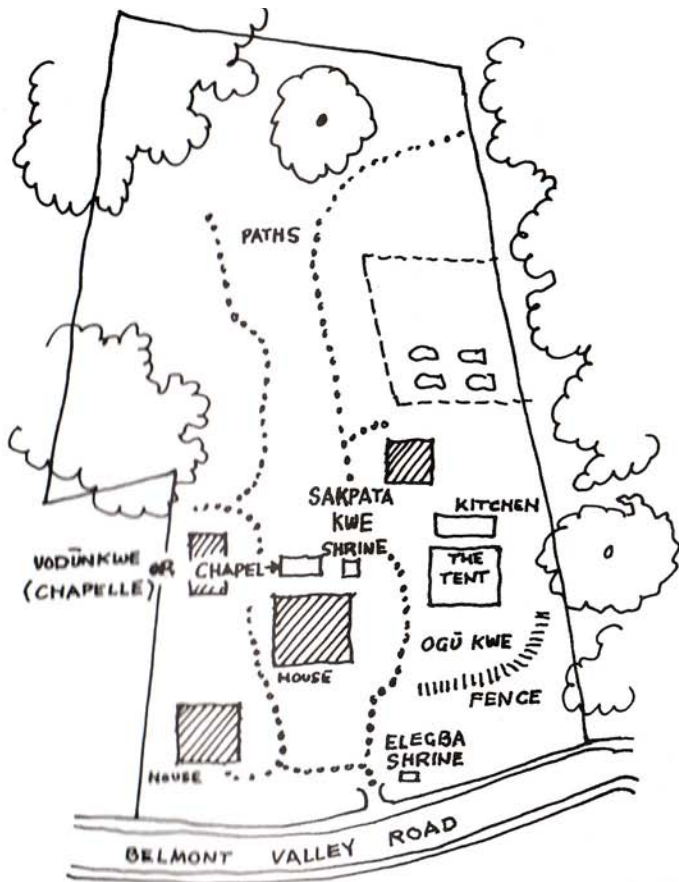
AFRICAN SETTLEMENT
RADA COMMUNITY. LAYOUT of COMPOUND 1890
BELMONT
PORT of SPAIN
by ANDREW T. CARR
FROM CARIBBEAN QUARTERLY VOL 3, No. I.
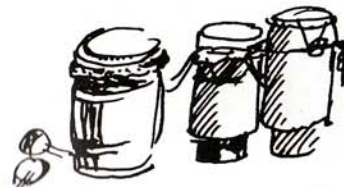
illus 2.11
[a] Plan of an African Settlement in Trinidad (left)
[b] Drawing of African Settlement in Trinidad (top right)
[c] Sketch of African skin drums (bottom)

slaves in the New World. At the same time, we will look at how these spiritual beliefs that embraced Carnival were translated into the celebration itself. Particular attention is paid therefore to African masquerade, danced forms and spiritual beliefs that may have informed the shape of Trinidad's Carnival.

Since the 1600's, the *Atlantic Ocean Slave Trade*, under the Portuguese, Dutch and Spanish, carried millions of West Africans from slave depots on the Slave Coast, Gold Coast and Ivory Coast to all territories of the New World. In the New World slaves were set to work on sugar, cocoa and coffee plantations, first under Spanish rule (until 1797) and then under British rule during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, until the slave trade was abolished in 1807 and then full emancipation in 1834. Most scholars agree today that the majority of slaves at this time were taken from west-central Africa, roughly from Senegal to Cameroon, including most of Nigeria.[2] From looking at the cultural influences of these regions, it is easy to see their translation in New World practices. Particular carnival character forms as well as musical forms like the steelband now appear to be African derived. Frances Henry in *Reclaiming African Religions in Trinidad* considers that:

> *'Many West African peoples had masking traditions, including important ones such as Egungun* (see page 3) *in which masked people played the role of the ancestors. It is quite likely that many of the slaves and their immediate descendants brought to the Caribbean remembered masked festivals…that the passion with which Africans accepted Carnival demonstrates that they saw it as a legitimate way of expressing their earlier Yoruba traditions of masking. Springer[3] however goes one step further and suggests that Egungun or the Yoruba festival of the dead was practised in her childhood and that it is this ancestor tradition, so vital to Yoruba religion that survived in the memories of Orisha worshippers. She sees a clear connection therefore, with the masked tradition coming out of Egungun, surviving through the Orisha religion and moving into Carnival practices. A*
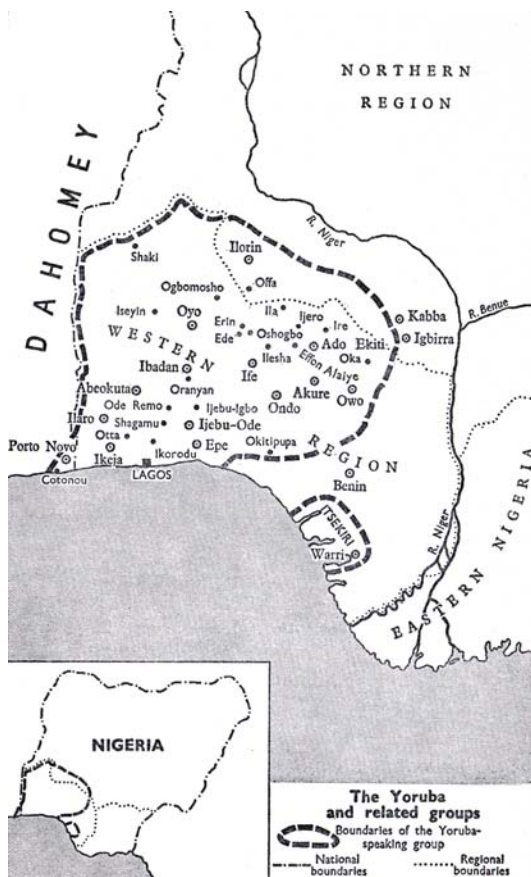
illus 2.12
Map of Yoruba land in West Africa

famous Carnival character, the Moko Jumbie, or stilt walker, is also a revered ancestral spirit, as is the Pierrot whose face is also covered. The Pierrot is also directly linked to the "commedia des l'arte" style of theatre in eighteenth century Italy and France. Springer sees Oshun and Shango (see page 5) *in the Carnival characters of Tan Tan and Saga Boy in the eternal dance of courtship. The hat of the Midnight Robber comes from the Orisha Oshun. She sees a significance in the colour of the national flag of Trinidad and Tobago, designed by two mas men and bearing the colours of Eshu and Shango."*[4]

Since a number of cross references can be drawn between African-derived religious and folk traditions in Trinidad and Yoruba practices in Africa, this analysis will consider religious customs of west-central Africans but most specifically, will consider the rituals and beliefs of the Yoruba people. The dominion of the Yoruba-speaking people originally lay on the eastern half of the Slave Coast between Bagagary to the west and the Benin River on the east. One of the largest language groups in Africa, the Yoruba are divided into about twenty subgroups which share a similar history and religion. Since the eleventh century, the Yoruba have created city-states governed by divine kings, whose power was mediated by a council of selected leaders. Spiritually, it is accepted that the monarch is divine and alongside various priests, he acts as a mediator with the gods. Their spiritual capital Ife, still stands today[5].

The belief structures and traditions of the African cultures that were relocated in the New World share some basic similarities with African societies. Firstly, the Ashanti, Fon and the Yoruba people all believe in a high deity who governs over intermediary deities as well as lower, earthbound deities. All of these groups also practice blood sacrifices, spirit possession (involving a masked persona), ancestor worship and herbal healing practices.[6] All of these traits have also been translated into the New World African-derived religions. The Yoruba belief structure is founded on the worship of a large pantheon of gods, goddesses and spirits of ancestors called Orisha. Their manifestations are largely

anthropomorphic, ruling over natural phenomena. E. Bolaji Idowu, in *Oludumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, outlines Yoruban life as such:

> '…the real keynote of the life of the Yoruba is neither their noble ancestry nor in the past deeds of their heroes. The keynote of their life is their religion… Religion forms the foundation and the all-governing principle of life for them. As far as they are concerned, the full responsibility of all the affairs of life belongs to the Deity; their own part in the matter is to do as they are ordered through the priests and diviners whom they believe to be the interpreters of the will of the Deity.'[7]

Masked rituals are an integral part of African worship. The history of masked dances in African culture predates written historical accounts. The earliest accounts showing masks and masquerades can be seen through rock paintings in Tassili-N-Ajjer and the Hogar. Secrets of masked dances however have been carried in mythology. Many tribes like the Igbo, Kuba, Baule, Senufo and Dogon say that women were the first masters of masked dances, though today these dances are almost completely dominated by males.[8] These masked traditions are dynamic things which have adapted over time to new practices. Herbert M. Cole in *I Am Not Myself* states that:

> *'Masquerades are probably Africa's most resilient art form, continually evolving to meet new needs. In some areas, too, urban masquerades have sprung up, based in part on earlier forms yet reflecting modern social realities and employing plastic, aluminum, and other new products. Masking is sufficiently deeply embedded in African cultures for us to predict with some certainty that it will continue with vitality – and more changes – in the years to come.'*

illus 2.14: Dance of D'mba, Baga Sitemu, Guinea
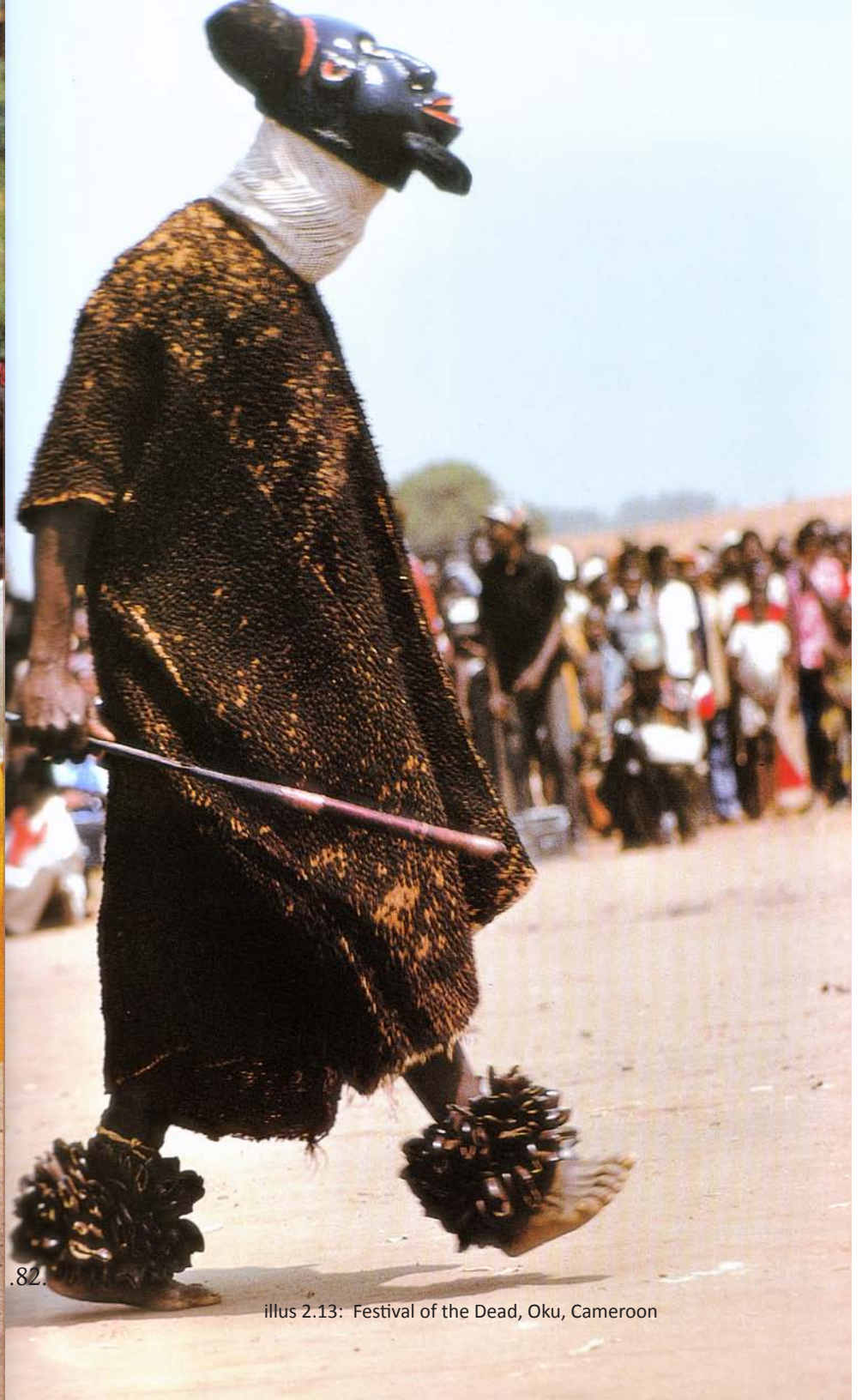
illus 2.13: Festival of the Dead, Oku, Cameroon

[a]Egungun mask (Yoruba)

[b] Gelede headpiece (Yoruba)

[c] Efe mask (Yoruba)

illus 2.14

The purpose of masking rituals was:

> '…to harness the power which rages in the outside world by transporting it from the surrounding bush into the centre of the town, where it can purify the community and revitalise the king. Thus contained, controlled. And incorporated into the community, the powers of the outside world – personified by the orisa – replenish the body politic with fertile women, abundant crops, and a strong, healthy king'[9]

What is remarkable in these forms of masquerade is the overwhelming transformation that occurs through masked ritual. African masquerade is typified by possession. Communal religious traditions often involve masked ritual and the wearer of the mask comes to embody the spirit of the divinities present at the ceremony. Cole describes this behaviour below:

> 'Masking arts may also drastically alter human forms. Under a disguise the bodily armature can be bulked out to nonhuman shapes and sizes… its face amplified with exaggerated quasi-human, zoomorphic, or bizarre features. Appearance and behaviours are also extraordinary, otherworldly. The being glides, walks on or spits fire, speaks in a foreign or nonsensical tongue. The masker neither talks nor acts like a true human and, as he careens wildly through the village, seems to be outside human laws.'

Many of the religious traditions to different deities involve specific colours, rituals and masked dances. Different types of religious masks can therefore be found throughout Africa. The wearers of the mask become mediators between the human world and the divine world. Their role is one of communication. Their function is not as in Western theatre as a means of disguise or dissimulation, rather the word mask in different African languages, means something closer to

'spirit'. It is important also to note that transience is very significant to African masquerade. The spirit appears for a short period of time and then returns to his world. Cole states that:

> '*BaKwele say buoobkuk ("face of the forest spirit"); Igbo say isi mmuo ("head spirit"); Lega say likiwakongo ("death gathers in"); Jukun say bakindo to indicate a broad supernatural category including high god, ancestors, forest or bush creatures, and other spirits both visible and tangible as well as invisible. For most Africans, the word or name associated with a "mask" both evokes and incarnates the living personage'.*[10]

Ritual performance is an integral part of the Yoruban religion. There are three main masking traditions: Egungun, Efe / Gelede, and Epa / Elefon[11].

Egungun is a mask performed to honour the ancestors. Its complex form and costumes are celebrated in all Yoruba subgroups. Masqueraders are completely covered in costumes which are both satirical and symbolic. Beginning with a song and invocation, followed by acrobatic displays and dances, the masqueraders act and dance mythic scenes involving gods and ancestors. Costumes are composed of wooden masks, panels of patterned fabric and headdresses.

Gelede is a masked form to appease "the mothers" who are considered the home of the spiritual life-force, both of life and death. This ritual is held from March to May in anticipation of the rains. Drumming is very important in these rites. The music mimics Yoruban speech patterns and the dancers, who dance in pairs, dance exactly in rhythm with the drumming. Female costumes emphasize the breasts and buttocks while the male costumes are long and bulky. "The mothers" represent a duality of life as they are both grotesque and beautiful, bringing death and illness as well as birth.

Epa, finally, is a masked ritual for fertility and well-being of the community. It is held every two years in March for three to seven days depending on the tribe. Epa involve processions of large Janus-helmet masks on supporting superstructures.
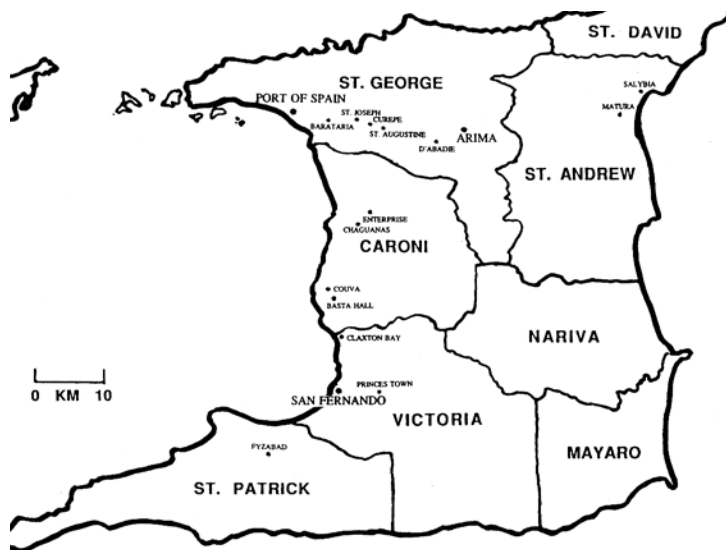
[a]

Religious Affiliations and Membership Totals

Religion	Number	Percentage
Roman Catholic	343,963	33.85
Hindu	262,740	25.85
Anglican	141,289	13.90
Muslim	63,227	6.22
Presbyterian	40,226	3.96
Pentecostal	34,257	3.37
Baptist	24,390	2.40
Adventist	22,069	2.17
Methodist	11,164	1.10
Jehovah Witness	7,732	0.76
Other	55,680	5.48
None	9,502	0.93

Source: *Annual Statistical Digest* (1988, 15); my calculations.

[b]

Ethnic Populations of Trinidad

Ethnic Group	Number	% of Total
Indian	428,539	42.17
African	393,896	38.76
Mixed	170,859	16.81
White	9,780	0.96
Chinese	5,528	0.54
Syrian/Lebanese	931	0.09
Not Stated	3,982	0.39
Other	2,724	0.27

Source: *Annual Statistical Digest* (1988, 14); my calculations.

African and Indian Populations of Western Trinidad

County	African No.	African %	Indian No.	Indian %
St. George	226,308	50.24	104,777	23.26
Victoria	65,362	29.66	126,450	57.37
Caroni	27,998	19.94	99,539	70.90
St. Patrick	46,712	37.70	61,855	49.92

Source: *Annual Statistical Digest* (1988, 14); my calculations.

[c]

illus. 2.16:
[a] Map of Trinidad showing its different counties
[b] Table of religious affiliation in Trinidad
[c] Percentages of ethic population in Trinidad (1988)

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These helmet structures stand up to one and a half metres in height and weigh up to fifty pounds. The masquerader performs athletic feats of agility, his strength and balance being a good omen for the coming years. The Janus helmet is constituted by two grotesque faces hunters / warrior or mother / child. Similar masks are worn to honour Ogun, the god of iron and war. The festival suggests that higher powers can be found by carrying the heavy but deeply symbolic masks through the town.

It is difficult to look into Yoruban past and assume what traditions survived the Middle Passage. Through looking at their attitudes toward religious masking traditions alongside particular syncretic forms in the Caribbean, we can gain an understanding of the African perspectives that allowed Carnival to be what it is in society today. Considering the significance of dancing through the village in the Epa ritual, the symbolic and satirical masqueraders of Egungun and the importance of drumming in the Gelede ritual, it is not difficult to surmise that echoes of this ancestral past have reshaped themselves in the Caribbean. These echoes take shapes like , the large busted Dame Lorraine, the drumming of the stick-fight and through the prevalence of Carnival in even the smallest villages of Trinidad. Most clearly however the manifestation of these ancestral images can be seen through the syncretic African religion, Orisha (also called Shango), in Trinidad and Tobago.

The religion of Orisha in Trinidad (often called Shango), is built upon a Yoruban model of worship, but has also absorbed Catholic, Hindu and even Kabbalistic practices into its worship.[12] As far as Yoruba goes it seems that the deities of south-western Nigeria almost identically match those of Trinidad's Orisha religion.[13] Coupled with the African-derived practices of the Orisha are those of the Spiritual Baptists in Trinidad, especially the non-orthodox groups who are closely integrated with the Orisha faith. These often share the same premises for worship.[14] There are approximately 156 Orisha shrines[15] in Trinidad today. Non-orthodox Spiritual Baptists and Orisha worshippers together account for between three to five percent of religious worshippers in the country. The Orisha religion (Shango) is politically recognised as an official religion though it is sometimes

1780

— French Catholic planters and their slaves arrive (1784).

— The plantation slavery period begins (c. 1785).

1800

1820 ——— The Catholic Church begins a period of expansion (1820).

— Yoruba immigration begins (c. 1838).
— African slaves are fully emancipated (1838).

1840

— Indian immigration begins (1845).

1860

1880

——— Anti-Drumming Ordinance is passed (1883).

1900

— Spiritual Baptist church becomes prominent (c. 1915).

— Shouters Prohibition Ordinance is passed (1917).

1920

1940

— Hindu elements are incorporated into the Orisha religion (c. 1950).

— Shouters Prohibition Ordinance is lifted (1951).

1960

— The Black Power movement (c. 1970).

— *Orisha* worshipers' association with the Kabbalah becomes public and widespread (c. 1970).

1980

— A small number of Orisha shrines begin to show signs of Africanization (c. 1985).

990

— Opa Orisha (Shango) represents the Orisha religion at official functions (1992).

illus 2.17: Timeline of events which have shaped the Orisha faith until 1992

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treated as taboo within common society. Social anthropologist, James T. Houk analysed the syncretic nature of the growing religion and outlines its overall form below:

> 'Because of the richness of sources that have contributed to the Orisha religion, worshippers at an Orisha shrine are overwhelmed or, more accurately, bombarded with a variety of symbols, prayers, songs, and rites. These sights and sounds reflect a corresponding wealth of numinous and metaphysical aspects of worship involving a plethora of spirits, gods, powers, and entities. The pantheon, taken at its broadest sense, comprise the following groups: the Spiritual Baptist powers (primarily the Holy Spirit, but also certain saints and Old Testament characters), the Kabbalah entities (which include the four archangels, Satan, famous deceased local personalities, ancient and powerful spirits and familiar spirits), Hindu deities, Catholic saints, and Orisha.'[16]

A central component of Orisha rites involves ritual possession of a person in the crowd who will come to embody the deity. Some of the key gods within the Yoruba and Orisha pantheons are Shango (God of Thunder), Eshu (the trickster) and Oshun (God of iron and war). When possessed by these Gods, the worshipper *'screams loudly and falls about as if being pushed and pulled by some invisible force. After this initial "settling period", however, the "horse" dances to the beat of the drums with a beauty that has to be seen to be appreciated'*[17]. This is not dissimilar from Yoruba practices where the importance of spirit possession is integral to worship. The significance of drumming and dancing has also become virtually synonymous with African worship. Don Ohadike in *Sacred Drums of Liberation: Religions and Music of Resistance in Africa and the Diaspora*, states that:

> 'It is important to explain that sacred drums are at the heart of most

[a] Orisha ceremony in Debe, Trinidad

illus 2.18

[b] An elder of the Orisha faith

African music, dance and religious worship. Charged with supernatural forces, drums speak the language of the ancestors. To become sacred, an ordinary drum must first be consecrated in order to provide it with godlike attributes... When properly performed, sacred drums may express special feelings like joy, affection or grief. It is not difficult to see that the African drum is not just a musical instrument; it is a communication tool, used to transmit oral traditions.'[18]

He continues to say that:

'Music is indispensable to African religious worship; without it, it is difficult to achieve a deep religious experience. In Voodoo, Candomble, Shango and Kumina worships, for example, it is difficult for devotees to experience spirit possession without the assistance of music. When performed in a protective roda (a ritual circle of musicians and spectators), the music becomes doubly powerful.' [19]

These ideas are deeply significant when considering the evolution of Carnival. Through using music and dance as a form of resistance, the African slaves were able to create a space for themselves to re-experience their ancestral traditions. Ohadike describes Samba in Brazil as:

'...an attempt to break down the barriers that separate the sacred from the secular. Derived from Congo-Angolan dance forms, Samba is characterised by the circles that the dancers form as they perform. The circle of dancers might mover counter-clockwise, as in Samba de Condomble or in a stationary circle, as in the Samba de roda. The dancers stand and clap and recite, one after the other. Then, a dancer receives a divine spirit. She moves to the center of the circle and is no longer a dancer but a goddess. Each goddess presents a particular choreography. Alternatively, the roda is fixed and the caboclo spirit

illus. 2.19
Photograph of an Acoustic music truck on
J'ouvert morning in Port-of-Spain

comes down the Sambas. The circle or roda represents the boundaries of the African religious community…The language that Samba speaks is one of resistance. It is a text that narrates what cannot be put into words; it is a language that is spoken with the body.'[20]

In Trinidad therefore in the early 1800's, while French and British colonials settled their own rivalries for power over the colony, the African slaves were given some leeway to develop their own traditions. In these stolen moments, they celebrated their ancient traditions which seemed crude, demonic acts to the Europeans. It was however the beginning of a movement if resistance against colonial rule. Throughout British colonial rule, countless ordinances were outlined which limited the freedom of the African celebration. The wearing of masks was prohibited in the Carnival of 1834, in fear of rebellions after the Emancipation of slavery. The 1840's brought the birth of the two-day Carnival with Canboulay (Cannes-Brulées) remaining the Africanised Carnival. The tensions between the British and the wild African celebrations surmounted in the Canboulay Riots of 1881. After a bloody confrontation between masqueraders and British police officers, the masqueraders were given reign to practice their festivities. These tensions did not alleviate in coming years however, erupting again in the Hosein Riots, this time against an East Indian festival[21].

The Ordinance of 1880 which forbade drumming in the streets during Carnival left celebrants without a percussive instrument. In the face of bans on masquerade and skin drums, Africans found new instruments to accompany dances. One such instrument was the tambour-bamboo[22]. This instrument was primarily performed by bands of men who would play rhythms on stalks of bamboo which when cut to differing lengths created an indescribable resonance. In the 1920's however tambour-bamboo bands were prohibited by the British from taking part in Carnival competitions. Regardless however, the popularity of bamboo bands extended to other Caribbean islands like Haiti. There is speculation that these bamboo bands were also popular in West Africa as well. Born in the early 1900's, tambour-bamboo bands were seen accompanying stick-fights as well

illus. 2.20: Drawing of a Woodbrook Pan Yard (1888)

as in Canboulay celebrations into the 1930's. By the 1940's however the steelband had emerged as the nations Carnival music. At first steel drums were assortments of discarded metal objects like salt boxes, dust bins and paint cans metal drums. Over the next few years however, steel pans made from halves of discarded oil drums, grew in type and complexity. They were strapped to men's shoulders and placed onto trucks so that bands could follow masqueraders through the streets. By 1945, entire orchestras were dedicated to steel band playing and pan yards became an integrated part of Carnival culture. The evolution of the percussive art form in Trinidad's Carnival reflects the endurance of ancient African art forms, redefining themselves in the New World. Frances Henry reflects that the ban on drumming in 1880:

> '… played a role in the search for a new percussive expression. It led to the development of the "bamboo tamboo", or the beating of sticks of bamboo together, that gradually evolved into the steelband. The latter was also, of course, facilitated but the abundance of the steel drums left by the Americans during their presence in Trinidad curing World War II… many of these early drummers were members of the Orisha faith. Thus, many of the early participants in steelbands during and after the war were devotees, who brought the skills and rhythms learned on the Orisha drum to the steelband… Even today, the part of the steelband called "the engine room" provides the rhythmic drive to the music. Using metal percussive instruments in the engine rooms confirms the Orisha god Ogun, who is the god of iron. The relationship, therefore, between metal and Ogun, although largely symbolic, provides another Orisha influence'.[23]

Henry extends her analysis of African-derived Carnival forms to include certain masquerade characters as well:

> 'In a direct linkage to the evolving Carnival in Trinidad… there was a

close relationship between the steelband with their Orisha drummers and the development of Fancy Sailor mas. The early sailor bands were known to include bad behaviour and violence, but they also produced some distinctive Yoruba dance movements, performed to drumming, that recall the presence of Ogun. They not only performed the movements of Ogun but also carried iron implements, suggesting his spiritual presence with them. Even after World War II sailor bands "were known for their distinctive dance, which contains elements of the dance steps familiar to local manifestations of Ogun in Orisha rituals".'[24]

The Moko Jumbie, as mentioned before, is thought to be derived from West African iconography. Moko possibly refers to a God, while Jumbie, the West Indian word meaning spirit or ghost, may have been derived from the Congolese word *zumbi*, meaning spirit. The stilt walker is though to be the mythical protector of the village, being able to see trouble from far away. Traditional *'Ole Mas'* characters like the Damme Lorraine remind us of the Gelede rituals, with their emphasised breasts and buttocks while dancers of the Devil Bands go into apparent trance like states not unlike ritual possessions. Most Carnival characters are syncretic in nature. Their costumes, chants, dances and masks of many remain reminiscent of African masquerade traditions having now become secular memories of ancestral figures.

'Līlā (Leela) is a Sanskrit noun meaning "sport" or "play". It has been the central term in the Hindu elaboration of the idea that God in his creating and governing of the world is moved not by need or necessity but by a free and joyous creativity that is integral to his own nature. He acts in a state of rapt absorption comparable to that of an artist possessed by his creative vision or to that of a child caught up in the delight of a game played for its own sake…'
[1]

Leela

After the British Slave Emancipation Act was passed in 1833, many African ex-slaves moved off the sugar cane plantations, leaving a deficit of labour in a still thriving sugar industry. To replace this labour force the British colonials brought indentured servants to the Caribbean who were paid wages and contractually obligated to stay a minimum of 5 years in the Caribbean. A range of different races were brought to the Caribbean including Chinese, Portuguese, Madeirans and free Africans from the United States[2]. The largest racial group of indentured labourers to stay in the English speaking Caribbean islands were Indians from Utar Pradesh, Bihar and Tamil Nadu (called *"coolies"*, a term is now considered derogatory). They spoke Bhojpuri-Hindi, a dialect common to Uttar Pradesh and lived on the plantations in conditions that were little improved since the end of slavery. The Indians arrived on a ship called the *Fateh Rozack[3]* which departed from Calcutta in 1845, travelling across the *kelapani[4]* (black waters) to Trinidad. Between 1845 and 1917, a total of 25 to 30 000 East Indians of both Muslim and Hindu faiths travelled to the Caribbean[5]. Thousands of Indians also went to Jamaica, Suriname and Guyana. Today, descendents of indentured Indian labourers constitute 40% of Trinidad's population, while the rest of the population is 37.5% African, 20.5% mixed race and 2% unspecified[6]. When Indians came to the Caribbean they brought their language, their religious customs and even plants and herbs. The fusion of different cultures in Trinidad can be seen in culinary flavours, the tone of Trinidadian dialect, artistic expression and national festivals. Some of the most

* *Kelapani* refers to the Bhojpuri word meaning "black waters" which describes the oceanic voyage from Calcutta to the Caribbean. It is typically insinuated that this was a one way voyage.

[1] Norvin Hein,The Gods at Play, Līlā in South Asia, pg 13

illus. 2.22: [a] Hosay in St. James, showing the moon of Hasan

[b] Tadjah detail (Cocrite, 1986)

[c] Tadjah detail (Mathura, 1986)

popular Indian festivals in Trinidad are *Divali* (Festival of Lights), *Phagwa* (derived from India's Holi) and *Hosay* (derived from a Shiite Islamic festival).

Before considering the physical manifestations of Indian iconography in the Caribbean, we must first consider the basic underlying principle of Hindu religious thought: that of Līlā (Leela). This guiding concept of sacred play underscores the day to day life and festivities of Hindu practitioners. Leela also refers to divine theatre, where mythological stories are ritualistically acted out.

> *"The entire cosmos is a leela, a dance of energy, a drama staged by Brahman, the Absolute. Leelas are also specific celebrations, the most important in Trinidad being Ramlila , the story of Ram (Rama), the god-warrior-king as told in Valmiki's Sanskrit Ramayana…"* [7]

illus 2.22 : Group of Phagwa celebrants in Trinidad

These plays are presented through dances, drama and songs of narrative poetry[8]. As is the case of Ramleela in Trinidad, this re-enactment of sacred text becomes a public spectacle which represents communities. Like Carnival, the leela is a way of reinstating sacred narratives in a profane world. The ludic nature of Carnival may indeed be the most formative condition of Hindu thinking that has been translated into Carnival and Trinidadian culture at large. Although a sense of playful buffoonery is reminiscent of the *Feast of Fools*, Leela suggests a depth of purpose through ludic masquerade characters that might lead to a kind of transcendence. The divine theatre and the festival are two of the strongest ways in which this sense of Leela is communicated in the broader community. There is little reasearch that considers the affect the proliferation of Indian festivals throughout Trinidad on the carnivalesque impulse to reclaim public space through festival. This thesis theorises however that between the African and Indian cultures of Trinidad, is a mutually apparent association with festivals as a means of asserting identity.

There are two Indian festivals that are practiced in Trinidad which are strongly reminiscent of Carnival. The first is Phagwa (a Hindu celebration) and

Girl at Phagwa in Central Trinidad

.100.

.101.

illus 2.24 :
Girl at Phagwa in Brooklyn, NY
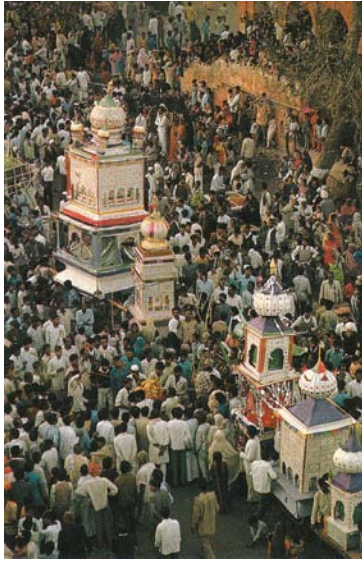
[a] Ta'ziya procession in India (1974)

[b] Tassa drummers heat their instruments in Port-of-Spain (1986)
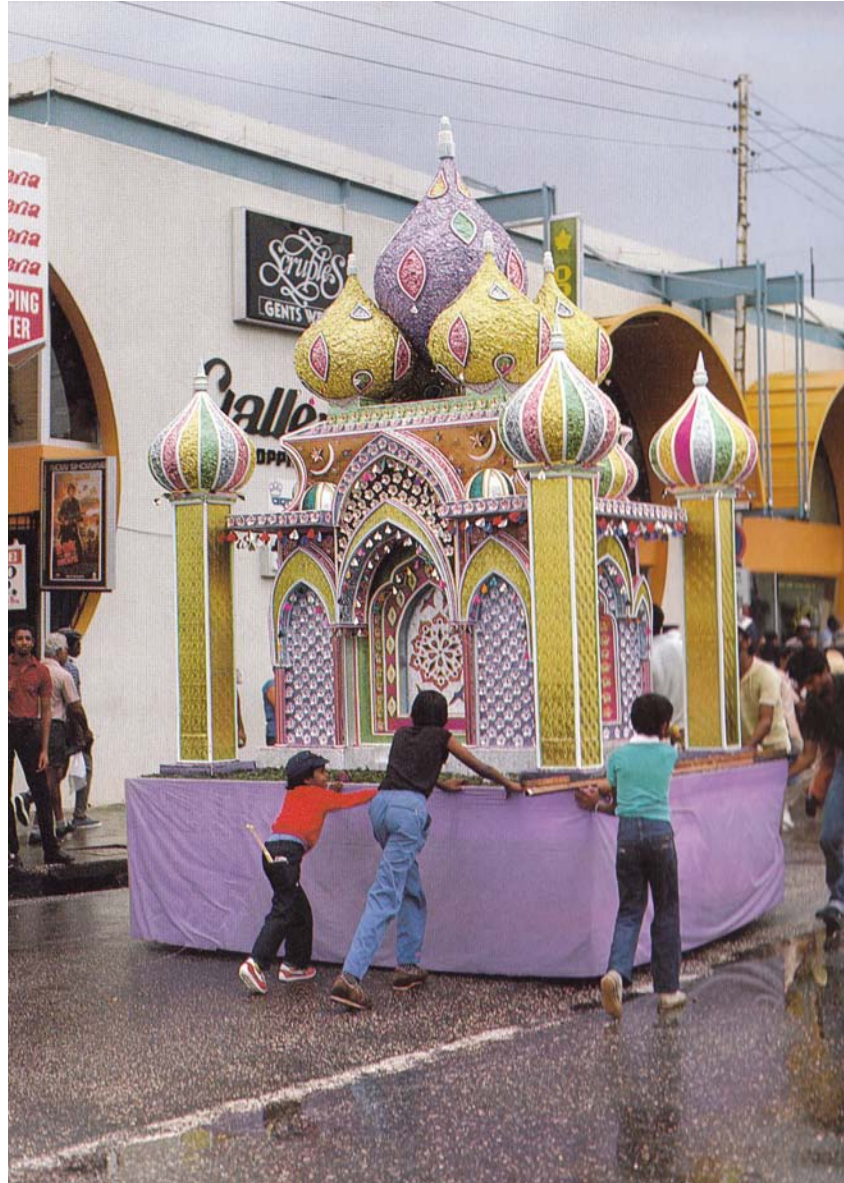
[c] Tadjah in St. James (1986)

illus. 2.25

the second is Hosay (an Islamic celebration). Phagwa is the *Bhojpuri* word for Holī, which is a vernal festival that is celebrated throughout India (as seen in illus 2.23 & 2.24). This practice came to Trinidad with Indentured labourers, regaining popularity in the 1980's particularly. Holi in India takes place before the spring harvest. In an article on the practice of Holi in India, Crooke considers that:

> *'We have seen that the festival marks not only the close of one of the seasons, but also the end of the year in its older form. It is thus a crisis, a No Man's time, a rite de passage, as M. van Gennep terms it. It is at such times for instance, during intercalary months, that festivals in the nature of the Saturnalia, accompanied by ribaldry and obscene rites, very commonly occur… On the principles of mimetic magic, orgiastic rites are supposed to recruit and re-invigorate the exhausted energies of the year that has passed, and to promote fresh and healthy activity in the coming season.'*

The similarities between the Saturnalian Holi or Phagwa and Carnival are quite strong ideologically. Phagwa is a joyous gathering of people where they play and throw brightly coloured dye called *abeer* at each other. It is a community based festival that is conducted in a mutual public space. Another component of the festival is the *pichakaaree* competition in which Indian songs are sung, mostly in English. Burton Sankaralli describes these songs as *"Indocentric calypsos"*[9] since they are rooted in social commentary. Although there is not a great deal written on the interrelationship between Phagwa and the form of J'ouvert, there are obvious physical similarities between the two in the flinging of paint or mud in a crowd and the joyous revelry of bodies at play. The main difference between the two is that J'ouvert is a procession through the city whereas Phagwa typically occurs in one compound or public square. The similarity between Carnival and Phagwah as saturnalian things is furthered by Hein's consideration of devotees of the child god Krishna:

[a] Tadjah detail (Mathura, 1986)

[b] Tadjah from Port-of-Spain being pushed into the Gulf of Paria
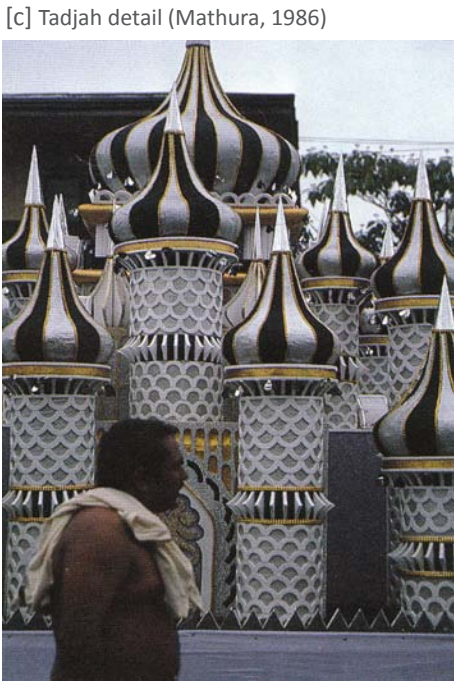
[c] Tadjah detail (Mathura, 1986)

[d] Hosay (St. James, 2009)

illus 2.26

'Their sportiveness has manifested itself in cultic matters that are marginal to social ethics: in the exuberance of their religious assemblies, in the easy emotionality of their pathway of salvation through devotion, in the madcap behaviour that they tolerate in their saints, and in the spirit of abandon that pervades their fairs and pilgrimages and a few saturnalian festivals like the licentious Holī.'[10]

Both Carnival and Phagwa are known for their inherent joy. In both cases that joy and abandon is not confined by masquerade form or religious programme. Instead the experience of freedom that they incite arises out of Leela; that playful fascination with paint and mud that is exuberant, ecstatic and almost child-like.

Apart from Phagwa, one of the most popular Indian festivals which also resembles Carnival is Hosay (also called Hosein). Hosay is a Muslim festival which has been celebrated in Trinidad since the beginning of Indentureship. It occurs during the first ten days of the Islamic month of Muharram, which is the first month of the Islamic calendar year. The festival is a commemoration of the martyrdom of Husain and Hasan, the grandsons of the Prophet Mohammed[11] in the seventh century battle of Kerbala (in modern day Iraq). Hosay, as the festival is called in Trinidad is a contraction of the name Husain. This commemoration involves the construction of fifteen foot high tombs that are made from bamboo, paper and a myriad of other decorations. These tombs which are called *tadjahs* (called *taziyas* in India)*.* The last four days of the ten day festival are devoted to street festivals.

On these days the tadjahs, flags and baby tadjahs are presented with the accompaniment of *tassa-drums* (Indian skin drums). The tadjah are built in secrecy, their builders fasting, praying and abstaining from sex and alcohol. The construction of the tombs is a sacred act and their structures are imbibed with the focused devotion of their builders. The tadjah are pulled through the city on wheeled platforms and then taken to the coast where they are set into the currents of the water and taken out to sea. Below is a description of what is thought to have been the first official Hosay procession in Trinidad.

'The first Hosay procession most likely was held in 1850, on the Philipine Estate south of San Fernando. The spectacle of the tadjah, fuelled by the powerful staccato sound of the sun dried clay tassa-drums, the low snapping blows of the large wooden bass drums and the holy chants mourning Husain and Hasan, lifted participants to ecstatic states, an experience that contrasted sharply to their daily lives. Once Hosay processions started in Trinidad, stopping them was beyond the power of the British colonial authority. In 1859, there were boisterous parades in Port-of-Spain, and competitions took place between estates in which not only East Indians but also "Creoles and Chinese went to the help of their workmates; loyalties to the estate transcended those of race and fighting." By the late 1850's Afro-Trinidadians began to participate in the processions as drummers or as tadjah bearers.'[12]

Hosay was practiced in all areas in Trinidad where a dense settlement of Indians was found and so it was called *"Indian Carnival"*. Although street processions had religious import, in some places, especially in the south of the island, these processions became much more carnivalesque. Playful stick fighting was said to accompany the tadjah as they moved toward the coast. What's more Hosay united the Hindus and Muslims in one celebration of solidarity and self-affirmation. The ritual drama of Hosay is like the Ramleela in that it is also a sacred re-enactment that is performed in community space. In turn, this is also similar to the nature of Carnival, especially to African ex-slaves.

" Both Carnival and Hosein were processions, and the animation of a march has a more exciting effect on a crowd than a function that takes place in one spot. And perhaps most important of all, each had a strong competitive element in it. In Carnival it was,

and still is, the rival bands that compete in the ingenuity of their
themes and in the magnificence of their costumes. In Hosein it is
the rival taziyas that compete for admiration, and to be first in the
procession or first at the edge of the water. The rivalry of Hosein
was between estates and it was the working group and no religion
or the same home district which determined the allegiance of
those who took part."[13]

The similarity of Hosay to Carnival was marked by the cross pollination between festivals, where Africans helped in building tadjahs and tadjahs appeared in Carnival bands. Hosay became a celebration that, like Carnival, temporarily united all of the influences surrounding its celebration in Trinidad:

"In Hosay one may see the cultural confluences of Persia. Arabia,
India, Africa and Europe: the fusion of sacred and secular, of
funeral and fete."[14]

By the 1880's the Indian population had risen to account for one third of Trinidad's population. Fearing revolts through the combining social engines of Carnival and Hosay, the British colonials began to limit the freedom of both festivals.

'In those instances where officialdom saw popular festivals only
as powerful and dangerous vehicles, their response to them were
coldly political… When Trinidad's elites saw their otherwise docile
subordinates at their mass festivals, the latter were transformed
into sometimes magnificent beings. These labourers were not any
longer mere units of labour. At these moments in the annual cycle
Africans and Indians reverted to something of their former glory or
meaning. The planters and other elites could not understand their
workers in this street arena… The plantocracy spoke of the street
festivals as powerful "things" and were often filled with dread. By

[a] Drawing of a Burroquite

[b] Drawing of Jab Jabs

[c] Drawing of a Fancy Indian King

illus 2.27
Drawings of Carnival Traditional Carnival Characters

the 1880's the elites seemed determined to destroy Carnival and Hosay through state violence. That Carnival and Hosay survive in Trinidad today testify to the resilience of meaningful ritual in the lives of all human beings.'[15]

These colonial fears culminated in the Canboulay Riots of 1881 and the Hosay Massacre of 1884. In 1884, the police banned Hosay celebrants from occupying the city's streets. Ignoring the ban however, people in San Fernando went onto the streets with their tadjah as was their custom. The police opened fire on the crowd, killing twenty-two people and wounding hundreds[16]. Despite efforts to quell the festival, its purpose as a commemoration of past martyrs rang truer still to those victimised by the assault. Today Hosay is still celebrated with its biggest celebrations in St. James of Port-of-Spain and in Cedros (South Trinidad).

The Indian presence in Trinidad has also changed the face of masquerade archetypes in Carnival down to its very colour palette. Carnival bands dressed in shades of turquoise and azure, accented by jade green, and gold; others of brilliant red, flushed with flamboyant purple and fuchsia, all make vivid the influence of brightly coloured and ornately decorated saris. Wheeled kings and queens were also introduced through the Hosay festival[17]. Mosques in the form of tadjahs appeared in the band *River* in Port-of-Spain in 1983. Even by presence in numbers, today it is undeniable that Carnival on the streets of Port-of-Spain is an almost equal mix of Indian and African. Apart from Pretty Mas which is the most racially diverse type of masquerade, there are a few other masquerade archetypes that have become associated with Indian people.

One of the earliest forms was the Burokit (burro-keet) which was a character derived from Hindu worship that consisted of an elaborately decorated donkey's head that was attached to a bamboo framework. Through a hole at the base of the donkey's neck the masquerader would stand, holding the horse's reins. The body of the horse was covered by richly decorated fabric. The burokit would appear in bands, with a king wearing a crown and five or six attendants, all dancing to *tassa* drumming and singing traditional Hindi songs[18]. Today the burokit

is rarely seen, but it remains one of the traditional characters of past Carnivals.

Another common Mas archetype that came to be dominated by Indians was the Jab Jab.

> *"The Jab Jabs with their fancy clothes, whips and bells had a particular Indian involvement – the Indians would have understood the bells as gunghroos (shungroos), bells Indian dancers attach to their ankles. Jab Jabs were indeed referred to as "coolie devils". Indians were attracted to Devils because they evoke images from Indian mythology. Indians also played Red or Wild Indian (Amerindian), with a creative "confusion" both by Indians and Afro-Creoles of the very word "Indian"."*[19]

The name *Jab Jab*[20] comes from the patois word *"diable"* which meant devil. It originated amongst Indian indentured labourers. Travelling in groups, Jab Jabs costumes are brightly coloured, resembling that of a court jester with bells suspended from the tips of his costume. It is elaborately decorated with rhinestones and mirrors. The real mark of the Jab Jab however is the heart stopping crack of his plaited rope whip. Jab Jabs would have duels in the streets, whipping each other, the cracks of their whips echoing all around.

Wild Indian Mas, though derived from the ceremonial garb of South American aboriginal Indians has been widely accepted in East Indian communities (descendants of Indian indentured labourers) as their own. In many East Indian settlements, perhaps mostly because of the word "Indian" in the title of the masquerade, Wild Indian Mas has been adapted as a majority East Indian type of masquerade. This archetype of costume is said to have evolved in the middle of the 1800's though it is possible that it may have begun before, especially in southern Trinidad. Wild Indian Mas which is most prevalent in San Fernando is based on the ceremonial garb of a tribe of South American aboriginal Indians called Guarajo or Warrahoon who belonged to the Orinoco Delta of South America[21]. As time passed and films became popular stories of Cowboys and Indians travelled

to the Caribbean and these Wild Indian bands began to mimic the elaborate ceremonial garb seen in North American Indians. In Trinidad there came to be four different tribes of Wild Indian bands: Red, Blue, Black and White Indians. There are also Fancy Indians whose costumes vary in colour compositions. The main tribes of Wild Indian Bands however speak their own language that is a creative combination of aboriginal Indian, Spanish, English and perhaps French patois[22]. On the streets come Carnival days they engage in loud verbal exchanges, dancing in unison and chanting their songs. Whole families grow up in this masquerade tradition and on Carnival days, adults and children alike are seen together on the streets. In San Fernando today the majority of masquerade is based on the Wild Indian archetype, perhaps because of the city's proximity to the southern coast of the island and also because the population of southern Trinidad is majority Indian. Wild Indians, most notable Black Indians can be seen in Port-of-Spain as well.

Apart from inventing and adapting the form of certain masquerade archetypes, the descendants of Indian labourers also directly participated in traditionally African Carnival expressions. Many Indian men became notorious in the realm of *Calinda* stick fighting alongside African ex-slaves. In music, Jit Samaroo was one of the most prolific Steelband music composers since the 1970's. Local artist *Ras Shorty I* was one of the first musicians to combine Indian musical styles with Calypso. This combination gave Soca, today's Carnival music, its fast pace and lilting intonations. Another brand of Indian music grew up around Carnival called *Chutney*.

> *"Chutney music is the confluence of the folk-songs of women (particularly those associated with the matikhor and cooking nights of the Hindu wedding), raw celebratory music of the menfolk, Hindu religious music, and Indian film songs."[23]*

Chutney music sometimes crosses over into mainstream Carnival music, though typically it remains an Indocentric Carnival expression.

The Indian presence in Trinidad has undoubtedly extended *"carnival*

space"[24] in Trinidad from city centers into small villages and even into different festivals during the year. The Indian presence is perhaps one of the defining characteristics of Trinidadian Carnival that makes it unique from its other Caribbean and Latin American cousins. Similarly, Carnival has been shaped by the festivals, music and ideology of Indian Hindus and Muslims. With the idea of divine theatre through leela, today the staging of ritual dramas reaches creative depths of individual and community expression which make Carnival an ecstatic and often transcendental celebration. This unique union of polytheistic beliefs between Yoruba and Hinduism has melded into an extraordinary festival that

FAREWELL - TO - FLESH

MAS

'She recognised that this city was a place that granted you only what you were willing to claim. Tramping the streets those two days marked the place as her own. She felt joined to every masquerader, not only the ones playing in her band, but to all, everywhere. For the first time she felt the holiness of the town and saw the beauty of its people and that it was hers, the city...'

Salt by Earl Lovelace

Acrylic on Canvas
24 x 36

FAREWELL - TO - FLESH

INKA

'I feel a sweetness taking over,
A sticky sweetness taking over,
A nice kind of madness taking over,
Inside, outside spilling over...'

Ah Love it by 3 Canal

Acrylic on Canvas
24 x 24

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FAREWELL - TO - FLESH

JUMBIE

*She played Nubian princess, with her hair cut short and ringed with co-
loured beads and a tiara of gold. The sun had tanned her so that the rich
velvety blackness of her skin glistened and she had felt so much herself on
those days of Carnival...'*

Salt by Earl Lovelace

Acrylic on Canvas
24 x 24

FAREWELL - TO - FLESH

POSSESSION

'Carnival is a bacchanal
No no no
Carnival is a living ritual
This one is annual celebration of freedom
A literal emancipation session
It's a spiritual and physical expression of a living ritual'

Carnival is... by 3 Canal

Acrylic on Canvas
24 x 24

FAREWELL - TO - FLESH

SYLVIA

'Then he saw Sylvia, dancing still with all her dizzying aliveness, dancing wildly; frantically twisting her body, flinging it around her waist, jumping and moving, refusing to let go of that visibility, that self the Carnival gave her; holding it balanced on her swaying hips, going down and coming up in a tall, undulating rhythm, lifting up her arms and leaping as if she wanted to leap out of herself into her self, a self in which she could stay forever, in which she could be for ever.'

Earl Lovelace, The Dragon Can't Dance

Acrylic on Canvas
24 x 24

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CHAPTER 3: The Extraordinary City

'The urban festival provides a bridge between the ordinary city of everyday experience and the extraordinary city- projected in part by the festival – of idealistic and technological urbanism; of utopian hopes, projects and illusions. The extraordinary city provides a glimpse of the city as it might be – for good or ill – as certain groups. Certain constituencies within the city, would like it to be…'[1]

The Carnival season in Trinidad officially begins in February, although its effect on the city begins to manifest with the turn of the New Year. January for instance, welcomes Soca and Calypso music on the airwaves. On the northern end of the city around the Queens Park Savannah and on Lady Chancellor Hill, hundreds of people (mostly women), begin their mornings jogging and exercising, getting in shape to wear their costume for that year's Parade of the Bands. Steelband practice yards (called *"Pan yards"*)* in all parts of the city come alive with the New Year, each band practicing for the upcoming Panorama Steelband Orchestra competition (called *"Panorama"),* filling the night with their melodies.

As January passes the streets are busier than any other time of year. Especially at night, people go to fetes* (called *"feteing"*) or attend that night's calypso competition or visit Masquerade camps (called *"Mas camps"*) and Pan Yards. Along Ariapita Avenue, bars and restaurants become busier as Mas camps host pre-Carnival parties. As January gives way to February, the year's official events are held night after night. Each day of February is part of the countdown to Carnival. The radios blast in every office; bets are placed on who will win the prize for best song of the year. Walking through the city, one cannot avoid the tension in the air waiting to break onto the streets come Carnival Monday morning. It is as if the streets themselves have grown agitated as stands at judging points are erected, the traffic becomes denser and the Queens Park Savannah becomes a veritable Carnival stage on which different spectacles occur at different times each day. In the week before Carnival, productivity is at an all time low, but people's

Carnival in Trinidad

[1] Writing Urbanism: Celebrating the City, by Alan J. Plattus, pg 96

* A fete, derived from the French word "fete", refers to a party. In Trinidad the term particularly refers to Carnival parties, some of which reccur each year in the same places
* Masquerade camps are places where costumes are made and dispensed from. Each band has a separate camp. Pan Yards are typically open lots where steel bands practice and store their instruments during the year.
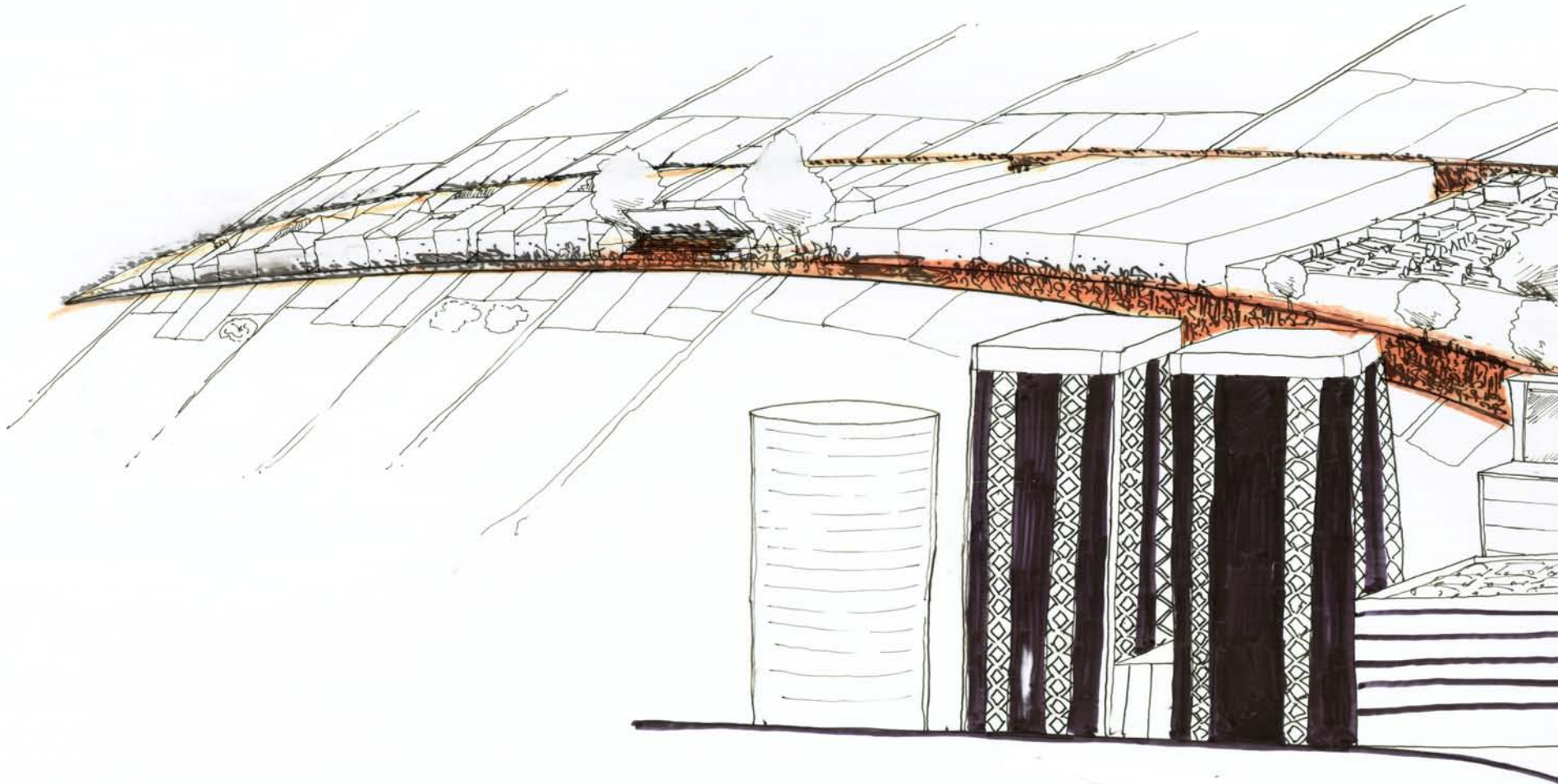
illus 3.1: Drawing of the Extraordinary city of Port-of-Spain representing the Carnival route and judging points

sn		sn	4	sn	11	sn	18	sn	25

January calendar:

- **sn 4** — Soca in Moca Fete / St. Mary`s All-Inclusive Fete
- **m 5**
- **t 6**
- **w 7**
- **th 8**
- **f 9** — St. Francois School Fete
- **s 10** — Fire Services Fete

- **sn 11**
- **m 12**
- **t 13**
- **w 14**
- **th 15**
- **f 16**
- **s 17** — QRC Fete / National Flour Mills Fete

- **sn 18** — 3 Canal Show / BPTT All-Inclusive Fete
- **m 19**
- **t 20**
- **w 21**
- **th 22**
- **f 23** — Central Bank Fete / Classic Russo Calypso Tent
- **s 24** — Bishops Fete / Youth Fest 2009

- **sn 25** — Stars of Tomorrow Fete / Unique Calypso Tent
- **m 26**
- **t 27** — Panorama Preliminaries Begins (North Yards)
- **w 28** — Kaiso House
- **th 29** — Calypso Revue
- **f 30**
- **s 31** — WASA Fete / St. Mary`s Fete / Wicked in White Fete

First week:

- **sn**
- **m**
- **t** ○
- **w**
- **th 1** — Soca begins on the radio... / Pre-Carnival Crowds begin early morning and late afternoon exercising around the savannah. / Pan yards become more active...
- **f 2**
- **s 3**

NATIONAL COMPETITIONS
CARNIVAL FETES

Schedule of Events
Carnival 2009

january 08	february 08	march 08	april 08	may 08	june 08	july 08
temporary infrastructure built begining of Carnival Fetes	CARNIVAL DATES : Feb 4th & 5th — begining of Lent — Other Caribbean Carnivals: Aruba, Bonaire, Carriacou, Curacao, Carriacou, Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, Haiti, St, Bathelemy & St. Martin	EASTER SUNDAY March 23rd — Carnival: Dominica	Carnival: Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, St. Maarten & St. Thomas	Carnival, Atlanta	Washington Caribbean Carnival, Washington DC	Tribe Mas Band Launch / Evolution Mas Band Launch / Spice Mas Band Launch — Crop Over, Barbados / Brass Festival, St, Lucia — Carnival: Cuba, Nevis, Saba, St. Eustatias, St, John

Year-Long Carnival Calender
Jan 08 - Feb 09

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FEBRUARY 09

s n 1
North Junior Calypso Prelims
D'Extreme Hilton All Inclusive Fete

m 2
Carnival Village begining construction...
FQ

t 3

w 4
Carnival Under the Trees

th 5

f 6
Randy Glasglow Ladies Night Out Fete

s 7
Gyal Farm Fete

s n 8
Pan Trinbago Panorama Semi Finals
US Embassy All Inclusive Fete
Friends of the Blood Bank Fete

m 9
Official stands being erected...
Young Kings Calypso Monarch Finals
FM

t 10
Northern Region Soca in Pan Competition

w 11
National Extempo Limbo Preliminaries
Carnival Under the Trees

th 12
Carnival Launch Downtown POS
King & Queen Costume Preliminaries
Carnival Under the Trees

f 13
Soca Monarch Semi-Final Competition
Army Fete
Carnival Under the Trees

s 14
Carnival Under the Trees
Alternative Concept Fete
Kama Sutra Carnival Fete

s n 15
Junior Panorama Finals
Junior King & Queen Individual Prelims.
St. James Junior Street Parade
CAREL All Inclusive Fete
Hearts on Fire All Inclusive Fete

m 16
Junior Calypso Monarch Finals
Limbo Finals
Unattached Calypso Monarch Finals
PNM Fete
LQ

t 17
Ambassador Verse & Song Finals
King Costume Semi-Finals
Junior Queen Finals
Bishops Fete
Eyes Wide Shut Fete
Carniva Under the Trees

w 18
National Small Bands & Single Pan Finals
Conventional Mas Competition
Senior Individual traditional Mas Comp
Custom Bay Fete
Carniva Under the Trees

th 19
National Extempo Finals
Police & Army Fete
Tribe Ingnite Fete
Carniva Under the Trees

f 20
Canboulay Re-enactment
Parade of Traditional Mas Characters
International Soca Monarch Finals
Senior Queen Costume Semi-Finals
Junior King Competition Finals
Fantastic Friday Fete
Island People Girl Power Fete
Rise All Inclusive Fete

s 21
NCBA Junior Parade of the Bands
Panorama Finals
Dawn till Sunrise Fete
Carniva Under the Trees
Lion's Fete

s n 22
Nostalgia Traditional Mas Parade
DIMANCHE GRAS:
King & Queen Costume Finals
Calypso Finals
Extempo Finals
Brian Lara Fete
Hilton Poolside Fete
Is Just a Fete

m 23 CARNIVAL MONDAY
J'OUVERT (4am - 9am)
PARADE OF THE BANDS
Monday Night Mas
Paramin Bue Devils
Carnival Jump Up

t 24 CARNIVAL TUESDAY
PARADE OF THE BANDS
Pan on the Road
Last Lap
NM

w 25   ASH WEDNESDAY

th 26

f 27

s 28

NATIONAL COMPETITIONS
CARNIVAL FETES

august 08	september 08	october 08	november 08	december 08	january 09	february 09
EMANCIPATION DAY Ronnie & Caro Mas Band Launch Harts Mas Band Launch D Krewe Mas Band Launch Island People Mas Band Launch Dream Team Mas Band Launch Caribana, Toronto Notting Hill Carnival, London, UK Carnival: Anguilla, Grenada, Turks & Caicos	Brian Mc Farlane Mas Band Launch Pulse Mas Band Launch Trini Revellers Mas Band Launch Labour Day, New York	HOSAY Legacy Mas Band Launch Carnival, Miami		soca music starts on the radio for 2009 Carnival: Bahamas, Montserrat & St. Kitts	temporary infrastructure built see month breakdown for events	CARNIVAL DATES : Feb 23rd & 24th see month breakdown for events

illus 3.2 showing the Carnival events which take place during Jan & Feb. It also shows the reverberations of the festival during the rest of the year.

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enthusiasm and thirst for Carnival reaches its peak. This is the moment people have been awaiting since Ash Wednesday the year before.

Overseen by the National Carnival Commission; a government funded organization, a sequence of competitions are held in Port-of-Spain's public spaces. Each night of February witnesses a different qualifying round for Junior Carnival Kings and Queens*, a range of Panorama categories and calypso competitions for young and old. In the week directly preceding Carnival, there are smaller parades held on Port-of-Spain's streets. Traditional Characters like the Midnight Robber, *Dammes Lorraines*, Chinese Dragons and Blue Devils can be seen before Carnival. On Carnival Saturday a Children's Carnival Parade is held each year (called "Kiddies Carnival") running from South Quay, along Frederick Street, up to the Queens Park Savannah. All of these events culminate over the weekend preceding the Carnival Parade with the Panorama Finals at the Queens Park Savannah and the Dimanche Gras show. Dimanche Gras presents the best performers from all of the season's competitions.

In the dark hours of Carnival Monday morning, a festival called *J'ouvert* is performed all over Trinidad. J'ouvert is a derivative of the earlier Canboulay celebrations which were held before Emancipation. These Canboulay celebrations typically started at midnight on Carnival Sunday night. In 1884 however masquerade was banned from starting until six in the morning. This early morning celebration came to be known as *"Jour Overt"* which in Patois* meant "opening of day". This celebration retained the *'brave, angry defiant spirit of the Carnivals before it…"* [2] ,and today its allure is still of a dark, instinctual and grotesque nature. There are no gentle dances, sequins or feathers, but rather, large bands of people covered in mud and paint. Where daytime masqueraders can pay large sums for costumes, the *J'ouvert* celebration remains more accessible to the general public. It is also noteworthy that *J'ouvert* abides by no official route. Though there is one judging point at South Quay for *Ole Mas Characters**, the majority of bands meander through the city without the regulations of the daytime mas. As if baptizing the street, J'ouvert revelers leave the streets and walls of buildings streaked with a rainbow of paint and mud. Due to the sometimes volatile nature of the festival,

* Carnival Kings and Queens are large wire based costumes (sometimes 20 feet in height) that are pulled or carried by a single masquerader. Themed according to their band, each band typically enters a King and Queen for judging in the Junior and Senior King and Queen of the Bands competitions.

* Patois is a language composed of French and West African.

* Ole Mas Characters are typically political satires designed and performed by individuals or small groups.

its duration has steadily been reduced, now beginning at four in the morning and continuing through the sunrise, until nine on Carnival Monday morning.

Carnival Monday and Tuesday for many represents complete liberation from the tensions and restrictions of daily life. For those two days, people in their respective bands dance through the streets into the night. Earl Lovelace in his novel *The Dragon Can't Dance*, relates the cultural significance of Carnival:

> *'For two full days Aldrick was a dragon in Port-of-Spain, moving through the loud, hot streets, dancing the bad-devil dance, dancing the stickman dance…He was Africa, the ancestral Masker, affirming the power of the warrior…saying to the city: 'I is a dragon. I have fire in my belly and claws on my hands; watch me! Note me well, for I am ready to burn down your city. I am ready to tear you apart, limb by limb… Oh he danced. He danced pretty. He danced to say, 'You are beautiful, Calvary Hill and John John and Lavantille and Shanty Town. Listen to your steelbands how they playing! Look at your children how they dancing! Look at your beads and feathers! Look at the colours of your costumes in the sunshine! Look at your colours! You is people, people. People is you, people!'[3]*

Although the most tangible experience of Carnival in Port-of-Spain is seen during January and February, a substantial amount of planning, designing and contemplation of Carnival occurs throughout the year. When Ash Wednesday arrives, the passing of Carnival is marked by fetes and a proliferation of magazines and videos of the year's spectacles. From July to September Trinidadian Mas Camps launch their costumes for the following year while Steelbands prepare their line ups and calypso artists develop their material for the following year. Each years Carnival represents the coming together of artists, mas camps, pan yards, government institutions and independent entrepreneurs, many whose entire lives revolve around the Carnival industry. Similarly, certain sites in the city

illus: 3.3: Photograph of a woman in Port-of-Spain in ecstasy

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have also evolved to be dedicated to Carnival. Some pan yards and mas camps for example have been in the same location for many years. *Invaders Pan Yard* for example, has been situated opposite to the Queens Park Oval since the 1930's when they were called *'The Oval Boys'*. Its original members were some of the first to experiment with steel drums in the world. Elliot Mannette, for example, working in an iron foundry, was particularly adept at molding the drums and was one of the first to experiment with fifty gallon oil drums, creating six of the nine types of steel pans in existence. Today, Invaders Pan Yard has grown to be an iconic site within the city because of its pivotal role in the development of Trinidad's Carnival.

Because of the interwoven relationship between the growth of Port-of-Spain and the persistent celebration of Carnival since the city's inception, the city and the festival have become two intertwined entities. The Ordinary city of Port-of-Spain is the financial capital of the Caribbean while the Extraordinary city represents the hybridization of the varied social, cultural and political influences that have shaped the Caribbean. Carnival is the vehicle of expression that reaches out of the extraordinary city of myth, ritualistically transforming the streets of the city. The Extraordinary city is a living propensity for ecstasy that undulates just below the city's Ordinary face. Although visible for only two months each year, the Extraordinary city is an ever-present life force that invisibly measures, mocks and occasionally overtakes the year round city. Cuban novelist Antonio Benitez-Rojo states that carnival rhythm is deeply rooted in the Caribbean:

> *'...carnival, the great Caribbean celebration...spreads out through the most varied systems of signs: music, song, dance, myth, language, food, dress, body expression. There is something strongly feminine in this extraordinary fiesta: its flux, its diffuse sensuality, its generative force, its capacity to nourish and conserve (juices, spring, pollen, rain, seed, shoot, ritual sacrifice – these are words that come to stay). Think of the dancing flourishes, the rhythms of the conga, the samba, the masks, the hoods, the men dressed*

illus 3.4: Victory Carnival 1919 at Marine Square

illus 3.5: Victory Carnival 1919 at Queens Park Savannah

and painted as women, the bottles of rum, the sweets, the confetti and coloured streamers, the hubbub, the carousal, the flutes, the drums, the cornet and the trombone, the teasing, the jealousy, the whistles and the faces, the razor that draws blood, death. Life, reality in forward and reverse. Torrents of people who flood the streets, the night lit up like an endless dream, the figure of the centipede that comes together and then breaks up, that winds and stretches beneath the ritual's rhythm, that flees the rhythm without escaping it, putting off its defeat, stealing off and hiding itself, imbedding itself finally in the rhythm, always in the rhythm, the beat of the chaos of the islands.' [4]

The proliferation of Carnival throughout the Caribbean and Latin America has arisen from the overlaying of similar threads of history. When analyzing the art and literature that has come out of the Caribbean and Latin America a common thread of Magical Realism dominates these expressions. Magical Realism is a genre of literature that has emerged from these territories being popularized by Latin American authors like Isabel Allende and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Looking at painters like Frida Kahlo and even Trinidadian painter Che Lovelace, a world of dual perception becomes apparent. As a genre of literature, Magical Realism is typified by its hallucinatory imagery and dizzying combination of modern reality in an often animistic world. Stephen Sleman in his essay on *Magical Realism as Post Colonial Discourse*[5] states that history in the magical realist novel, engages in a kind *of 'double vision'* or *'metaphysical clash'* between notions of imperial history and the view of *'real'* history based on the *'marginalised and dispossessed voices'* of the colonial encounter. Kumkum Sangari in *Politics of the Possible* describes Magical Realism as occupying a *liminal space* between the reality of physical experience and the mythological underpinnings of a multilayered cultural experience[6]. Derek Walcott says about the art of the Antilles that:

'Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments

is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole. The glue that fits the pieces is the sealing of its original shape. It is such a love that reassembles our African and Asiatic fragments, the cracked heirlooms whose restoration shows its white scars. This gathering of broken pieces is the care and pain of the Antilles… Antillean art is this restoration of our shattered histories, our shards of vocabulary, our archipelago becoming a synonym for pieces broken off from the original continent... This is the basis of the Antillean experience, this shipwreck of fragments, these echoes, these shards of a huge tribal vocabulary, these partially remembered customs, and they are not decayed but strong. They survived the Middle Passage and the Fatel Rozack*...'[7]

This re-assembly of cultural fragments in a liminal space between physical and mythological is physically represented through Carnival in the Caribbean. The Extraordinary city represents the temporary unity of these fragments. It is a second urban condition within the city of Port-of-Spain that is part of a regional cultural condition. Carnival can in this way be seen as the regions attempt to make sense of its complex history and cultural experience. The effect of Carnival therefore is to create a sense of belonging to the city, re-grounding ones relationship to that space. It is as Mircea Eliade describes, that the power of this masquerade lies in mans need to periodically re-align himself with the sacred in the profane world. Eliade states,

'The sacred reveals absolute reality and at the same time makes orientation possible; hence it founds the world in the sense that it fixes the limits and establishes the order of the world.'[8]

The principal way in which the festival makes the city sacred again is thorough the physical pathway that it takes. On Carnival days it is not only the undulating

*The Middle Passage is the name given to the journey of African Slaves from the coast of West Africa to the Caribbean and Latin America.

*The Fatel Rozack is the first ship to bring East Indian indentured workers from Calcutta to the Caribbean in 1845.

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band that shapes the borders of ones experience. The parade route although physically nothing more than a series of barricades and stands which leave the streets free for masqueraders, still dictates the form and order in which thousands of revelers will experience Port-of-Spain. The Carnival route is the melody that moves through the Extraordinary city, reaching a crescendo at the judging points. The morphology of the city also shapes ones experience since sites hold personal memories as well as socio-political ones. Different neighborhoods have different widths or streets and heights of buildings. The masqueraders' experience of movement, the density of the crowd and the psychogeography of the area are all dictated by the Carnival route. It is the single largest organizational element in the festival, though its significance is largely underestimated.

In order to understand the significance of the route in shaping the extraordinary city, a brief history of its evolution must be given. While the 1800's was wrought with conflict between Africans and Europeans during Carnival time, it wasn't until 1919 that the first big Carnival occurred in Port-of-Spain with the homogeneity of todays. One of the most significant features of the 1919 Carnival was the proliferation of independent Carnival competitions held throughout the city. By rallying small businesses to sponsor prizes for the best patriotic song, best dressed and most uniform band, best fancy dressed band, best Creole song, best band of musicians, best individuals and best behaved masqueraders, competitions were carried out throughout the city which encouraged apparent inclusivity. The Carnival Revue, a forerunner to the *Dimanche Gras*, was held at the St. Clair Oval[9] (now Queens Park Oval) as well as *The Songsters Competition* and the *Intercolonial Orchestra Competition*. In the 1900's there were masquerade competitions held at Woodford Square, the Queens Park Savannah (Victory Carnival), at Marine Square (Argos Carnival Competition) and the oldest at Besson Street Square on the east end of the city.[10]

While French masquerade was based on playing different roles, with French and Spanish women dressing as mulatto women and the men as slaves, amongst an array of other masquerade types, the African masquerade was *'…part fantasy, part defiance'[11]*. Andrew Carr described the combative quality of

1.

illus 3.6: Argos Carnival Competition at Marine Square

illus 3.7: Victory Carnival 1919 at the stands of Queens Park Savannah

African masquerade as representing:

> *'… a depth of sublimated aggression: negue jardin fought with sticks and pierrots with whips, while others threatened and extorted the public according to their theme – robbers in speech, sailors with powder, cattle with horns, fishermen with nets, lunatics with their irrationality, prisoners with chains, snake charmers with snakes, jab jabs with whips and pregnant women with their paternity suits.'[12]*

After Emancipation, with growing fear of the majority population of ex-slaves, the British colonials tightened their reign over Carnival. The aggressive African masquerade types, the Canboulay, the chanting and the skin drums deeply disturbed the European colonials. Efforts were made to gentrify the Carnival so that the masquerade types were more palatable to European sensibility and to reduce the outbreak of violent clashes between bands of masqueraders. These violent clashes reached their peak from the 1940-s – 60's with the territorial fights between Steelbands as they moved through the city. In 1967 a route plan was devised as an organizational tool that would allow bands to move from one competition point to another without intersecting, since the plan was essentially one-way. The route made certain that bands and spectators could visit all of the competitions with the least disturbance. The new route gave bands more room to promenade and making *'… the whole city seem a stage'*. This new circuit not only maintained pedestrian traffic flow, but also scripted the experience each masquerader and spectator would have of the city that Carnival.

Since the 1967 plan, the Besson Street location has been moved a few blocks to Piccadilly on the Greens where the streets are wider and there is more room for stands to facilitate the 100 000 masqueraders that now participate in Port-of-Spain's Carnival[13]. The Victory Carnival at Marine Square (now Independence Square) moved to South Quay due to problems of congestion with big bands. Meanwhile, the Woodford Square location has been taken away entirely. With
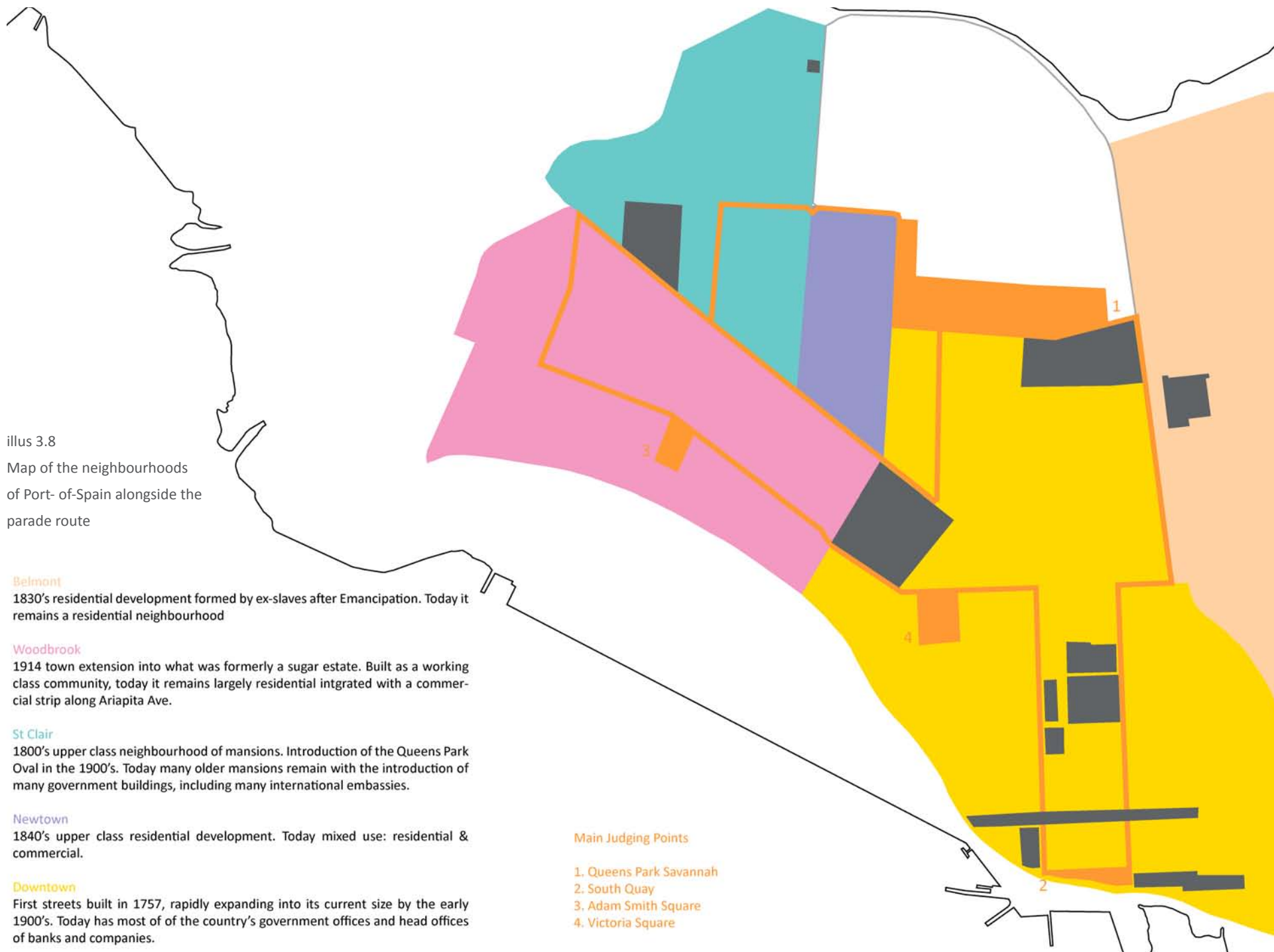
illus 3.8
Map of the neighbourhoods
of Port- of-Spain alongside the
parade route

Belmont
1830's residential development formed by ex-slaves after Emancipation. Today it remains a residential neighbourhood

Woodbrook
1914 town extension into what was formerly a sugar estate. Built as a working class community, today it remains largely residential intgrated with a commercial strip along Ariapita Ave.

St Clair
1800's upper class neighbourhood of mansions. Introduction of the Queens Park Oval in the 1900's. Today many older mansions remain with the introduction of many government buildings, including many international embassies.

Newtown
1840's upper class residential development. Today mixed use: residential & commercial.

Downtown
First streets built in 1757, rapidly expanding into its current size by the early 1900's. Today has most of of the country's government offices and head offices of banks and companies.

Main Judging Points

1. Queens Park Savannah
2. South Quay
3. Adam Smith Square
4. Victoria Square

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the growth of the city westward, two new judging points have been added in Woodbrook at Adam Smith Square and Victoria Square. The Queens Park Savannah is now the oldest centre for Carnival and considered the main judging point. The biggest difference in the festival structure between its form in the 1967 to now, is that today, the Monday and Tuesday parade of bands have become amalgamated into one singular competition with multiple judging points. There are a total of five judging points dispersed around the city. Participation in the Carnival masquerade competition is voluntary. Those wishing to participate must pass three judging points of their choosing. There are advised routes for larger bands. The mas band Tribe for example in 1984 had four thousand people in twenty three sections[14].

The judging points that exist in Carnival today hearken back to places of public importance over the past hundred years. It is this shaping of public space through the festival's action that constitutes the visage of the Extraordinary city. Each judging point constitutes a public stage during Carnival, the biggest of which was the Grand Stand at the Queens Park Savannah. The Grand Stand however, which used to stand on the Savannah was destroyed some ten years ago. Today, all of the judging points stand on streets, in front of significant public squares. In Woodbrook there is the Adam Smith Square judging point along Ariapita Avenue as well as the Victoria Square judging point, just beyond the Lapeyrouse Cemetery on Park Street. On the northernmost and southernmost tips of the downtown area are the Queens Park Savannah and the South Quay judging point. The South Quay location does not stand on a public square in the same sense as the others do. In this case, South Quay is part of a hub of public transit. The large stands are erected in a space between buildings there which during the year is shrouded by vendors' stands, parked taxis and mini buses. Regardless, at South Quay and Broadway, there stands a hub of public transportation called City Gate. South Quay is indeed the city gate today as it was in early 1900's. Piccadilly on the Greens is the last judging point. It is not as popular as the others and is dedicated to smaller bands. This area stands on the easternmost boundary of Port-of-Spain along the walls of the East Dry River. It has also recently become the site of a yearly re-enactment of the Canboulay Riots. This area of Port-of-Spain is considered to be
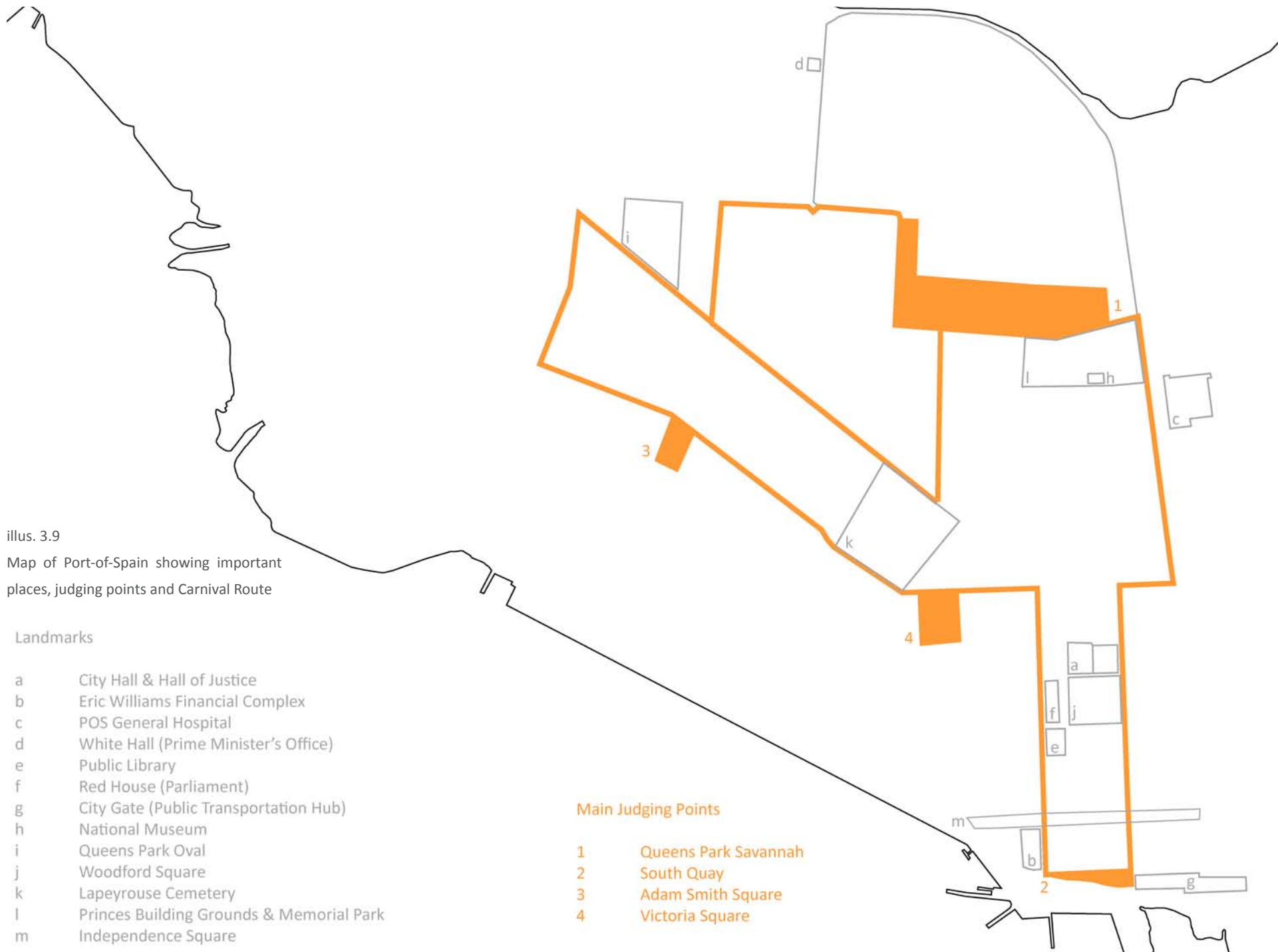
illus. 3.9

Map of Port-of-Spain showing important places, judging points and Carnival Route

Landmarks

a   City Hall & Hall of Justice
b   Eric Williams Financial Complex
c   POS General Hospital
d   White Hall (Prime Minister's Office)
e   Public Library
f   Red House (Parliament)
g   City Gate (Public Transportation Hub)
h   National Museum
i   Queens Park Oval
j   Woodford Square
k   Lapeyrouse Cemetery
l   Princes Building Grounds & Memorial Park
m   Independence Square

Main Judging Points

1   Queens Park Savannah
2   South Quay
3   Adam Smith Square
4   Victoria Square

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more dangerous than the other judging points as it borders a cluster of smaller lower income neighborhoods that are comparable to Brazil's favelas. Regardless however, this is one of the few times of year when the area is flooded by people. Each judging point is constituted by a set of stands for audience members and a tent for the judges. Masqueraders perform with greatest energy at these points, dancing to show off their full splendor, energy and pride. The judging points are high energy points along the parade route and are therefore key points within the extraordinary city.

What then is the relationship between the Parade route, judging points and the Extraordinary city? Sarah Bonnemaison in *Festival Architecture* describes a street protest in Paris against police brutality during the revolts of May 1968[15]. In order to explore the relevance of the protest route in engaging the protestor with his environment, she looks at the significance of the starting point of the parade in a working class neighborhood, the important civic landmarks that the protest passed, significant locations in the city where police brutality was enacted on students and working class citizens, finally considering the endpoint of the protest at a public park that was dedicated to the liberty of the people during the French revolution. Invoking the memory of the parks history in the minds of the protesters, the patrons spoke. The significance of the sequence of these psychologically charged sites that the protesters passed forced the individual to physically and mentally re-experience the poignancy of their cause. (see Appendix A) Her analysis is interesting since it outlines a means of describing the experiential form of festival space. Navigating and mapping festival space in the city, especially in an experiential way can be challenging. In the 1950's in Paris a movement of artists and urban theorists led by called the Situationists emerged. These ideas of psychogeography considered that each place in the city contained inherent energies which embodied all of the past experiences and associations of each site. The overall impression of psychogeography mapping was to express not simply the cartographic information of each place, but to convey the psychological constitution of places within the city. This qualitative approach to mapping makes visible the memory of sites in the city and their embodied identity as urban

Mas Camps

Carvahlo Mas
D Krewe
Dream Team T&T
Evolution
Genesis
Image Nation
Island People
Kaotic
Brian Mc Farlane
Masquerade Carnival
Pulse 8
Ronnie & Caro
Tribe
Trini Revellers
Harts
Wee Intertational
Berlin & Associates
BOSS
Burrokeets
D'Midas Associates
Elements
Felix Associates
Frontier Productions
Good Times Mas Inc
Dames Lorraines
Legacy
Masks Production
Mas Jumbies
Mass Factory
Old Fashioned Sailors
Rampage
Rosalind Gabriel
Saphyr
Skandalous
Toute la Monde

illus. 3.10

Map of Port-of-Spain showing Mas Camps, Pan Yards and judging points and Carnival Route

Pan Yards

Excellent Stores Silver Stars
Caribbean Airlines Invaders
Neal & Massey All-Stars
Pulse 2 Starlift
WITCO Desperadoes
Angostura Woodbrook
Playboyz
Phase 2 Pan Groove
PCS Nitrogen Starlift
Classy Sounds
Blue Diamonds
BP Renegades

Casablanka
Crazy Golden Eagles
Crescendoes Musical
D'Original Woodbrook
Modernaires
Flabej
Harlem Syncopaters
Jadap
Is We
Lincoln Express
Music Makers
Pan Vision

Main Judging Points

1. Queens Park Savannah
2. South Quay
3. Adam Smith Square
4. Victoria Square

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artifacts.

Keeping in mind the Situationists tradition of psychogeography and the Caribbean tradition of magical Realism, the second part of this chapter attempts to map the experiential qualities of the Extraordinary city. In order to do this the following route analysis is written in two voices. The first, written in black is the voice of the Ordinary city. It considers the historical and spatial form of the places that the route passes through. The second voice, written in white, is that of the Extraordinary city. It describes experientially how the parade moves and shifts along the route and the evocative relevance of neighborhoods and places in a phenomenological way. The analysis is coupled with semi-abstract diagrams that represent the extraordinary city and the relationship between the physical city and the masquerade.

This narrative is based on my experience during Carnival 2009. During this time I worked as an assistant to a Trinidadian photographer: Jeffrey Chock. Although I did not set out to follow one band, it worked out that I was able to see Brian Macfarlane's band *Africa* leave its camp and travel to different judging points in the city. Macfarlane's designs integrated traditions of West African masquerade into a modern Trinidadian Mas. This band ended up winning the prize for Best Band in 2009.
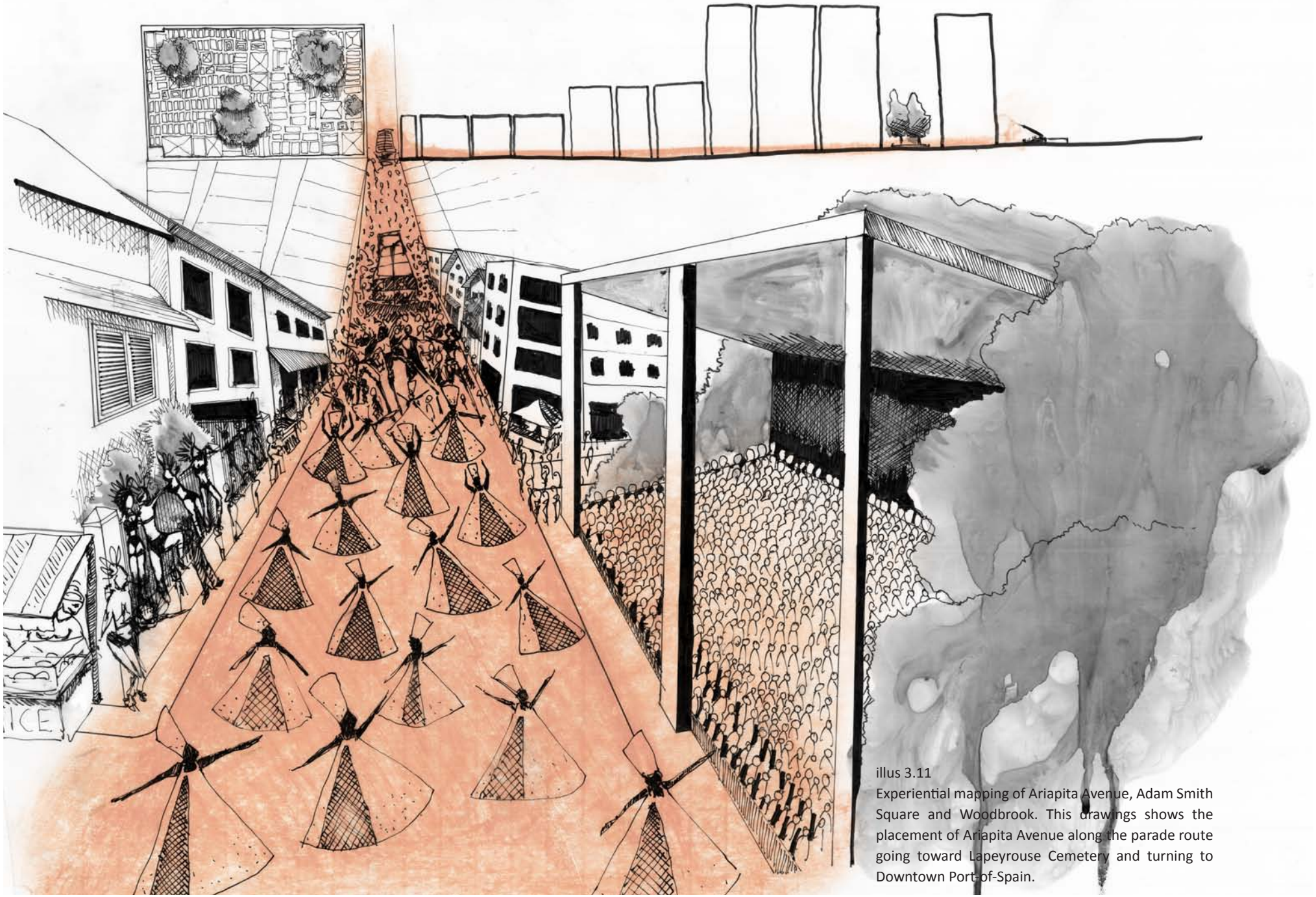
illus 3.11
Experiential mapping of Ariapita Avenue, Adam Smith Square and Woodbrook. This drawings shows the placement of Ariapita Avenue along the parade route going toward Lapeyrouse Cemetery and turning to Downtown Port-of-Spain.

On Carnival Tuesday morning the sun was bright. I parked my car near the Queens Park Oval and walked past the metallic melodies of the Invaders pan yard continuing along Tragarete Road toward Lapeyrouse Cemetery. Jeffrey and I had agreed to meet there, at the south-western corner of the cemetery on Ariapita Avenue. Approaching our proposed meeting place I was greeted by the heart thumping bass of a music truck. A band was gathering there and after some confusion in finding each other Jeffrey and I set off together down Ariapita Avenue toward Rosalino Street where Brian Macfarlane's band, Africa was assembling.

Woodbrook is a place of beginnings on Carnival Monday and Tuesday. In the 1800's while upper class masquerade was contained in noble buildings like the Queens Park Oval and the Prince's Building, the people's Carnival poured out from Mas camps and Pan yards onto the streets. As seen in illustration 3.10, more than half of the city's Mas camps are located north and south of Ariapita Avenue extending between Tragarete and Wrightson Road. Today, Ariapita Avenue (commonly called *"the Avenue"*) is a fashionable stretch of bars, restaurants and businesses, interspersed with private residences. The neighborhood was developed from abandoned arable land by the Seigart Brothers in the early 1900's, as a fashionable middle class residential neighborhood. In the 1920's, the town commission ran an east westerly street which connected to Park Street of the downtown area called Ariapita Avenue. The Avenue was so called because it ran through the old Ariapita Estate.

Just north of Woodbrook, separated by Tragarete Road, are the 1840's developments: St. Clair and Newtown. St. Clair is a neighborhood of mansions, many of which are now used as embassies for different countries. Newtown is an upper class development of smaller houses and remains that way today. Since its development, the location of Woodbrook on the periphery of the downtown area and its adjacency to the upper class developments to its north left only Woodbrook and Belmont as the lower to middle class residential developments within the city. According to Fig {} these are the two neighborhoods in Port-of-Spain that have become permanent homes to the Extraordinary City. Today during Carnival, as was the case with *Africa,* many bands gather in the streets

Key Map

Seigart Square

illus. 3.12 (above)
[a] Moko Jumbies walking along Rosalino Street beside the square.
[b] Women arranging their costumes in front of mirrors in Seigart Square.
[c] Masqueraders on Seigart Square before begining the parade.

illus. 3.13 (opposite)
[a] , [b] & [d] Masqueraders along Ariapita Avenue
[c] A man taken away by paramedics after passing out on the street

[a]

[b]

[c]

[d]

surrounding Ariapita Avenue. They begin their procession with great energy and anticipation. The Avenue itself is three to four lanes wide, creating a broad channel for large masquerade bands with their music trucks. The neighborhood is mixed use: residential and commercial with two to three storey buildings, many of which date back to colonial times. They stand low and unintimidating, allowing the masquerade to become the focal point of the street. Bands dance along Ariapita Avenue, past bars and businesses that masqueraders may have frequented during the year. Leaving that pale memory of their ordinary lives behind they move toward downtown Port-of-Spain.

Walking in the middle of the Avenue was strangely liberating. During the year I remember walking on those sidewalks, constantly aware of the loud busy traffic during the daytime, so busy that it made even crossing the street a challenge. Now however, the Avenue was free, open and welcoming to the pedestrian. It seemed more beautiful than I had ever noticed before. We walked past Adam Smith Square and a band was already passing the judging point; its tall King dancing on stilts in the morning sun. We turned up Rosalino Street which extends north and south of Ariapita Avenue to find the camp. On the south side Tribe, a large band of bikini clad masqueraders was gathering at their camp. The band Jeffrey was going to photograph however lay north of Ariapita, directly adjacent to Siegart Square. I had never been to Siegart Square as it is a small, grassy space tucked between houses and it was a surprise to find the camp in the midst of an otherwise residential street. One of the exciting things about Carnival is that one has the opportunity to learn the city by foot. Wanderings off the route have often taken me to places I would never have discovered in my year long routine.

Mas camps and Pan yards are seamlessly integrated into the city fabric. Typically, there tends to be minimal signage and no set typology or dedicated building type that defines these spaces and yet people know where they are simply through their social significance. Mas camps fit into residential garages and yards, sometimes with different sections built in different houses. In the case of large costumes, these may be built in other towns and driven into Port-of-Spain for the festival. Pan yards however occupy entire lots, many of which have remained in the same place for the past fifty years. They have evolved as their own typology. Typically they remain open to facilitate as many people and steel pans as possible they have only one or two small buildings on site in which instruments are stored

and year round activities can conducted.

Seigart Square and each of the eleven streets which make up Woodbrook were therefore named after the Seigart brothers and their family. Rosalino was the son of Carlos Seigart, one of the entrepreneurial bothers who founded Woodbrook. Apart from the eleven streets, two residential parks were to be made. Today, Seigart Square and Adam Smith Square are the two largest recreational green spaces in Woodbrook.

Approaching Seigart Square, the band was easily marked by five moko jumbies (stilt walkers) sitting easily atop a 10 foot garden wall. There were people covered from head to toe in bright printed fabrics, some donning large masks and others with elaborate feathered head pieces. As I stepped deeper into the crowd of gathering masqueraders, the ordinary face of Port-of-Spain started to fade and the space became coloured by the inferences of the masquerade. People poured out from the small camp, putting the finishing touches on their costumes in the adjacent park. Voluptuous black women in head scarves and patterned robes arranged themselves before large framed mirrors that were leaned against the old trees of Seigart Square. Lithe young men in brown loincloths practiced a choreographed dance in the morning sun while the moko jumbies, with scarves tied over their faces stalked past sleeping houses, their bare torsos floating above the heads of the crowd. It seemed such a magical gathering in this ordinary residential street. The band thickened to two thousand masqueraders that year which was not as large as Tribe down the street, with almost four thousand masqueraders that year. With a myriad of different costumes, Africa began its procession from its camp toward Ariapita Avenue.

By the time the whole band made it to the Avenue Evolution, another large band was already passing. Their enormous Carnival King which had won second prize at Dimanche Gras was pulled down the street amidst a sea of three thousand brightly coloured masqueraders. Drawing the eye upwards, the King's lurid colours, grotesque face and bulging eyes stood beautiful in front of second storey rooftops. A line of music and service trucks were densely packed onto the streets with the throng of masqueraders. The Avenue was thumping with Soca music: fast paced and bass driven, exciting wild dances, smiles and laughter from the proud band that passed us. As the street cleared, Africa assembled into sections and began their procession toward Adam Smith Square. In a jumble of activity, sections of costumes became apparent as the large papier-mâché Nigerian masks grouped together and all of the bright orange feathered headpieces stood in another section behind them. A kind of order emerged around the music truck, booming all along in the middle of the narrow street. Nearing the judging point, the band's King and Queen who had won first place the night before were brought up side streets on trucks. The King was a massive golden lion's head with a mane that shot up as high as the rooftops around with a gaping maw that threatened to swallow the crowd. The Queen

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[a]

[b]

[c]

illus: 3.14 (above)
[a] Tribe Carnival King on Ariapita Avenue
[b] Brian Macfarlane King near Adam Smith Square
[c] Brian Macfarlane Queen near Adam Smith Square

illus 3.15 (opposite)
[a] & [b] Brian Macfarlane's band Africa passing Victoria Square
[c] & [d] Adam Smith Square

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[a]

[b]

[c]

[d]

Key Map

Adam Smith Square was named after Alderman Adam Smith who acted as mayor of Port-of-Spain between 1919 and 1920. Today, the square is almost entirely associated with Carnival. It is seldom used during the year except for select functions like Trinidad's fashion week. Its location is surrounded by many popular restaurants and bars, makes it a very visible landmark in the city. Most bands that assemble in Woodbrook perform before the Adam Smith Square Judging point before going downtown. At the end of Ariapita Avenue, where Park Street begins is the Lapeyrouse Cemetery. Lapeyrouse Cemetery is one of the oldest monuments of Port-of-Spain. It is named after a Frenchman Pico de la Peyrouse who came to Trinidad in 1778. Although he ran a sugar estate in adjacent land, the cemetery was referred to at the time as *'Campo Santo'* or *holy field*. Its earliest graves start from 1745. The cemetery's walls were built in 1813. Today, the cemetery is testament to the different lives that have been lived in the Caribbean. The cemetery land was marked off in parts. The Western wall was lined by Anglican graves while the eastern wall was dedicated to Catholics. Another section was set out for ex-slaves with the graves of East Indians and Chinese interspersed between. The walls of the cemetery rise above eye level. Peeping above them however are crosses and steeples of elaborate family tombs. These walls mark the threshold between Woodbrook and Downtown.

elaborate feathered head dress that fell all the way from his head to his feet. When we reached the end of Ariapita Avenue a Sailor band of older gentlemen in white suits filled the streets. They followed a Steelpan truck and danced a short step, staccato kind of dance, spraying white body powder into the air. From afar they appeared under the old drooping trees of the cemetery, surrounded by a gentle haze of white powder. I could hear them from far off, the sound of the Steelpan starkly different from the hard edge of the electronic music trucks. The music was rounder, joyous and more seductive, shaping the temperament of the entire band as it ebbed and flowed through the city. Under the trees of Lapeyrouse Cemetery, I found ecstasy between the joyous and cantankerous revelry of the Sailors and a macabre hum of death just beyond the cemetery's high yellow walls. I became acutely aware that I was passing through something, moving toward something, being transported there with this rowdy bunch of sailors. One older man with a red women's thong over his white linen pants grabbed me to him for a short dance. With cups of rum in their hands, he and his friends laughed and called after me as I smiled and reluctantly pulled away. Knowing that if I lost him now, I would never find him again, I ran after Jeffrey who was quickly disappearing in the cloud of white. Together we turned down St. Vincent Street.

St. Vincent Street is one of the earliest streets built in the downtown area. When the British landed in Trinidad in 1797, St. Vincent Street outlined the outer edge of Marine Square (later Independence Square) on the waterfront. In 1875 it was extended beyond Marine Square, creating the western boundary of South Quay as well. The street was named by the Spanish after the victory of Lord Nelson off Cape St. Vincent in Spain in 1797. In 1802 when Brunswick Square (later Woodford Square) was developed with government buildings built around it, St. Vincent Street grew and began its growth northwards toward the Queens Park Savannah. Today, St. Vincent Street has become the site of the Red House, Port-of-Spain's Criminal Investigations Unit, the National Public Library, the Trinidad Guardian building which holds the country's oldest newspaper and the National Treasury. If you continue its extension beyond Independence Square, it is also the site of the Eric Williams Financial Complex (called "Twin Towers"). Its importance therefore is of a civic nature and the buildings on the street directly express that. The Red House foundations were laid in 1844 but its insides were burned in the Water Riots of 1903. It was restored in 1906 to its present condition[1]. In 1990 the Red House was overtaken by Yasin Abu Bakr, leader of the *Jamaat al Muslimeen.* Attempting to stage a *coup d'état*, the Jammat held members of Parliament hostage while other people killed within the building. The coup lasted for six days before the

Key Map

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Lapeyrouse Cemetery

[a]

[b]

[c]

[d]

illus. 3.16
[a] & [b] Sailor Band passing Lapeyrouse Cemetary
[c] & [d] *Africa* passing Victoria Square.

illus. 3.17 (opposite)
[a] & [b] Bands going down St. Vincent Street past the National Library and the Criminal Investigations Unit
[c] & [d] Masqueraders resting on the pavement outside the Red House.
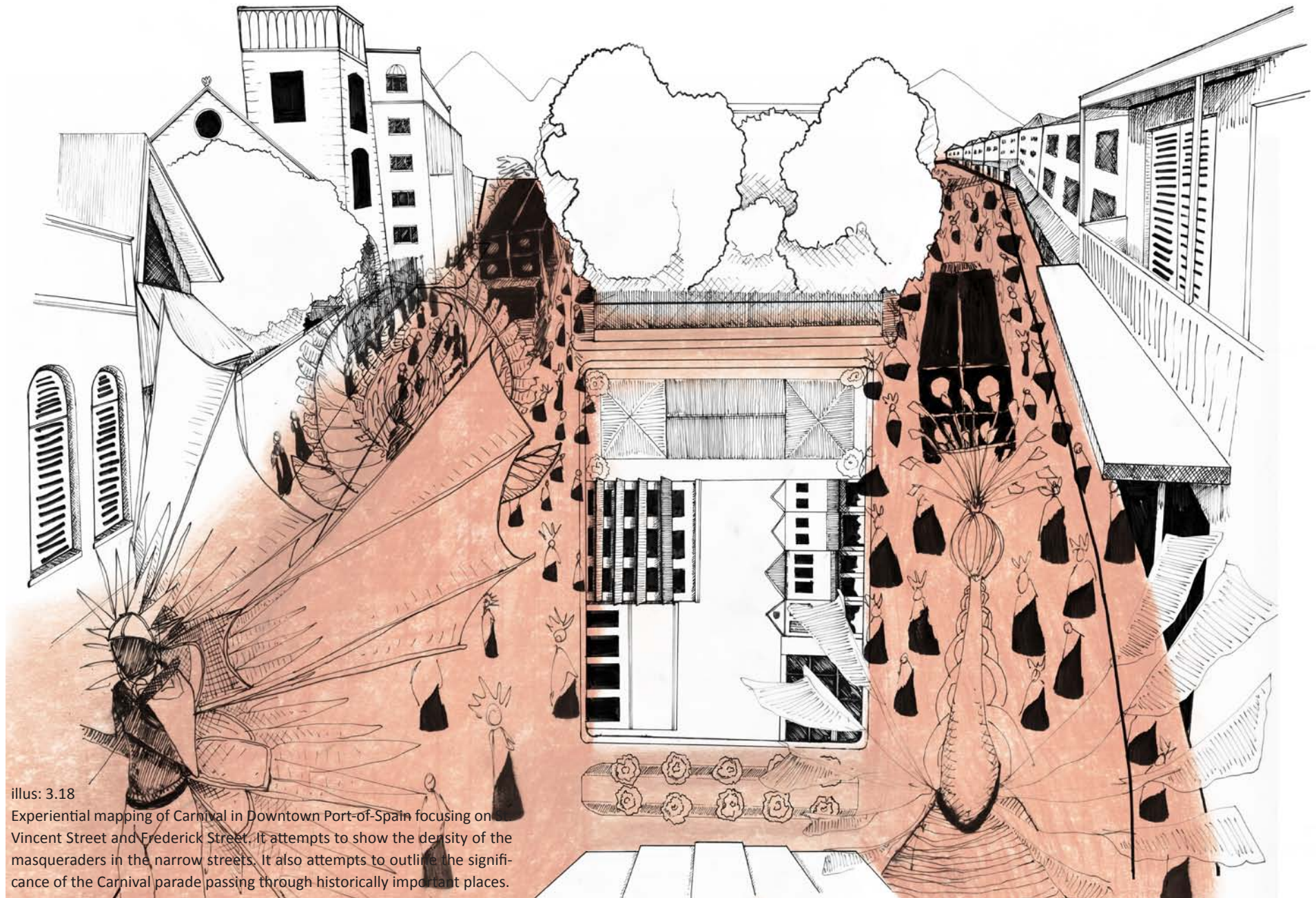
[a]

[b]

[c]

[d]

illus: 3.18
Experiential mapping of Carnival in Downtown Port-of-Spain focusing on St Vincent Street and Frederick Street. It attempts to show the density of the masqueraders in the narrow streets. It also attempts to outline the significance of the Carnival parade passing through historically important places.

Red House was reclaimed by the National Army. This memory is perhaps one of the strongest of the Red House within public memory. It stands on St. Vincent Street therefore as an iconic representation of Trinidadian government and its continued democratic freedom.

As we moved toward the downtown core streets narrowed and buildings increased in height. I was immediately aware of weight, age and density. The tone of the masquerade changed as we crossed Park Street and turned down St. Vincent Street. I could see the tops of Kings and Queens moving down the narrow street, brushing against its very boundaries, pressing against its notable buildings in a torrent of defiant bliss. On St. Vincent Street, we passed the courthouse, the police headquarters, the national library and the Red House. Against these civic monuments, I was overcome by an acute sense of the temporality of masquerade and yet calmed by the knowledge that each year for the past hundred years, thousands of people have danced through these streets, along this same path. I realised that within that swirling crowd of feathers and music lay a silent understanding of our world which transcends the power that governments have over people. The beauty of the Mas seemed stronger against those sombre civic buildings. In that moment, the persistence of a sea of red and yellow feathers and the glint of tinsel paper on a breastplate somehow rivalled the strength of the Treasury. With the casualness of a flowered staff leaning against the fence of the Police Headquarters, an elaborate Wild Indian head piece sitting on the ground outside the Red House and a band of people sitting on the sidewalk having their lunch, I was reminded that on these Carnival days, the city truly belonged to its people.

Independence Square, formerly called Marine Square and *Plaza Marina*, was perhaps one of the first spatial designations made in the life of Port-of-Spain. In 1797 when the British entered Port-of-Spain, they did so onto a flat muddy expanse of land, at that time bordered by the ocean on its west and south edges[2]. From 1814 to 1816 under Governor Sir Ralph Woodford, the long linear square was undertaken to be beautified with exotic trees and gardens with a Promenade built called Almond Walk. In the early life of Port-of-Spain, all of the downtown streets concluded at Marine Square. Today, it maintains the southern boundary of the downtown streets from Richmond to Charlotte Street, concluding in the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Immaculate Conception. In the past Marine Square was a hub of Carnival activity. In 1919 "Victory Carnival" was sponsored by the Trinidad Guardian as the biggest Carnival since the end of the First World War[3]. Its celebration was held in two centers: Marine Square and the Queens Park

Independence Square

[a]

[b]

[c]

illus. 3.19
[a] & [b] Fancy Sailors crossing
Independence Square
[c] Masqueraders resting under
trees of Independence Square

illus 3.20
[a] Africa passing South Quay judging point
[b] Midnight Robbers nearing South Quay
[c] Jouvert masqueraders at South Quay
[d] African emerging from St. Vincent Street

illus. 3.21
Abstract mapping of Independence Square and South Quay with their significance along the parade route. the drawing attempts to convey the openness of the tree lines square and its connection to the stage at South Quay

Savannah. The "Victory Carnival" marked the beginning of large citywide Carnival activities. During Carnival, although Marine Square is no longer a judging point, it is still a major point within the parade where masqueraders pause and refresh themselves. Since it is crossed at St. Vincent Street going toward South Quay and again at Broadway, going to Frederick Street, the square between those sections is typically full of people. Today, this tree lined square is still the most popular public space in Port-of-Spain and is often the location of many public expositions and shows during the year. Through the intersection of Independence Square with Broadway and City Gate (old headquarters of the Trinidad Government Railway), the linear form of Independence Square offers passage of several thousands of people a day who arrive into Port-of-Spain by public transit.

St. Vincent Street opens onto Independence Square. The tree lined promenade is bordered by the tallest buildings in the city. As the masqueraders pour out onto the square the density of the downtown area immediately recedes. The sky opens up and masqueraders seek shaded spots to rest while others continue south beside the Twin Towers toward South Quay. On Independence Square, I meet a Fancy Sailor Band. Unlike the costumes of the Sailor band I saw at Lapeyrouse, this band's costumes are brightly coloured. The cut is still similar to the white sailor costumes, but their colours are wilder and they wear elaborate, tall head dresses. Two Fancy Sailors start a mock stick fight and others join in. One is a young white man perhaps in his late twenties. The other is an older black man in his forties. Both fight with smiles on their faces faking hard blows and dancing around each other against the backdrop of trees and high rise buildings. Independence Square is lined by tall buildings of different corporations with the Trinidad Stock Exchange sitting near its Western corner. The Twin Towers and the Treasury at the corner of St. Vincent Street and Independence Square makes its western end a centre of financial and bureaucratic power. Looking around the square in the afternoon sun I remembered coming here during the year to visit the Planning Department in the lower floors of the Twin Towers. Now looking at it then, swarmed with colourful masqueraders, those ordinary memories and the tensions associated with them fade. All that exists are those Fancy Sailors who make this space of corporate power magical and egalitarian. Independence Square on this day and during the year belongs to everyone. In a spirit of jovial togetherness, I join the band of Fancy Sailors and continue toward South Quay.

Bordering the Twin Towers are tall purple fences with black wrought iron frames. They temporarily secure the perimeter of the building from the antics of masqueraders. Beside the twin towers is a derelict old building from colonial times. It's once beautiful wrought iron canopy still extends over the sidewalk, but its crumbling shell is a sad reminder of a government's ignorance. The juxtaposition between the crumbling building and the towering Financial Centre across

the road is punctuated by the political commentary of the Fancy Sailors. As we round the corner toward South Quay, the street broadens and the view opens up to the waterfront. A steel pan truck that led the Fancy Sailors sets a sweet sweet tone for the sailors awaiting their turn to cross the stage. Lurking around the corner is a trio of midnight robbers. They stand starkly in their black robes, with the blue glass of Nicholas Towers rising behind them. An older man in his wide brimmed hat and a skull for a face pulls a black wooden coffin with a sign written "Here Lies Traditional Mas". On the coffin sits a child, perhaps 6 years old also dressed in a black cape idly sucking on a black water gun. With a rising violent crime rate and masquerade overtaken by bikini mas, the Robber stands as a reminder that we are letting go of the things that make us who we are. With the message of the Robber sinking in, I turn toward St. Vincent Street and see emerging through the buildings on the other side of Independence Square the large golden lion's head of Africa.

South Quay was built between the 1820's and 1870's through extensive waterfront reclamation projects. These reclamation projects are responsible for the current form of the coastline at South Quay and the western edge of today's Harbor. The lighthouse which stands beside City Gate today was built in 1842 after the first phase of reclamation works was complete. In 1882 South Quay was marked by a long row of wooden buildings which acted as the city's railway headquarters (rebuilt in the 1950's as City Gate) and by 1901 it had also became the location of a large market. Michael Antony in The Making of Port-of-Spain states that: *'So far as commerce was concerned, these were rising cocoa days, and cocoa merchants were in formidable array on South Quay'*[4]. South Quay and the areas west and east of it contain very little residential space. It is mostly civic and industrial spaces which connect to Independence Square. Its broad streets facilitate vast amounts of traffic coming into and leaving Port-of-Spain. During the year it is the location of many mini bus Taxi Stands, temporary market stalls, a Carnival museum and a roughly fenced empty lot where the judging stands are erected each year. Since its street spans four to five lanes of traffic, during Carnival large bands are able to pass through its boundaries with ease.

South Quay judging point is open and wide. It is full of audience members, the sky extends above and a gentle sea breeze passes through the street. After the jostle of the downtown procession, this openness comes as a relief. The lighthouse can be seen behind the stage; a symbol that you have reached Port-of-Spain. City Gate, the most prominent iconic image of Port-of-Spain, beside the Twin Towers rises with grandeur, enhanced by the masquerade. As the Sailors pass the

judging stand, they spread out and theatrically perform their dances. The energy of the band swells as they show off to the audience and judges. I remember J'ouvert the morning before, seeing devils and Ole Mas Characters performing all along these same streets. As the Sailors move toward City Gate, South Quay is ablaze with a joyous occupation it sees at no other time of the year. City Gate brings thousands of people into town every day. It seems entirely fitting that this festival of the people, this rude barrage of ecstasy, sweeps through the streets, past City Gate toward Broadway and Independence Square. I walk past the stand where I used to catch a taxi to go home after work. The place is so familiar to me as we dip back through Independence Square going back toward downtown. During Carnival the Independence Square is full of masqueraders reclining, resting and eating. Whereas during the year, the same people would never be found sprawled out on the grass, during Carnival is it permissible. We linger at Independence Square, resting for a while until Africa comes up Broadway and goes up Frederick Street.

Frederick Street was one of the first ten streets built in Port-of-Spain in the late 1700's. In 1808 however a fire began on Frederick Street which spread throughout the old city centre all the way to Charlotte Street, destroying many of the older buildings of Port-of-Spain. Along Frederick Street was a grassy area called Plaza de Armas where soldiers would practice. Redubbed Brunswick Square in 1802 by the British, the governor Sir Ralph Woodford decided to dedicate the square as a space for public recreation. From 1814 to 1816 beautification of the city's public squares began and Brunswick Square was fenced and exotic varieties of plants from the Caribbean and South America were put in which still stand there today. The square was renamed Woodford Square in 1917 to honor Sir Ralph Woodford[5]. Frederick Street today is still lined by older buildings. It is entirely commercial in the area south of Woodford Square. The square itself has taken on very strong political meaning and is popularly called *"University of Woodford Square"* and *"The People's Parliament"*. Located opposite the Red House, the Woodford Square has been the location of a number of public protests and political gatherings even before the country's independence from Britain in 1962. The Water Riots of 1903 began in Woodford Square where members of the public gathered to protest an ordinance stipulating in increase in the price of water. The riots, after an altercation in the square between a police officer and a woman, led to the riots that ended with the burning of the Red House. Woodford Square has been the scene of many

Key Map

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Frederick Street

illus. 3.22
[a] Carnival Queen on Frederick Street
[b] & [e] Revellers by Woodford Square
[c] & [d] Kiddies Carnival on Frederick Street

[a]

[b]

illus. 3.23
[a] Steelband at the intersection of Park St. & Charlotte St.
[b] Revellers on Charlotte street Jouvert morning
[c] Masqueraders on upper Charlotte Street

[c]

illus. 3.24
Abstract mapping of the Queens Park Savannah and its significance along the parade route. the drawing attempts to convey the Savannah as a place of spectacle after a compressed passage through Downtown Port-of-Spain

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musical performances, political rallies and is typically either the starting point or ending point of any public protest in Port-of-Spain.

The street is narrow and framed by old buildings now discount shopping malls. The sidewalks are lined with white metal fences from which vendors have hung their products. As we approach Woodford Square one man sells an assortment of T-shirts with the faces of Barack Obama next to other t-shirts of Bob Marley with Rasta colours. The narrow old streets open to reveal Woodford Square, or the University of Woodford Square. Behind its tall beautiful trees stands the Red House, its roof ironically still unfixed, stubbornly refusing the patchwork that has been carrying on for the past couple years. I used to come to Woodford Square after work to meet an old friend. We would grab a bite to eat and sit under on the benches before getting a taxi home. Today, the sidewalks are crowded with vendors. The smell of hot doubles and shark & bake wafts towards me. A tall Rasta man with a long dreaded beard smiles and walks by selling organic loofa. They hang in pods around him and he looks like a strange masquerade as well. Children of the vendors play on the side walk and giggle as Jeffrey takes a picture of them dancing. The band turns on Park Street, past the old Anglican church and turns quickly again onto Charlotte Street where I had seen two steelbands meet up during J'ouvert the morning before.

Charlotte Street has been the easternmost boundary of Port-of-Spain since 1797 near the East Dry River. The Carnival route connects to Charlotte Street north of Park Street near to Renegades Pan Yard. Many government housing projects for lower income families are located along Charlotte Street as well as the General Hospital of Port-of-Spain. Typically congested with traffic, Charlotte Street is a major vehicular artery on the eastern edge of the city. Pedestrians however have little reason to wander along its length as there is no major public infrastructure and it is known as an unsafe part of town. During Carnival however, most bands will safely pass along Charlotte Street before reaching the Queens Park Savannah. It is the only time of year that many people will experience this boundary of the city as it meets the slopes of Laventille. Laventille was formed in the 1830's after Emancipation, when ex-slaves formed squatter settlements on the fringes of Port-of-Spain[6]. The connection between downtown Port-of-Spain and the hillside slums stand starkly separate on either side of Charlotte Street. Within Laventille is the Desperadoes Steel Band Orchestra. It is one of the oldest and most prolific bands in Trinidad. The steel pan drum is said to have been invented in Laventille

alongside different Masquerade types like the Black Indians: a variation of Wild Indian Mas. Although Laventille is now a slum, ridden with drugs and gang warfare, it continues to produce prolific artists.

I bid Jeffrey farewell at the corner of Park Street but I continued on my own toward the Savannah. Charlotte Street is not a place I would walk by myself any other time during the year. Here on the outer fringes of Downtown Port-of-Spain, Charlotte Street meets the city's poorer slums. On these days of Carnival however, all bands go along Charlotte Street before reaching the Savannah. These streets are broader than downtown meeting the edge of Lavantille Hill. The sky opens up above as buildings no longer tower above you. Incredible pan music pours out of Renegades Pan Yard midway up the Street. The crowds thicken as bands line up all down the street. From the top of Charlotte Street every colour can be seen extending down its long path. As you near the northern tip of the street it is near impossible to move through the crowd. People climb up walls and sit on fences trying to get a view of what is going on. A large group of Chinese construction workers stand on a construction trailer looking at the festival. Every masquerader is full of anticipation, as they prepare to cross the final stage. Music Trucks all down the street blast music as people dance and scream, their energy surmounting before bursting onto the Savannah stage.

Queens Park Savannah (called *"the Savannah"*) was incorporated into the city of Port-of-Spain in 1817 as part of Governor Woodfords attempt to beautify Port-of-Spain. Today it forms the northernmost boundary of the city. Once called Paradise Estate, where sugar cane was grown and cattle grazed, the land (232 acres) was purchased and converted into a large public recreational space for the growing city. Today it is used throughout the year by cricket teams, football teams, kite flying competitions and school field trips. What's more, it has become the world's largest traffic round-about. Due to the city's growth, it has become a centre for vehicular traffic around the city. There is only one building located on the Queens Park Savannah and that is the Grand Stand. The Grand Stand has been rebuilt over the years in the same location and always for the same purpose: it is the chief judging point for the Carnival Parade. In recent years, the parade stands have been erected to look onto the street, with the informal stands located at the Grand Stand for events like the Panorama competition. In addition, today an array of small huts is erected along the periphery of the Savannah near to the Grand Stand. These huts intended for use be local vendors and craftsmen are referred to

as the Carnival Village. Before the Savannah became the locus of Carnival activity that is today, opposite the Savannah used to be the Prince's Building which *'… for more than a hundred years remained a focal point for public balls, Carnival frolics, public meetings, and all manner of social occasions.[7]'* The Prince's Building was used up until 1977 when it was destroyed in a fire[8]. Today in its location is the recently completed Centre for Performing Arts. In 1919, the Queens Park Savannah was first incorporated into Port-of-Spain's Carnival under the "Victory Carnival". An important feature of this Carnival was a parade of decorated vehicles that ran around the Savannah[9]. Since that time, the Savannah has become an important centre for Carnival. Its wide curving street and plentiful green space make it an ideal location for large and small bands to pass through. It is the official point of televised broadcast of the Parade of the Bands and is therefore in many ways a Carnival stage.

Crossing the Queens Park Savannah marks the final great performance of the Carnival. Armed with the band's favourite musical pick for the season, masqueraders charge across the stage, dancing with all the energy and enthusiasm they can muster, filmed and broadcasted around Trinidad. It is the last and greatest stage on which to be seen. I look on from between the trees since at this point it is impossible to get any closer. This stage is for the masqueraders. Africa doesn't cross the stage until the sun has begun to set. In the waning sun of Carnival 2009, each section dances under the Samaan trees, proudly representing their band, their freedom and their possession of Port-of-Spain.

At this point I begin my trek back to my car. I walk along the outer edges of the Savannah, passing a steelband going back into Belmont, other masquerade bands on and off the route. As the sun was sinking into the night, the extraordinary city still holds firmly into its final hours as bands make their last lap around the city. It is a time of total abandon. There is joy, laughter and dancing everywhere fading so gradually before the dawn of Ash Wednesday morning.
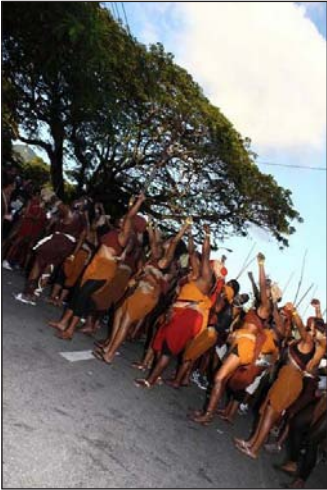
[a]

[b]

[c]

[d]

[e]

illus. 3.25
[ALL] The band Africa passing the main judging point at the
Queens Park Savannah

illus. 3.26 (opposite)
[a] & [c] Kiddies Carnival at Queens Park Savannah
[b] Jouvert Revellers at Queens Park Savannah
[d] Carnival Villiage around Queens Park Savannah

[a]

[b]

[c]

[d]

MAS

INDEPENDENCE

'This is people taller than cathedrals; this is people more beautiful than avenues with trees.'
Earl Lovelace. The Dragon Can`t Dance

Acrylic on Canvas
24 x 36

MAS

ROBBER

'From the day my mother gave birth to me, the sun refused to shine and the wind ceased blowing many mothers that day gave birth, but to deformed children. Plagues and pestilence pestered the cities, for atomic eruption raged in the mountains. Philosophers, scientists, professors said 'the world is come to an end' but no. It was me; a monarch was born. Master of all I survey and my right where none could dispute.'

Daniel J Crowley, Caribbean Quarterley

Acrylic on Canvas
24 x 36

MAS

SAVANNAH

The Savannah bears witness in its vast belly. This dense, pulsating rush of human energy suddenly widens, breathes – it swells and once more I am an individual again. The sun is coming up and I am more exposed now. I used to pass by here every day in another time and another life, belonging to a more shrouded existence. The sea of blue still thrashes and shakes, taking on the wider streets, cooling down for a short time – to see and be seen.

Personal Account, Carnival 2009

Acrylic on Canvas
18 x 24

MAS

TWO FACE

''Every year we dance and sing
And every year we kill the King
Because the old King must be slain
For the new King to rise again...'

Derek Walcott

Acrylic on Canvas
24 x 36

MAS

MOAN

'Then the darkness filled with its attendants. They were stout men with glistening faces. They held on to the luminous ropes attached to the towering figure. Dancing wildly, it dragged them towards the rioting. When it strode past, sundering the air, I crept out of my hiding place. Swirling with hallucinations, I started back towards the main road.'

The Famished Road by Ben Okri

Acrylic on Canvas
24 x 36

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CHAPTER 4 : Anatomy of the Festival

Ephemeral. Evanescent. Transient. These are words used to describe the temporality of the Carnival. The brevity of the experience is intrinsic to the festival's restorative nature as the Extraordinary city resurges, reclaims and purges the city of its year long tensions. This festival is temporary. Its beauty lies in its physical ephemerality, though its effect lingers in the city's psyche throughout the year. It is this temporary upturning into chaos that re-energises ordinary time. The disposal of last years costume is not to be mourned, but rather it is a necessary part of starting over.

The experience of Carnival as it moves through Port-of-Spain extends from the context of the city to the morphology of the band itself. A typical band on Carnival Tuesday will be composed of dozens, sometimes hundreds or thousands of masqueraders, arranged in different sections. The theme of each band, often historical or based on a natural phenomenon will be interpreted differently among the costumes of the different sections. Each band therefore will appear as a wide stratification of form and colour. Each band will also have with them a large Carnival Queen and King which is representative of the band at large. Accompanying each band will be some kind of music truck: an electronic music truck that is overseen by a DJ, a steelband music truck which will be loaded with dozens of steel pan players and their instruments or a rhythm section which would be smaller in size than a steelband and carrying different percussive instruments. Depending on the size of the band and the services it promises to provide, a band might also be accompanied by trucks with food or washroom facilities. In the case

[1] The Sacred and The Profane, Mircea Eliade, pg 79

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of some there might also be an outer edge of security with ropes, keeping the masquerader and spectator separate.

Within the morphology of the band therefore a masquerader is always within the context of his section, his adjacency to a truck, the border of the band, the width of the street, the location of vendors on the sidewalks, the density of spectators and the size and setback of the buildings around him. This chapter therefore closely considers this context.

In following section, the history and current form of traditional Carnival characers will be presented. Afterward this is a set of diagrams which consider twelve images taken along the parade route. By isolating elements of the parade that are repeated throughout the city, a rough guide can be made of the types of spatial elements found in the festival.

Devil Mas is one of the oldest forms of Masquerade created in Trinidad. The earliest devils were seen around 1848, rising in popularity in the 1900`s. It is thought that slaves reenacted their own lives in a macabre dance where the forks and chains were both a Christian image of hell as well as a physical image of what a band of slaves on the plantation would look like. This type of fearsome masquerade may also have been part of an apotropaic ritual (to ward off evil)

Different types of Devil Bands exist; Blue Devils however remain one of the most popular types seen today. Devil bands consist of a king devil, and pairs of creatures, some tethered by ropes and chains. They instil a chilling primordial fear into the onlooker, molesting them until they pay them to move on. It is perhaps the most intense and vehement form of Mas that exists in Trinidad today. A small town just outside Port-of-Spain called Paramin is now the home Blue Devil Mas.

'When the moment comes for me to take up that mask, and I take the mask and put it on, I become a different being entirely. I never feel as if I am human at all. All I see in front of me is devils! Real! Until a long while after, before I get myself to knowledge again.'
Charles Benet, Personal Account, 1965

illus. 4.2

There is a myth that the Moko Jumbie walked on his tall stilt legs from West Africa, across the ocean carrying centuries of his ancestral wisdom to Trinidad. The term Moko refers to an African God and Jumbie is a Trinidadian word for ghost (perhaps derived from Congolese ``zumbie``). The Moko stilt walker in Nigeria is a god who protects the village from evil.

The Moko Jumbie in Trinidad is rooted in traditional Mas. There are 3 schools in the island that teach stilt walking and dancing to children and adults. Different skill levels are indicated by the height of the stilt.

illus. 4.3

Born in the early 1900`s the Midnight Robber emerged at first from a simple cowboy masquerade. Over time he evolved to incorporate images of the Devil and speech of the Pierrot. The Midnight Robber is a braggart, with apocalyptic speeches of death and destruction. Typically appearing alone rather than in a band, the robber wears a large oversized hat reminiscent of his cowboy lineage. His clothes are all black, with a dark cape that extends to the ground. The Robber drags a coffin behind him and engages members of the public in loquacious verbal assaults.

'From the day my mother gave birth to me, the sun refused to shine and the wind ceased blowing many mothers that day gave birth, but to deformed children. Plagues and pestilence pestered the cities, for atomic eruption raged in the mountains. Philosophers, scientists, professors said 'the world is come to an end but no. It was me; a monarch was born. Master of all I survey and my right where none could dispute.'

Daniel J Crowley, Caribbean Quarterly

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MUD MAS

illus. 4.4

Everything is from mud then back to mud again,
Everything is mud from creation to J'ouvert morning...

Deep in the dirt we connect to your birth
Trapped inside, feel the vibe coming straight from the tribe...

Its liberation and renewal of this madness potential
This rhythm detrimental, it is exponential
It will cause an infection in the whole of your system
Bringing 'bout resurrection
It will leave you in a mess
This is a mud madness.

Mud Madness, 3 Canal

illus. 4.5

J'ouvert began around 1884 out of the ashes of Canboulay. Ole Mas (old-mask) characters were a traditional part of the morning festival. Their appearance in the 1900's were indulged in by upper-class creoles, with costumes that were typically satirical representations of global sociopolitical commentary. Though in recent times it as lessened in popularity, it remains a witty and accessible masquerade that can be seen on Carnival Monday morning in Port-of-Spain. Characters range from solitary figures to groups of people under one theme. They perform before a judging point at South Quay in Monday morning in competition for the best costume.

SAILOR MAS

illus. 4.6

Military bands were one of the oldest forms of group masquerade. It goes back to the earliest days of Trinidad's Carnival after the emancipation of slavery, since Carnival was always overseen by martial law. One of the first Carnival bands therefore was a burlesque of an artillery militia. A turning point occurred in 1907 however when military bands transformed into Sailor bands. What heralded this change was an unprecedented visit of a US naval fleet to the island. 'Yankee Sailors' gained in popularity and today their number of masqueraders may be up to two thousand. The costume is lightweight, inexpensive and re-usable so that costumes may evolve from year to year rather than being thrown away. Sailors throw powder in the air and are often associated with particular Steelbands. Fancy sailors are another kind of sailor mas seen today. Masqueraders wear tall, elaborately decorated papier-mâché head pieces with their stark white naval costumes that are adorned by ribbons, feathers and sequins.

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illus. 4.7

Wild Indian Mas has existed in Trinidad since the middle of the 1800's. They were based many years ago on a tribe of aboriginals to known as the Warahoon from the Orinoco Delta in South America. They were known in the south of the island especially, which is just a few miles away from Venezuela. Wild Indian Mas became more popular in the island in the 1900's from North American films of the time. The Wild Indian Mas grew to be spilt into different colors: Red, Blue, Black and White Indians. Some multi colored bands as shown above also exist.

What is amazing about this type of masquerade is that each tribe has its own language that is a mixture of aboriginal Indian, Spanish, English and perhaps French. Their language is accompanied by an energetic dance that is specific to the tribe. Rehearsal for their masquerade is held approaching Carnival every year. Whole families take part in the masquerade.

illus. 4.8

The Dimanche Gras Show was inaugurated in 1946 after the brief hiatus in Carnival celebration during World War II. The crowning of the Carnival King and Queen was central to the theatrical performance. Today these characters form part of the traditional Pretty Mas band. They are large elaborate costumes that are carried by a woman (Queen) and a man (King). They present in larger form the theme of their band. In Trinidadian tradition, the King and Queen costumes are not floats but rather are worn, pulled or carried by a person. Consequently, they often reflect the movement of the person dancing within them.

illus. 4.9

Pretty Mas began in the 1930`s and 40`s with historical bands that depicted epic stories or events. In the 1950`s mas designers introduced masquerades with short skirts these costumes may have shrunk over time into its present form. Today the most popular iconographic image of Carnival in the New World is of the bikini clad masquerader dancing in the street. These bands tend to be quite large, numbering in the thousands, and separated into different sections by theme. Themes are often naturalistic or cultural (eg: Birds of a Feather by Tribe 2009 and The Oddessey by Peter Minshall in 1996). There are two strands of Pretty mas today. The first kind is the bikini model which emphasises colour and seduction. The second kind is more closely linked to the historical band tradition and creatively employs different kinds of costumes for that years themes emphasising theatre and form.

ROUTE MAP

1.   Adam Smith Square

2.   Ariapita Avenue

3.   Park Street

4.   Upper St. Vincent Street

5.   Upper St. Vincent Street

6.   Independence Square

7.   Lower St. Vincent Street

8.   South Quay

9.   South Quay

10.   Rosary Junction

11.   Charlotte Street

12.   Queens Park Savannah

illus 4.10: Route map showing the location of
each photograph shown on the following pages.

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illus 4.11: Photographs along parade route

illus 4.12: Photographs along parade route

gov't infrustructure :
Public spectator stands and judging tents are erected in the weeks preceding Carnival. Adam Smith square is the only judging point just outside of the downtown area of Port-of-Spain.

signage:
The NCC broadcasts nationally every year a televised `Parade of the Bands` as they cross different judging points. Around judging points therefore where coverage takes place there tends to be more signage than in other areas of the city.

music truck:
In this photograph a DJ music truck is passing the judging point with its band. When trucks pass the judging point, they play the band's song pick for road march, that is, the most popular song on the road played that year.
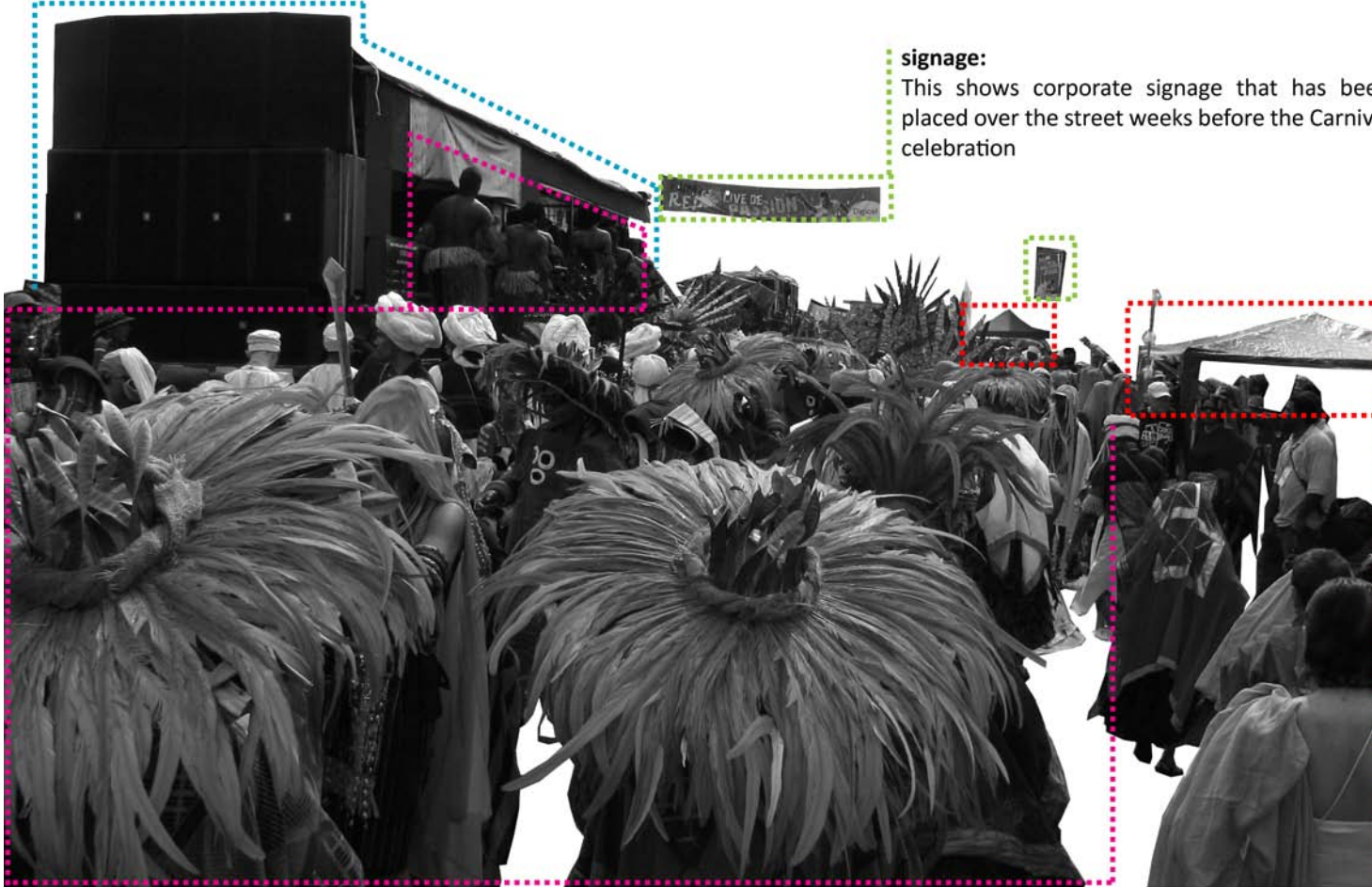
masqueraders :
Bands of Masqueraders line up to pass each judging point. The large costumes highlighted are king costumes for the band passing the judging point. In the far background you can see other masqueraders gathering to pass the judging tents.

illus 4.13: Adam Smith Square

music trucks :
DJ music trucks also create stratifications within the street.
They are like moving service walls within a carnival band.

signage:
This shows corporate signage that has been placed over the street weeks before the Carnival celebration

masqueraders:
The tall stilt figures outlined against the music truck are called Moko Jumbies. The theme of this band was called Africa. The moko jumie is a Trinidadian iconic masquerade image with West African mythology attached to its appearance in the 'new world'. This will be discussed further in the section to follow. This band was composed of several sections. Each section represented a different masks, head pieces and colours.

vendors:
With most shops closed, vendors create new borders on streets; often built off of existing wall and fences.

illus 4.14: Ariapita Avenue
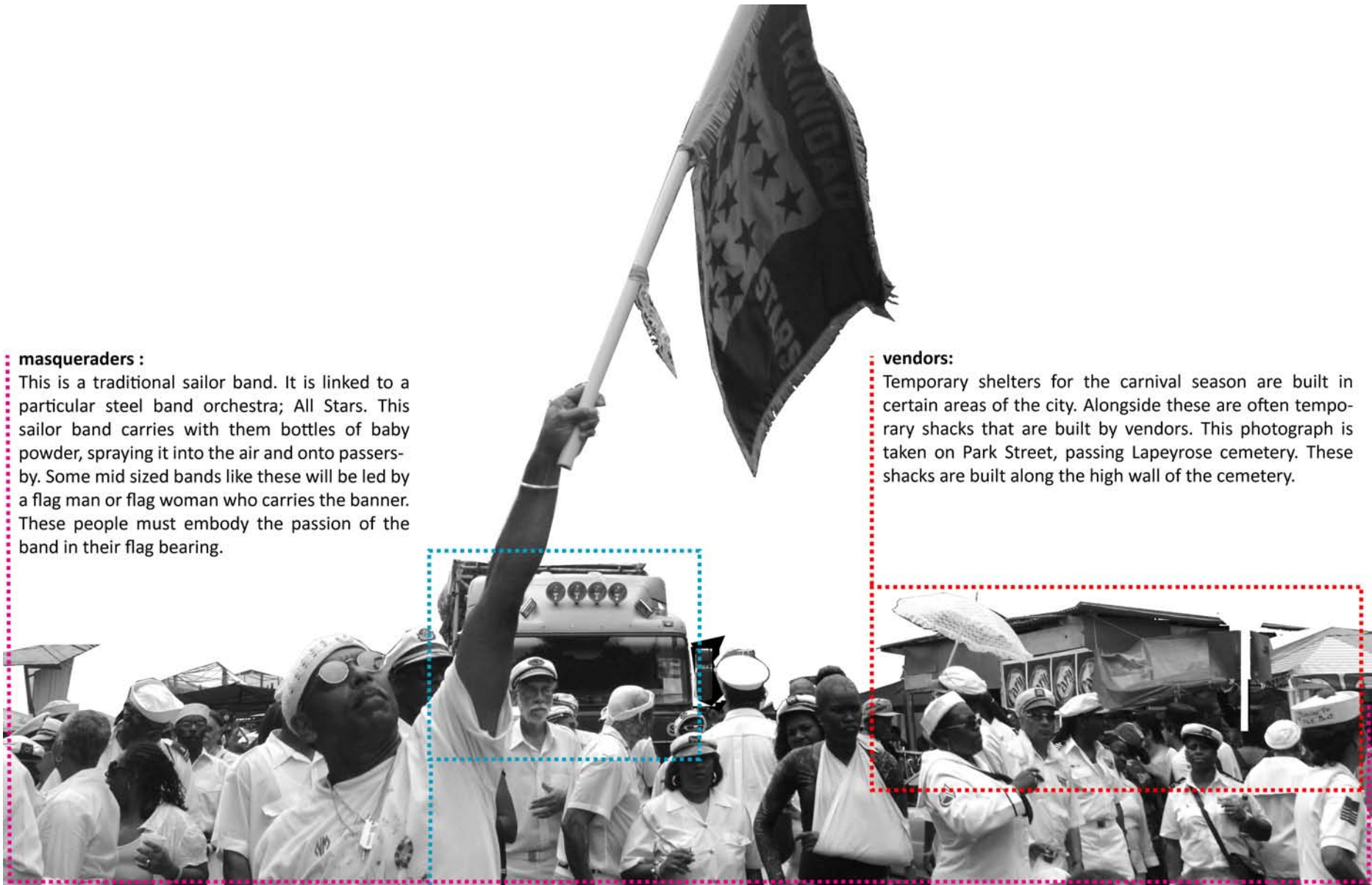
masqueraders :

This is a traditional sailor band. It is linked to a particular steel band orchestra; All Stars. This sailor band carries with them bottles of baby powder, spraying it into the air and onto passers-by. Some mid sized bands like these will be led by a flag man or flag woman who carries the banner. These people must embody the passion of the band in their flag bearing.

vendors:

Temporary shelters for the carnival season are built in certain areas of the city. Alongside these are often temporary shacks that are built by vendors. This photograph is taken on Park Street, passing Lapeyrose cemetery. These shacks are built along the high wall of the cemetery.

music truck :

Electronic DJ truck following the band along Park Street. Predeeding the band was another music truck with acoustic steel pan players.

illus 4.15: Lapeyrouse Cemetery

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music trucks :

These DJ music trucks line up on St. Vincent Street, inching their way behind bands of masqueraders. Trucks are an interesting feature of Trinidad's Carnival. They are hardly decorated in any way, and are rented from small businesses that build these mammoth music machines approaching Carnival time each year. They create a particular stratification of space within the band itself, and most broadly - within the celebration.

signage:

Corporate sponsors support select bands during the parade in turn for advertisement space. Many events in the celebration are also sponsored by various companies including children's carnival. Carnival is a very lucrative business opportunity for many.

masqueraders:

Many revellers dress in half costume on Carnival Monday, coming out in full regalia on Carnival Tuesday.

masqueraders:

The large costume in the foreground is a King Costume. These costumes are a traditional part of a pretty mas band. Most bands submit a King and Queen costume for judging in the National Carnival King and Queen competition. The finalists are decided on Carnival Sunday night at the Dimanche Gras show. This portion of the mas is reminiscent of the earlier French masquerade type were pageantry was of great importance. It is interesting however that where floats have predominated most other carnivals in the world, the king and queen costumes in Trinidad are almost always carried by a person in some way and is responsive to that person's movement.

music truck:

Visually, these large black trucks may seem an eye sore within the colourful mas, on the street however, they create nodes of music that radiate around them. This creates a physical as well as auditory separation between each section within one larger band. The truck itself disappears as it simply becomes a centre from which music emanates.

spectators:

We can see in this image that spectators and masqueraders intermingle on the street, between judging points. Masqueraders often do not even stay in the same band they belong to. The streets become a large playground of activity.
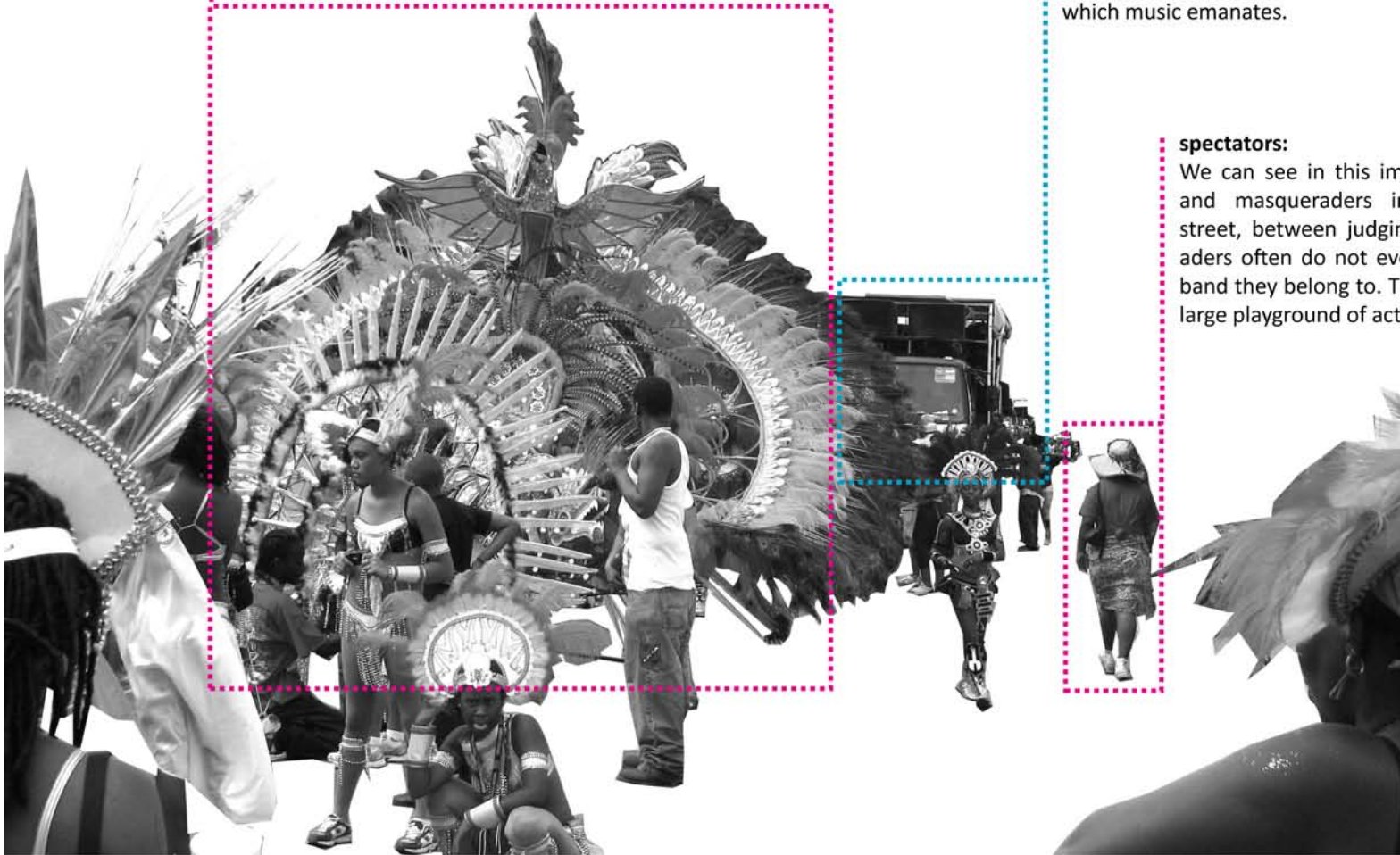
vendors:
Many individual people and families come out on Carnival Monday and Tuesday to sell things. Food, drinks and local crafts are the most popular. They create a secondary infrastructure for the festival when most shops are closed.

music truck :
In the background is a DJ music truck leading the band of sailors across Independence Square, toward the South Quay judging point. It is covered by garbage bags to protect the speakers from rain.
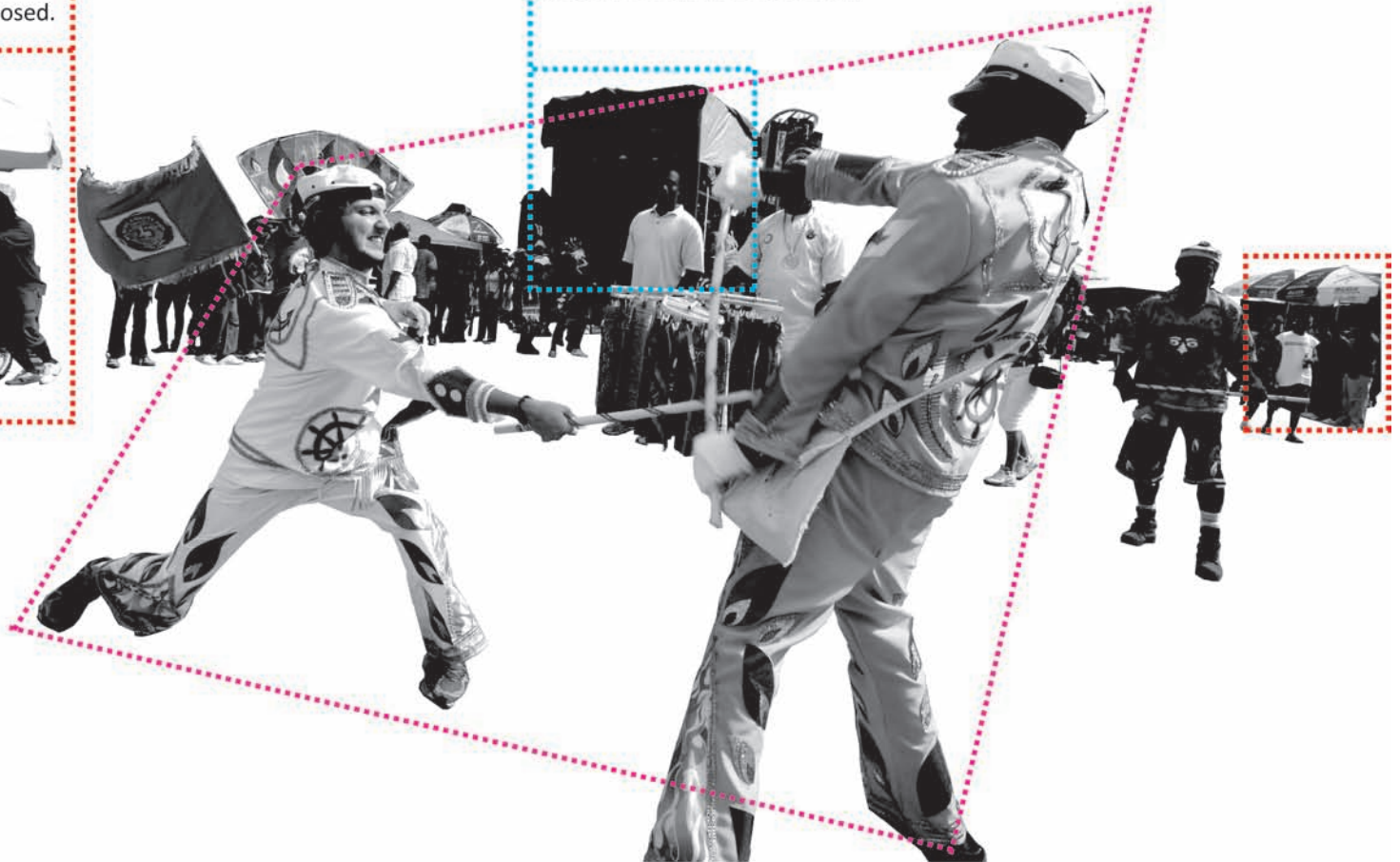
masqueraders :
2 members of a sailor band on independence square challenge each other. This band of fancy sailors do not carry ornate head pieces but still sport elaborately decorated costumes. The stick fight shown here is reminiscent of the calinda stick fight indigenous to Trinidad's earliest Carnival.

illus 4.18: Independence Square

gov't infrastructure :

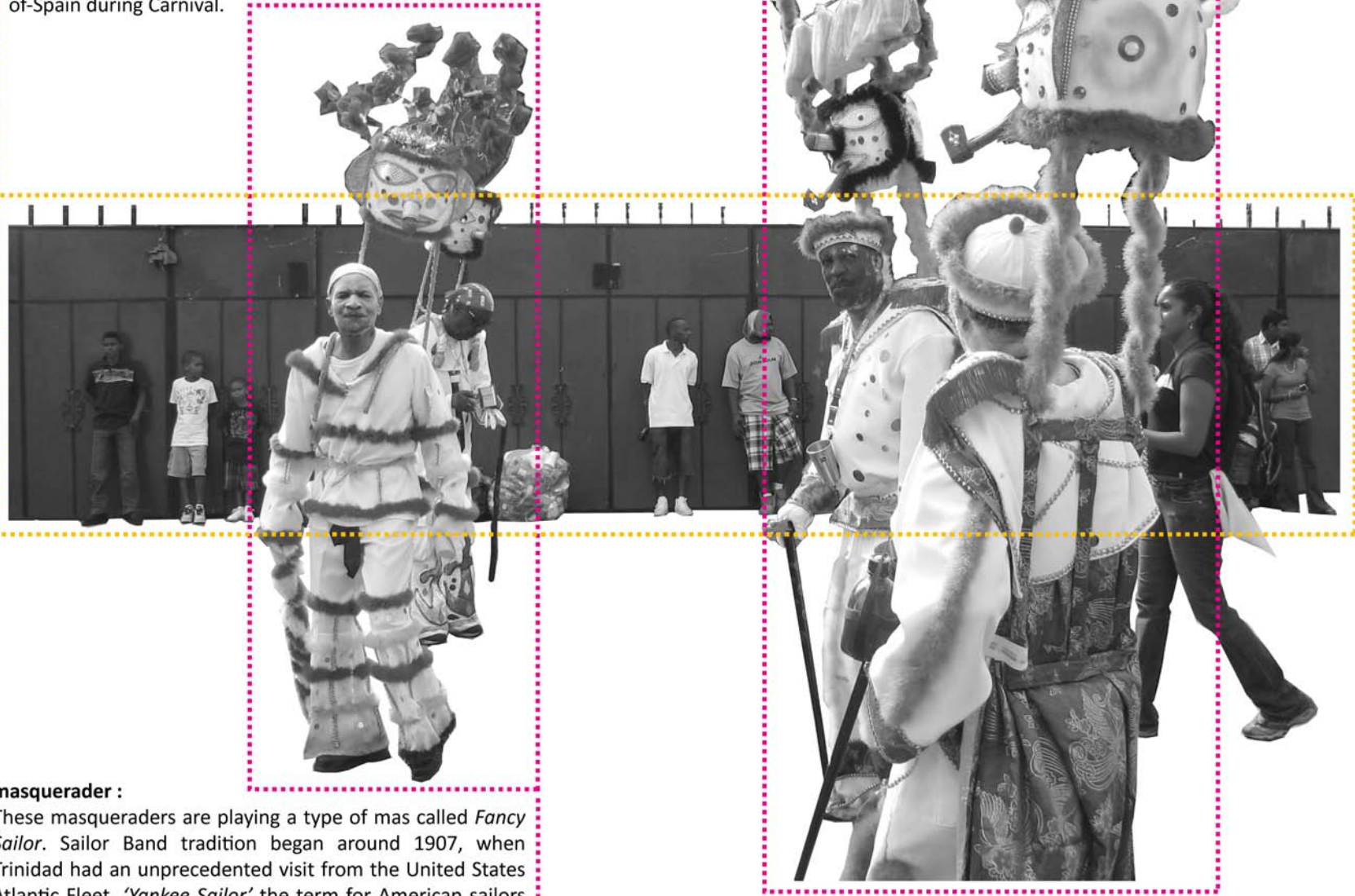These are fences put up by the ministry of culture to protect private properties. These ornate barricades protect the premises of Trinidad's central bank. The fences vary in design around the city. They create new borders in the city and become part of the theatrical set that is inserted into Port-of-Spain during Carnival.

masquerader :

These masqueraders are playing a type of mas called *Fancy Sailor*. Sailor Band tradition began around 1907, when Trinidad had an unprecedented visit from the United States Atlantic Fleet. *'Yankee Sailor'* the term for American sailors gained popularity, evolving into the kind of mas seen here. The sailors are known for their elaborate headpieces (typically following a yearly theme), decorated white suits and lively dramatic dances.

illus 4.19: Lower St. Vincent Street

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masquerader :
Ole mas is a type of satirical masquerade in Trinidad that appears mostly during J'ouvert, although they are also sometimes seen on Carnival Monday and Tuesday. Unlike masqueraders in a band, Ole Mas costumes are built and acted out by individuals. This small group of people are playing Midnight Robbers. Their dark costumes were a political commentary about Trinidad's current government and the rising crime rate in the country. The Midnight Robber is a significant character in the country's history of masquerade, but his appearance has become a rarity with time.

gov't infrastructure :
Barricades separate pedestrians from masqueraders in areas close to judging points.

illus 4.20: South Quay

judging point :

These are temporary stands and tents built by the National Carnival Commission. They are built within the month preceding Carnival Monday and Tuesday. They are for spectators and media, tents allocated for judging panels and officials.
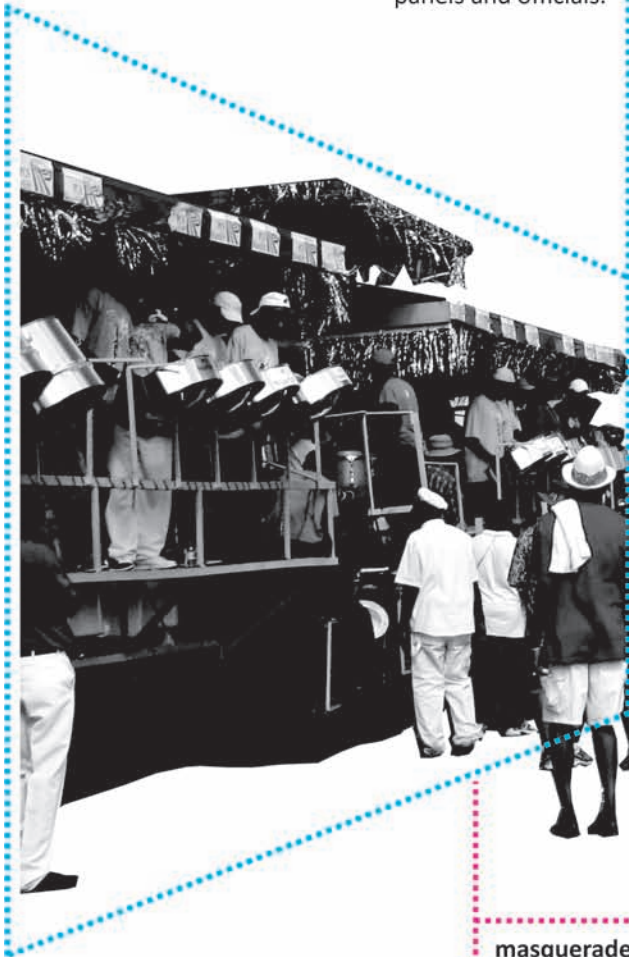
music trucks:

This is an acoustic steel pan truck accompanying a band at the South Quay judging point. Some masquerade bands choose to be accompanied only by a Steel Pan orchetra. For the masquerader this is a very different experience from the electronic music truck.

masqueraders :

Masqueraders gear up to cross the stage at each judging point. Some smaller bands do not have elaborate costumes, but simply go out onto the streets to have a good time.

illus 4.21: South Quay
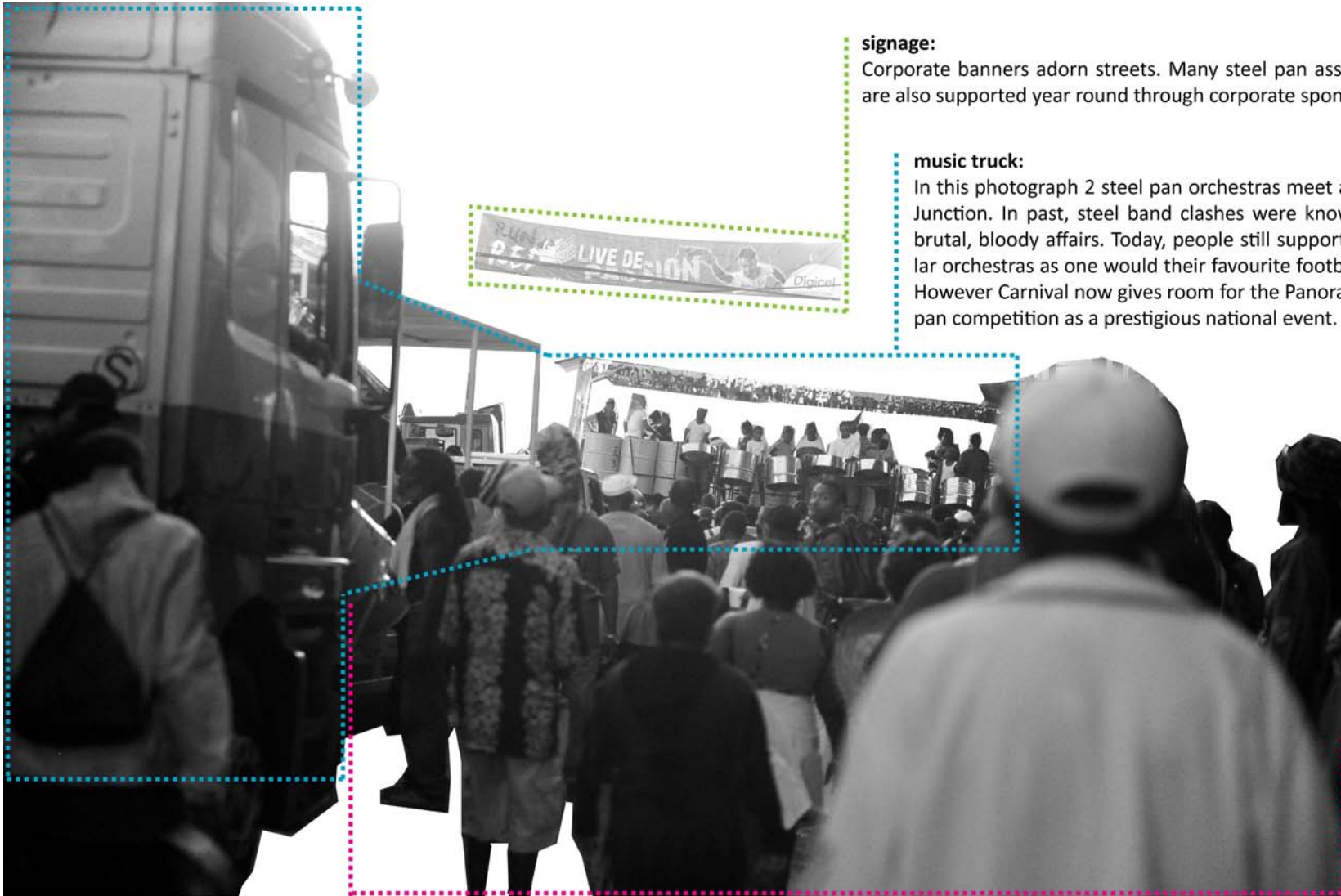
signage:
Corporate banners adorn streets. Many steel pan associations are also supported year round through corporate sponsorship.

music truck:
In this photograph 2 steel pan orchestras meet at Rosary Junction. In past, steel band clashes were known to be brutal, bloody affairs. Today, people still support particular orchestras as one would their favourite football team. However Carnival now gives room for the Panorama steel pan competition as a prestigious national event.

spectators:
This photograph shows that in some parts of the city, Carnival does not revolve around the masquerader. In this area which is close to the Pan Yard of one of the more successful steel pan orchestras, the music of the steel pan or acoustic rhythm section takes charge of the Carnival stage.

illus 4.22: Park Street

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music truck :
acoustic steelpan truck with roughly 18 players. this trailor is being pulled by a tractor along the parade route.

spectators:
chinese immigrant construction workers stand on temporary containers on the neighbouring construction site to look on at festivities.

spectators :
when bands are between judging points, spectators and mas players meld into one body. Unlike other more commercialised carnivals in the world, in Trinidad's carnival, the spectators are equally as important parts of the celebration as the masqueraders themselves.

illus 4.23: Charlotte Street

music trucks :
both trucks belonging to one band.
truck 1 is an acoustic truck with a rhythm
section of drummers.
truck 2 is an electronic music truck with a
dj and large speakers.

truck 2

signage:
corporate sponsors for the 'carnival village' at the queens park savannah wrap fences in advertisements. This judging point is televised on carnival Monday and Tuesday, and is therefore an important place for advertisement.

vendors:
'carnival villiage' occupied by tvendors in the month preceeding carnival

truck 1

gov't built infrastructure:
temporary stands to form the main judging point at the queens park savannah. Temporary stands build against the wrought iron fence of a neighbouring park. This park will be full of spectators during the 2 day festival, when year round it will only be used sporadically for smaller events.

masqueraders:
this j'ouvert band called joy + fire involved different colours of paint. people do not typically wear costumes for this kind of mas - rather they come onto the streets in clothes they don't mind getting stained and inevitably are soaked to the skin in paint.

illus 4.24: Queens Park Savannah

'The main purpose of such posts, barriers, frameworks and lights was to organise the festival space. The intention was to set limits, draw contours and precisely outline the site where the festival was to take place…Wooden barricades were positioned around festival sites to channel the movements of the crowd, reduce accidents, and prevent people from falling into the river and drowning… ' [2]

Borders of Experience

Arising out of this graphic analysis of Carnival is a framework for understanding the way in which the festival transforms public space and reinstates the dominion of the mythical world on the streets of the city. The main way in which the procession is outlined consists of corporate and civic signage, official infrastructure of stands and barricades, vendors, masqueraders and spectators and finally moving music and service trucks.

Official signage is placed along the parade route outlining where the parade would pass through the city. Corporate signage would also be placed where large crowds are expected to gather like at judging points. Official infrastructure of stands for judges and spectators would be erected from the beginning of January in the designated areas that are used each year for the festival. The Carnival Village of vendors would also be built during this time. On the day before the parade, glass storefronts along the parade route are lined by fences which are reused each year. On the periphery of the street, often against these temporary fences and existing fences in the city vendors built temporary shelters that will remain in place for the two days of the festival. Finally, masqueraders and spectators flood the streets of Port-of-Spain from the twilight hours of Carnival Monday morning until Carnival Tuesday night.

The following diagrams look at each factor that outlines the framework of the festival. It aims to create an understanding of the ways in which public spaces in the city are appropriated by festival architecture from the articulation of judging point to the significance of character types in masquerade.

[2] Eric Monin, pg 158 (on 18th century public festivals in France)

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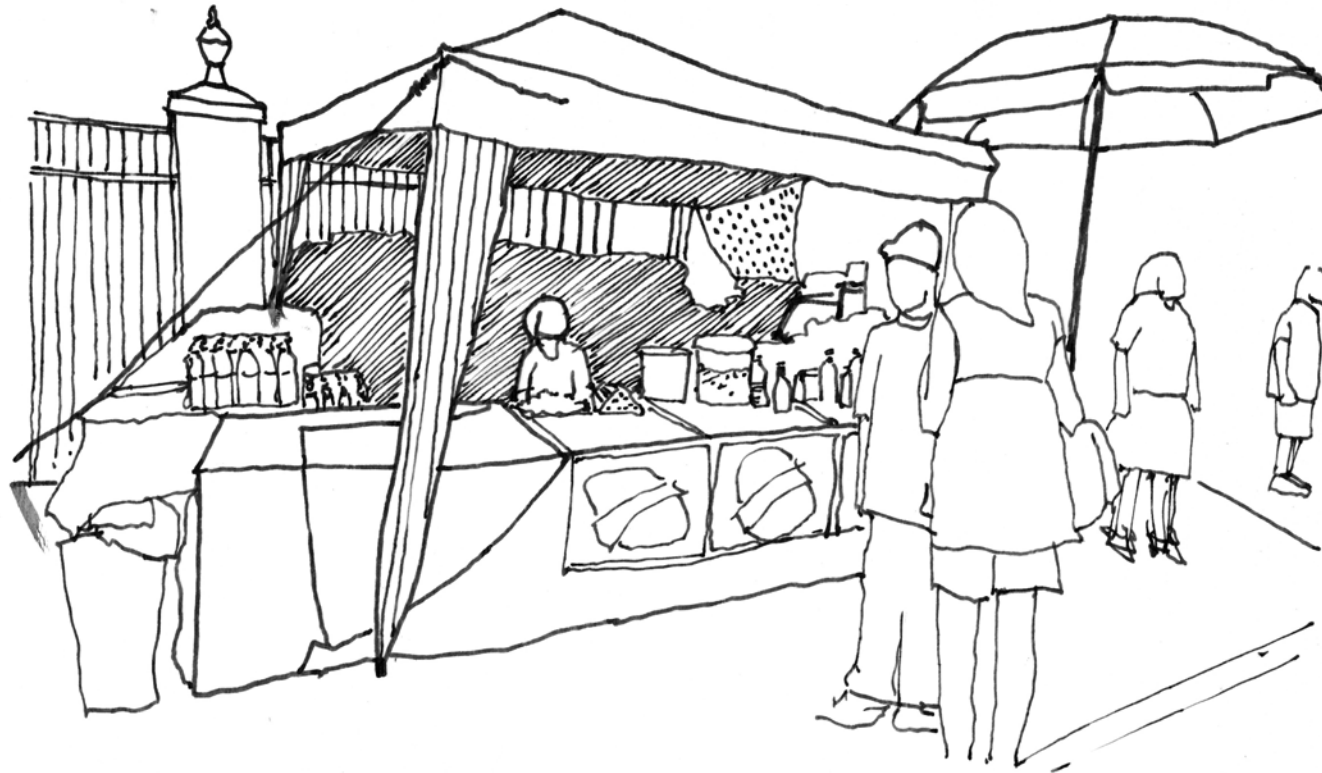
illus. 4.25: A vendor on Ariapita Avenue

Fences temporarily set up around the city to protect the glazed fronts of the ordinary city create a secondary boundary within the city. Although these fences and barricades guard the ordinary face of the city from the antics of revelers, they also form the periphery of the streetscape along which another layer of festival infrastructure can be built.

The festival creates an opportunity for street vendors to come into the city and make some extra money. Selling aromatic foods and cold drinks, vendors are a main part of the festival's anatomy. Some vendors erect adhoc shacks while others pin up their products against existing or temporary fences during the day. In both cases, the fence is the

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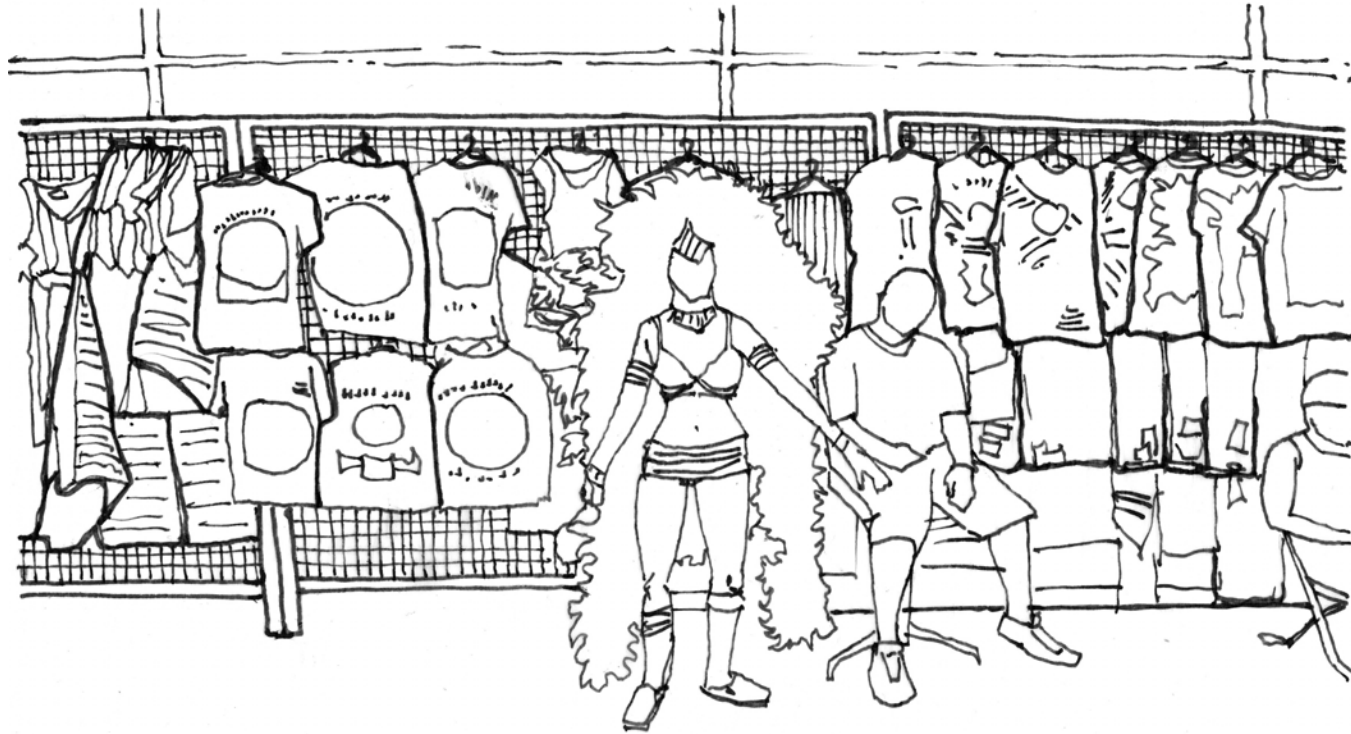
illus. 4.26: A vendor on Frederick Street

new borderline in the streetscape and it transforms the periphery of the street into a service belt of food, clothing and local craft items.

The drawing above shows one vendor that hangs clothing from an iron mesh fence that a Trinidadian clothing store has erected to protect their facade. Similar fences are erected all over downtown Port-of-Spain and are re-used each year. It is interesting to see how these boundaries or barriers, are transformed into yet another type of exhibitionism. The vendor here is selling garments on Carnival Monday and Tuesday on the closed doors of the official shops. The T-shirts he sells have graphic prints of different Hip Hop artists as well as a series on the left that have prints of the Obama family. This image is immediately fixed in a specific time and global environment. These temporary fences cease to be barriers and become a different kind of masquerade.

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illus. 4.27: [a] Drawing of vendor against the fence of the Princes Grounds

[b] Drawing of vendor against the fence of Woodford Square

Walls and fences that belong to the year long rational city are also reused during Carnival. In these drawings, you can see elaborate wrought iron fences that vendors have built upon and used as a backbone for their temporary stalls. The fences I have chosen to show here are all edges of public squares from early British Colonial times. The filigree of the elaborate wrought iron designs stand in lovely contrast with the temporarily and utilitarian erections made for the festival.

The wrought iron steel work however, speaks of another layer of Trinidadian experience. It is interesting to think therefore about the formation of Carnival, and to see it quite literally grafted onto old Colonial forms. The fence in this case ceases to be a barrier and instead becomes the supporting structure for commerce and pedestrian interaction.

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illus. 4.28: Masks sold on the fence of the Princes Grounds

This image to me illustrates most clearly the transformation of fences and borders that occurs during Carnival. It was taken during Kiddies Carnival where a vendor was selling masks and other children's toys. He had tied all of his products onto the spokes of this fence near the Queens Park Savannah.

There is something very interesting that becomes apparent here. When we look through the lens of Magic Realism or the mind of Yoruban folktales, you can look at this image as more than a representation of a vendor selling masks to children. It becomes apparent that these armatures have taken on a different spirit than their typical role within the rational city. Here, I see the magical city personified. These edges that were once fences now look back at you through countless eyes.

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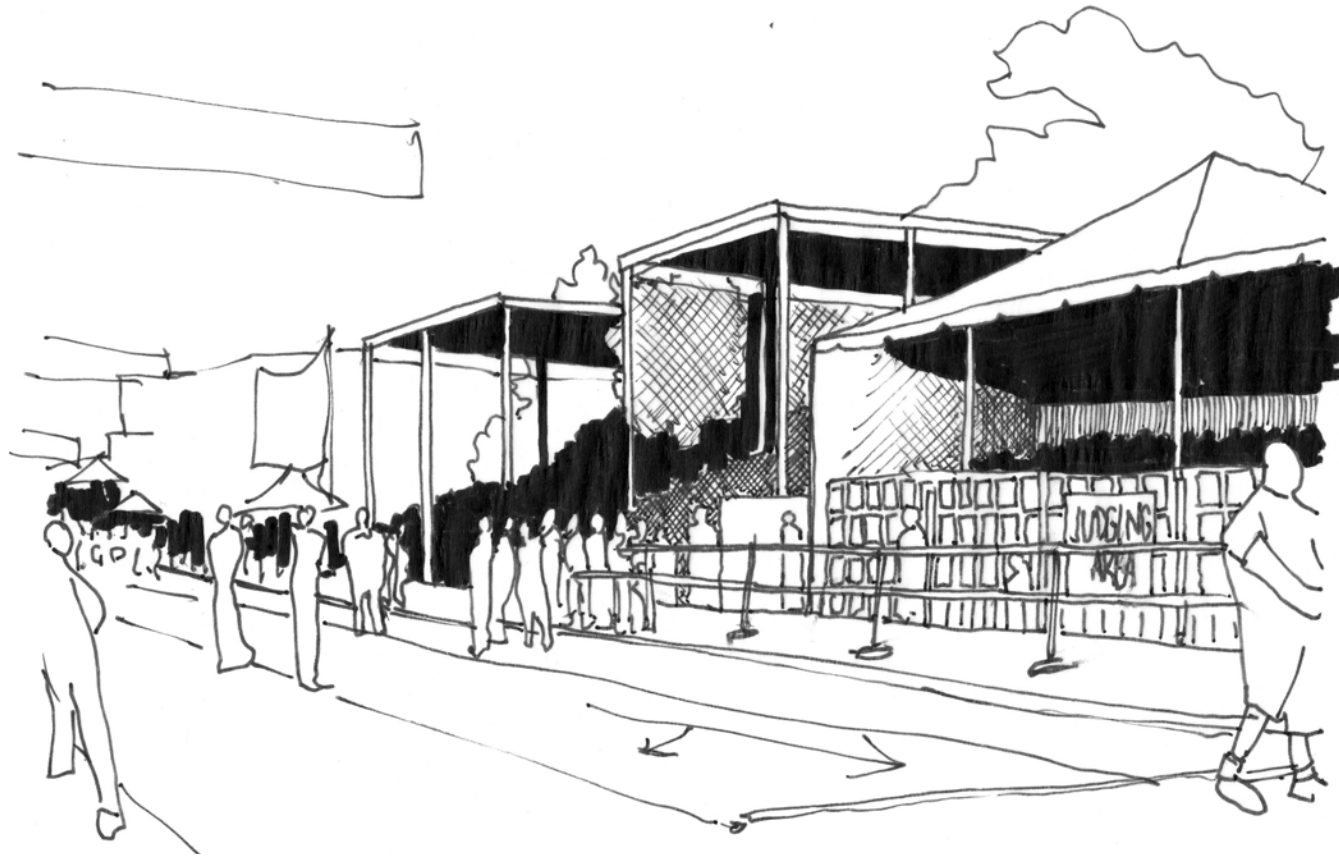
illus. 4.29: Ariapita Avene judging point

As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the Carnival Parade Route is punctuated by five judging points. To be considered for winning the Band of the Year, a band must pass 3 of these judging points. Each point marks a pinnacle of energy within the festival since each band charges past the judging point showing off their full splendor. The judging point itself is composed of exposed steel beams, and scaffolding that is bolted together for the Carnival season. These temporary structures are immense seating between 300 – 500 spectators. Ancillary to the large

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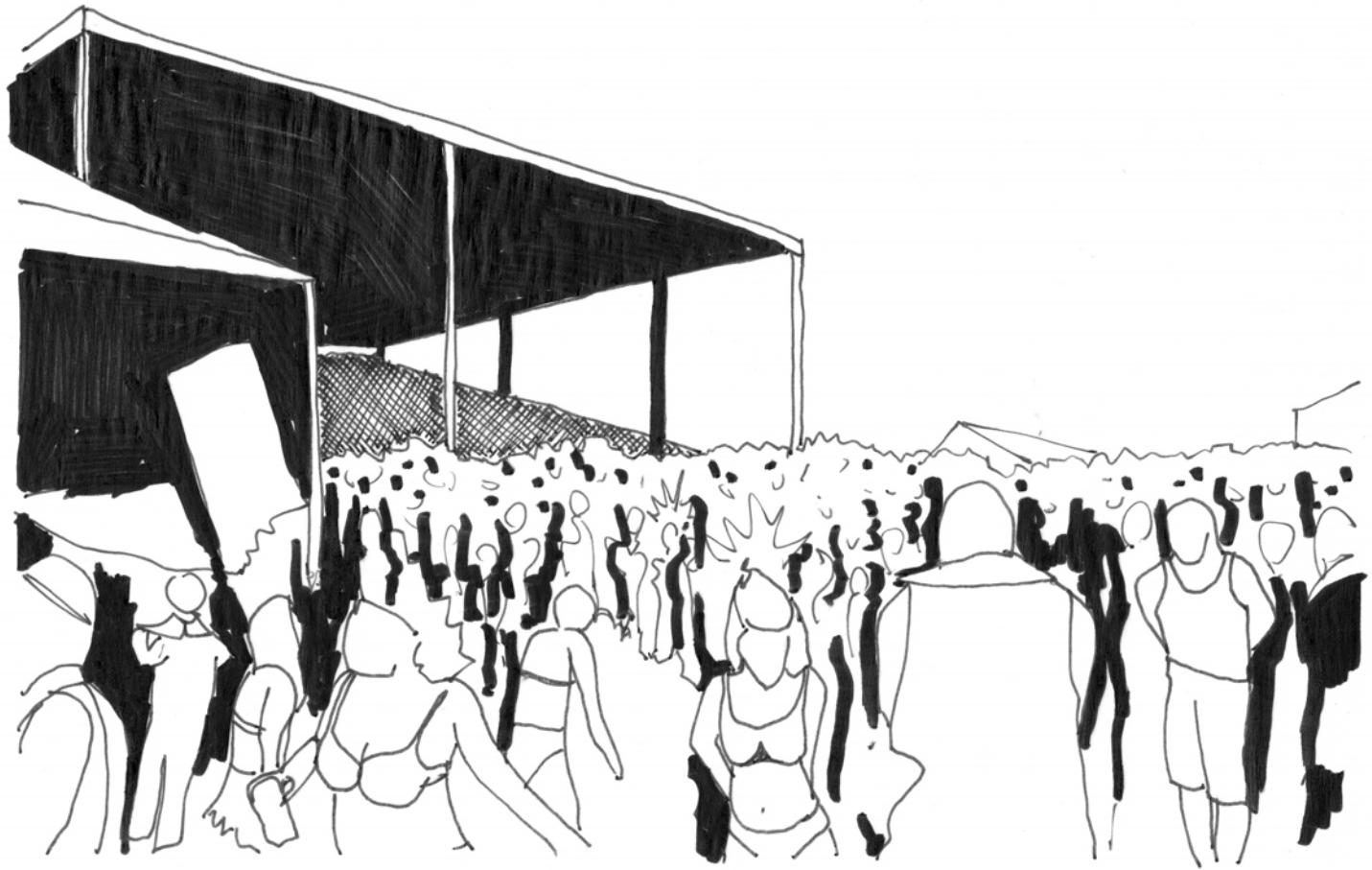
illus. 4.30: South Quay judging point

steel stands are temporary tents where the judges sit. The pictures above show the judging point at Adam Smith Square on Ariapita Avenue and South Quay at the southern tip of Downtown. In both cases the judging points are erected in spaces that are rarely used during the rest of the calendar year. This is especially true of the South Quay location.
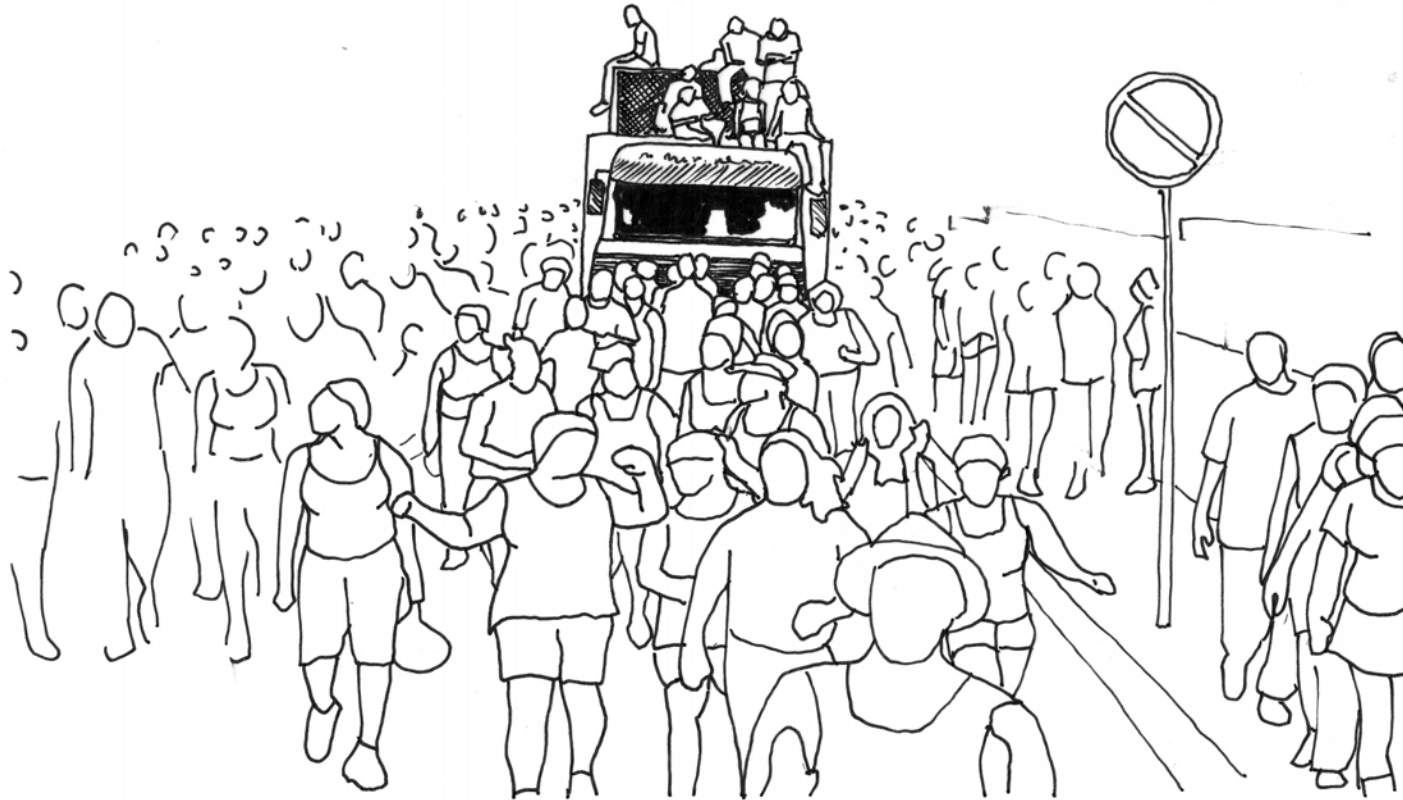
illus. 4.31: The music truck amidst a crowd of revellers

From the birth of the Canboulay to present, Carnival has always been per-formed alongside music. Musical bands accompanied masqueraders in the streets, first on skin drums, then with tamboo-bamboo and eventually with Steelpan music. The dancing procession could not exist without the accompaniment of music. Today bands are accompanied by electronic and or acoustic music trucks. The truck repre-sents moving music.

Electronic music trucks are large black islands that move through crowds of masqueraders booming from its numerous speakers the bass driven melodies of

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illus. 4.32: Masqueraders following a music truck on the Savannah

Soca music. The trucks inch slowly along the parade route alongside their bands with speakers stacked high amongst the framework of scaffolding, all on a flat bed truck. This type of truck has become prevalent in all Caribbean Carnivals.

It would be difficult for those who have not experienced Carnival, standing on the street to understand from photographs that the truck is not merely a big speaker box. It is the modern shantwell. The image of the truck is layered into modern calypso and has even reached innuendo in today's Soca. The Road March of Carnival 2009 in Trinidad was a song titled 'Heavy T Bumper'. It is innuendo for a woman's large back-side. The truck is loud, blasting emitter of music, dance and vibration.

illus. 4.33: Drawing of Steelband players on a double tiered truck

The power of drumming in the Caribbean has no doubt travelled from ancient West Africa. When thinking about the percussive power of music within the celebration we must remember that Shango is the Orisha God of Thunder and Drumming. In Carnival today another type of moving music is the acoustic percussion truck. These either hold steel pan players or a rhythm section with skin drums. In some cases one might even see a truck with tassa drummers.

During Carnival, the steel pan orchestras leave their pan yards and moved through the streets in single, sometimes double tiered caravans that are pulled by a truck or sometimes a tractor. These bands often accompany Sailor bands though large bands might have both an
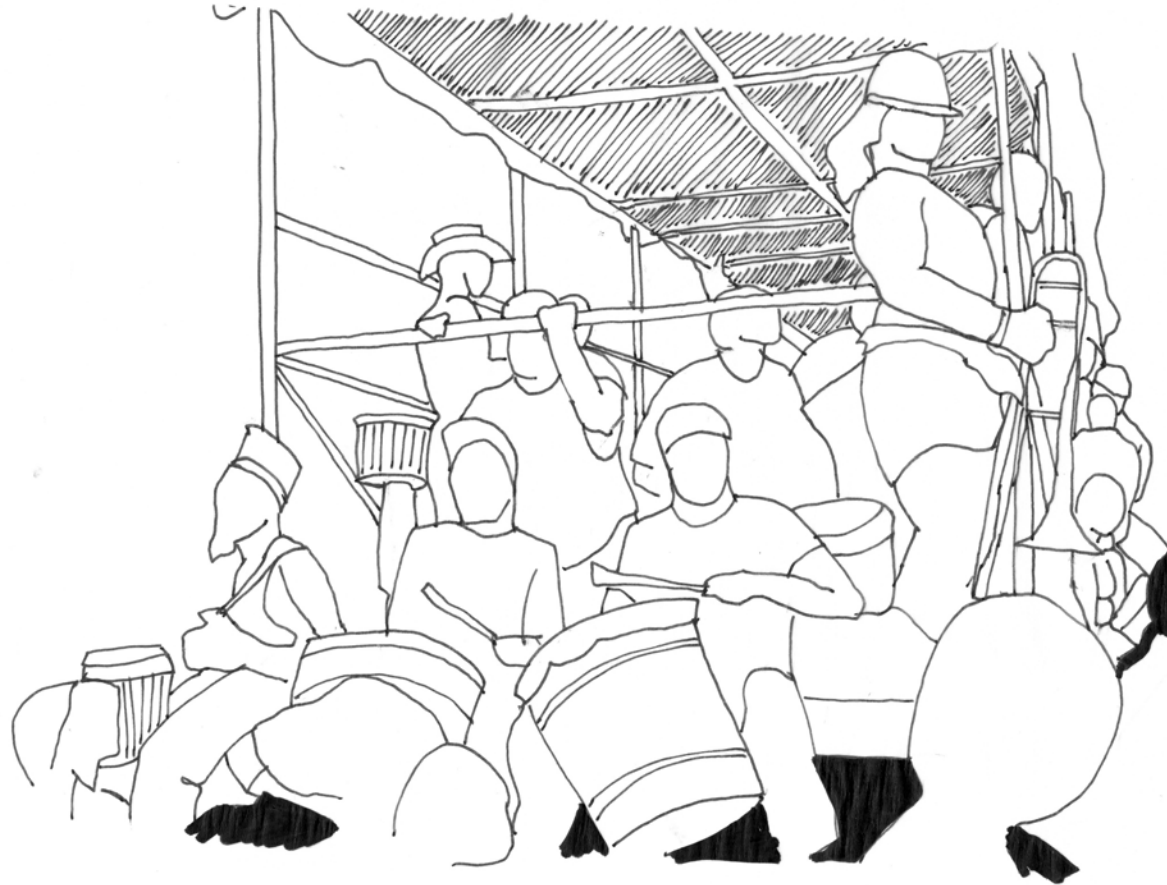
illus. 4.34: Rhythm Section

acoustic as well as an electronic music truck, so that masqueraders can move between the two. Of course the presence of the acoustic percussion truck in the street is an entirely different experience than that of the electronic music truck. The former is often performed without lyrics, the sound of the steel pan or the skin drums reverberating within the masquerader. Dynamic enery builds between performer and masquerader. In the case of the electronic music truck, it plays the hits for the season, its bass speakers reverberating inside of your body. Soca music is quite frenetic and so the pace it sets is high energy and wild.

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SERVICE TRUCKS

illus. 4.35: Service Trucks for the band Tribe

Apart from music trucks, trucks have evolved in today's Carnival to move all kinds of services. Many of the larger Pretty Mas bands have a number of trucks that are dedicated to their band members. They supply: food, drinks, medical attention, rest spots and even toilet facilities. These trucks provide services for the thousands of masqueraders that make up these large bands. In this image you see the slow moving wall of trucks that is surrounded by Masqueraders.
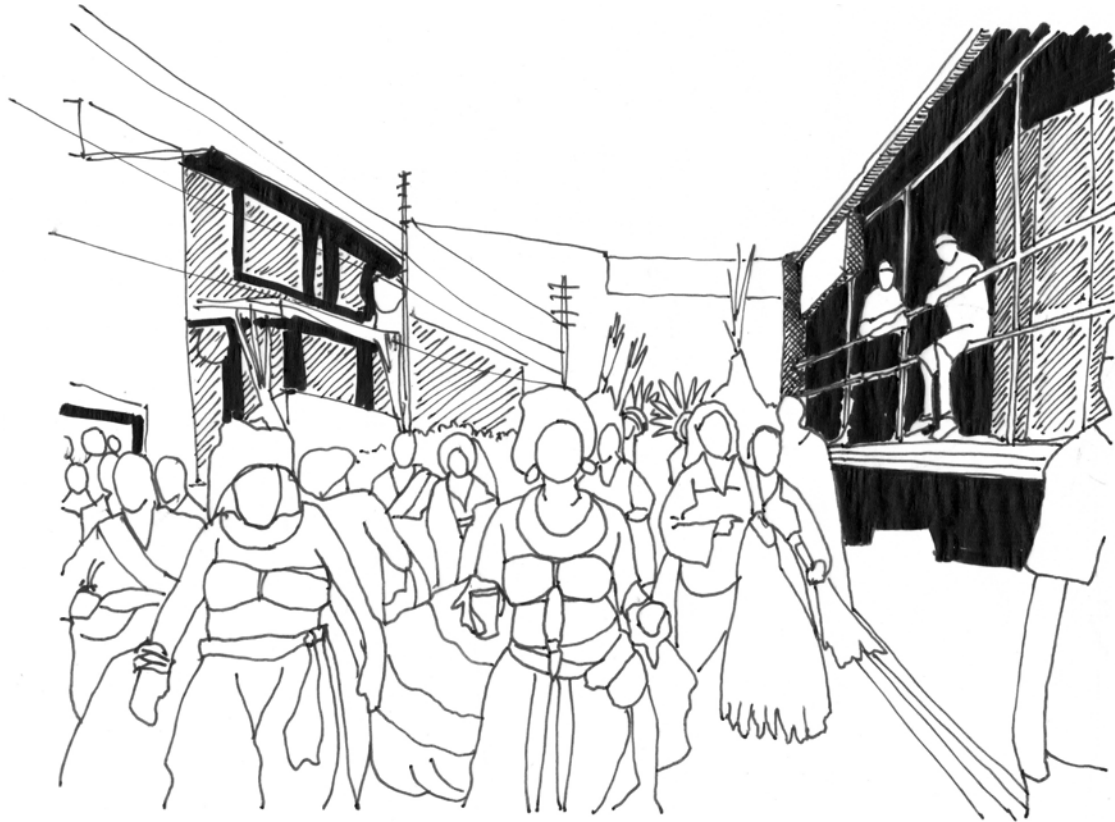
illus. 4.36

   Music trucks of all kinds are large and loud things. They move through the middle of the street, creating different spatial conditions around them. They are like large black beetles which push and pull the band with their tempo. In the images on this page, you can see how the crowd moves with the truck. Within a band, one typically locates oneself in relation to the nearest truck. The speed of the truck dictates the speed of the band. Likewise, the type of music controls the behavior of the people in the band. Apart from splitting a band from front to back of the truck, it also splits the band on its sides. The truck partitions the road into what can be likened to different rooms. One's experience on the road is defined by the edge of the sidewalk and the truck. The width of the street changes the spatial dynamic of the band on all of its sides, around the trucks. These moving nodes of music feed the spirit of the band.
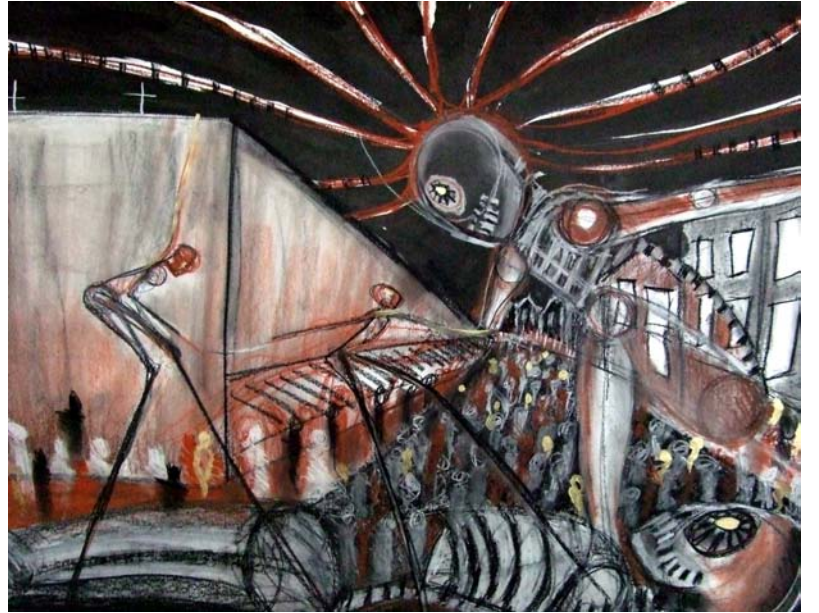
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CONCLUSION

This thesis began with the silent understanding that at Carnival time, something quite profound was happening on the streets of Port-of-Spain. My experiences there led me to question: *why is Carnival so important?* And *how does this celebration affect people's relationship to their city?* And finally*, in a city that is otherwise entirely ordinary, is there some invisible poetry to Port-of-Spain that escapes the eye at first glance?*

Through my research, I have formed three main arguments that run through the body of this thesis. My first argument is that Carnival is one of the most successful syncretic expressions of the Caribbean and Latin America. Its celebration temporarily unties the myriad of cultural legacies that have shaped the Caribbean. My second argument which perhaps provides a basis for the other third is that the experience of collective and individual ecstasy attained through dancing in the streets has a profound effect on the collective and individual psyche. Its effect is in enhancing an individual's sense of *communitas* and collective identity. My final argument is that festival space, or the Extraordinary city as it is referred to in this thesis constitutes a parallel urban form which temporarily makes visible the chaotic and vivacious form of the city of myth. This Extraordinary city transforms certain spaces making each a locus of the festive city. Below I will summarise how these conclusions have been attained through my research.

A City with Two Faces

[1] Merle Hodge, Trinidad and Tobago: Carnival, Land, Water, People, pg127.

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Hybridisation

'Perhaps the epitome of a Trinidadian is the child in the third row of the class with dark skin and crinkly plaits who looks at you out of decidedly Chinese eyes and announces her name as Jacqueline Maharaj. The strains which converge in her may be African, Indian, Chinese, French, Spanish. She speaks English – will speak Standard English on occasion – but is most comfortable in a dialect of English which bears the imprint of French, Spanish, Hindi and West African influences ...'[2]

The islands of the Caribbean the meeting place of a myriad of cultures. There the imprint of West African mythology, Indian mysticism and Catholic traditions simultaneously exist in day to day life. Derek Walcott described Antillean art as attempting to re-assemble these fragments of epic memory into new forms. An analysis of Caribbean theatre and dance is testament to an accretion of different strands of collective wisdom since the 1400's. Samba, Rumba and Capoeira are examples of *"corporeal intelligence"*[3] that have arisen in Cuba and Brazil. The significance of dance in these places cannot be overstated. Perhaps arising out of Yoruban rhythms, the dance / martial art of Capoeira is a physical embodiment of Caribbean racial and social struggles. Its fluid movement, feints and explosive attacks make visible dance steps accepted by Spanish colonials while invoking ancestral dances and planning revoltions. Reassembly of the far flung cultural motifs that compose the Caribbean is perhaps most succinctly performed through syncretic mind-body forms of expression.

It is not a surprise therefore to discover that carnival exists in one form or another in almost every island of the Caribbean archipelago. Never before has a singular celebration come to typify the cultural expression of an entire geographic region. This proliferation of carnival throughout the Caribbean in most cases has autonomously arisen from the history of each place. This is why celebrations vary radically from one place to another. In Carriacou a small island north of Grenada,

each year carnival curiously revolves around Shakespearean dramatic presentations of the play *Julius Ceasar*.[4] While *Jonkanoo* in Jamaica and the Bahamas occurs in December. It is not tied to Easter in the same way other Carnivals are, and its masquerade motifs more closely resemble ancient West African mythologies. Even in Trinidad from one town to another the manifestation of masquerade varies widely. In the south of the island in San Fernando, modification of Wild Indian Mas dominates, while in Paramin, a small hillside town in north Trinidad, Blue Devils are the main feature of their masquerade. Port-of-Spain itself is arguably typified by both Pretty Mas as well as Sailor Mas. The social and historical differences from one town to another and indeed from one island to another is made visible in differences of masquerade, music and dance.

Between Latin American and the Caribbean the massive proliferation of Carnival is not merely an event created to attract tourists but rather a syncretic spectacle that bespeaks something deeply rooted in the Caribbean and Latin American psyche. It is as Benitez-Rojo states in *The Repeating Island*, that Carnival is the most fitting means through which the people of this region can express their individual and collective legacies. In the costume of the Midnight Robber one sees the convergence of the American cowboy who has travelled to the Caribbean through film, the Italian Pierrot as a memory of French theatre, alongside the combative qualities of African stick fighters all cloaked in the black cape of death or the Christian image of the Devil. Next to the Midnight Robber stands the Wild Indian king who suggests an aboriginal past, enriched by a North American image and embraced by a people who align themselves with the name "Indian", echoing Columbus' earlier mistake. These masks are like *mandalas* that showcase so many cultures all mixed up in icons that move and breathe and remake their masquerade each year. As dizzying as the different portrayals can be, Carnival is the only form of expression that can manifest a hybrid vision of the worlds of thought and experience that converge in the Caribbean in one dynamic and vivid celebration.

Ecstasy

At the *'sacred climax of the rite'*[5] as Ehrenreich calls it, the participant in a religious or secular ritual experiences a fusion of place, time and purpose, sometimes gaining spiritual insight or in the case of Carnival, re-establishing their relationship to the people and the place that surrounds them. Through dancing, Saturnalian rituals like Carnival can induce this exaltive state of rapture that has been fundamental to human experience for centuries. Particularly collective ecstatic rituals have been performed throughout the ancient cultures of the world. *"Collective effervescence"*[6] and *communitas* arise out of a group's mutual celebration of a singular event.

It is for this reason that the experience of Carnival allows the individual to work out problems and tensions through physical exaltation. This is fundamental to Carnival as an apotropaic ritual. As I have outlined in Chapter 2, Trinidad's Carnival embodies remnants of West African mythological influences where religious masquerade was used to dispel evil spirits from villages as well as to unite the community with their deities. Meanwhile the main purpose of Catholic religious rituals and Indian festivals are to re-sanctify space. Born out of these cultures therefore, Carnival is a celebration that re-energises civic space. Through ecstatic states of revelry, the spirit of the vernal festival lifts the celebrants into an exalting expression of transcendent beauty.

Anarchism of space & Collective Imagination

> *'The street is the locus of the Matsuri experience and the street gains its form from the memory imprinted on it by the people of the community. The street is not seen simply as a corridor of vehicular or pedestrian traffic, but as a connector of private space and social space. It is a spatial mode of social integration, characterized by a layering of function and experience, the basis and culmination of which is the "magical" experience of matsuri...'*[7]

> *'Life is seen as a process which changes metamorphically, just as nature metamorphoses from season to season, age to age, birth to death, in endless rhythms of renewal.'*[8]

What Fred Thompson states above about the importance of the street as a continuous social space during the Matsuri can also be said of the significance of the street during Carnival in Port-of-Spain. This insight is perhaps a shared truth to all street festivals, especially those festivals of renewal which re-occur each year in specific spaces.

Within my first chapter I presented three case studies of festivals which outline a pattern of celebratory behaviour. Common to *Il Palio* in Siena, *Gion Matsuri* in Kyoto and *Las Fallas* in Valencia is a ritualistic reclamation of the street as democratic public space in which community expression overrules civic or corporate agendas. In all of these cases the festival engenders a sense of *communitas*, each year creating a mutual experience within the community which links the collective memory of its citizenry to the streets of their neighbourhood or city. By engendering this sense of community and belonging, the festival also creates and propagates collective identity. Carnival has been embraced by Trinidad and many other islands of the Caribbean with quasi-religious fervour, embracing it as a representation of emancipation, strength and independence. The nationalistic pride with which Trinidadians approach Carnival comes out of

the festival's strength in uniting people in ecstatic celebration.

The ritual of reclaiming the city's streets is also central to the notion of re-energising the city. As a festival of renewal, Carnival in Port-of-Spain recurs each year constantly changing and re-imagining through different masks the cosmic nature of each street and neighbourhood. These shifting faces and capricious masks are in a sense the opposite of Architecture. Where monuments and buildings are constructed for longevity this festival embraces chaos. It venerates the illusory and the ephemeral. Perhaps as the antithesis of architectural permanence, the festival makes visible the mutability of life. It is a springtime festival – a saturnalia, and therefore a season of opposites. Carnival is ultimately a celebration of life and death, creation and destruction, myth and reality. As Thompson states above, it physically manifests the metamorphic quality that is life itself. The Extraordinary city is therefore a different type of place which is dynamic and responsive. The Extraordinary city embodies what Hiroshi Soeda calls *"anarchism of space";* where the festival transforms the nature of the ordinary city and its year-round uses into an experience of the city that is fundamentally different from its ascribed usage.

Festival space is therefore liminal: between the ordinary space of the city and the invisible mythology that comprises the Caribbean psyche. Through my analysis of Magical Realist space in Chapter 3, the Extraordinary city is conceived as a place that stands between these two worlds.Through my drawings and paintings I have represented these ideas; of physical places that are enriched by the silent imagination of thousands of people. My drawings convey the sense that particular places in the city have become marked by masquerade. This is why the Queens Park Savannah in the collective memory of people of Port-of-Spain will always be the main judging point along the festival route. A marginal space like on South Quay is re-enchanted only through the festival and its significance is entrenched into the collective memory of the city. Their silent year round faces are simply a reminder of the spectacle that will erupt at the beginning of each year.

This analysis of Carnival in Port-of-Spain and the form of the Extraordinary city introduces a new way of looking at Carnival as an urban entity. *A City with Two*

Faces creates a greater understanding of the nature of the festival and its relative importance within certain spaces in the city. This perspective of Carnival in Port-of-Spain, changes in the form and articulation of the festival can be much more efficiently and sensitively managed. Changes in the Carnival route for example can be managed with an enriched sense of the effect that these changes might have on the collective experience of the city's populace during the celebration. In a broader sense this thesis also considers the undeniable significance of festivals, even secular ones in creating a sense of *communitas* and building social networks within the city. The Extraordinary city presents a different perspective of urbanism in which physical celebratory experience builds a persons relationship to the city that transcend the limitations of mundane day to day living. A City with Two Faces attempts to convey the apotropaic power of the festival in re-energising city space and re-grounding the individual.

ENDNOTES

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2   Bakhtin, M. (1968),Rabelais and His World (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge, Mass : M.I.T. Press), p 8.
3   IBID ,pg 10

4   Ehrenreich, B. (2007), Dancing In The Streets : A History Of Collective Joy, (New York: New York : Metropolitan Books) p 93.

5   Walcott, Derek, Batai; Hill, E. (1997). Trinidad carnival : Mandate For A National Theatre (London: New Beacon Books) p 99

6   J Campbell, J., 1904-1987. (1988). In Flowers B. S. (Ed.), The Power Of Myth. New York ; Toronto; New York: New York ; Toronto : Doubleday.
7   Derek Walcott Nobel Lecture (1992)
          <http://nobelprize.org/cgi-bin/print?from=/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1992/ walcott-lecture.html>
8   IBID, Antillean Art refers to Art from the Lesser and Greater Antilles, the two groups that constitute the Caribbean.

9   Danow, D. K. (. K. (1995). Spirit Of Carnival : Magical Realism And The Grotesque. Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, p 67

10   Schuster, Mark, Imaging The City : Continuing Struggles And New Directions (2001). In Warner S. B. (Ed.), (New Brunswick, NJ: New Brunswick, NJ : Center for Urban Policy Research), p 362

11   IBID , pg 362
12   IBID, pg 376

Chapter 1: City Space and Festival Space

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3   Rossi, A., & Eisenman, P. (1982). Architecture Of The City. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press)

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5   Eliade, M., 1907-1986. (1959). The Sacred and the Profane : The Nature of Religion. (San Diego: San Diego : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) p 69

6   IBID, p 76

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Leela

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2   Hill, E. (1997). *Trinidad Carnival : Mandate For A National Theatre*. (London: New Beacon Books), pg 9

3   Sookdeo, N. A. (2000). *Freedom, Festivals And Caste In Trinidad After Slavery : A Society In Transition*. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia, PA : Xlibris Corporation, pg 11

4   Kelapani refers to the Bhojpuri word meaning "black waters" it describes the oceanic voyage from Calcutta to the Caribbean. It is typically insinuated that this was a one way voyage.
Sankeralli, B. Culture In Action – The Trinidad Experience: Indian Presence in Carnival, Burton Sankeralli, (New York and London: Routledge)p 77

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<http://www.valencia-cityguide.com/tourist-information/leisure/festivals/the-
fallas.html>