Journal of Urban Affairs
The Journal of the Urban Affairs Association

FREEDOM AND CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS: BLACK WORKING-CLASS PARADES IN POST-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS

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ABSTRACT: *This analysis of public parading in New Orleans extends a cultural sociology framework to shed new light on the importance of public parades in the construction of meaning in the postdisaster city. Not dependent upon a functioning city structure for their existence, public parades reemerged in the months following Katrina and have remained self-generating resources creating the logic and momentum for rebuilding communities and meaning in local life. Among these are parades of Mardi Gras Indian Tribes and Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs in which historical narratives of fictive Indian tribes and fictive nouveau riche are annually reinvented. Performances—involving body adornment, processional display, improvisational music, and dance—express symbols of freedom, while the collective participation that is a central tenet to these rituals creates an enduring cultural consciousness of self and city. For participants and observers, these mass gatherings on public streets provide a purpose, a process, and a gauge of recovery of the city's culture in post-Katrina New Orleans.*

In the years since Hurricane Katrina's landfall on August 29, 2005, New Orleanians have rebuilt much of their city and their way of life. Katrina tore back the veneer of social harmony portrayed by the city's cultural images of the "Big Easy," but in its wake brought to light the power of the city's culture to motivate action—and in the case of New Orleans, action necessary for its own survival. In this article, I focus on the public parades of Black New Orleans—an often overlooked aspect of a culture long recognized for its musical, literary, and culinary excellence—to demonstrate how this cultural form played an integral role in the recovery of parading communities and the city as a whole (Figure 1).

"It's our tradition" is a phrase often used to explain why emergency crews helped to rescue Mardi Gras Indian suits and why residents resumed parading only months after Katrina's landfall. But the term "tradition" usually refers to the processes of transmission between cultural actors and from one generation to the next, not the thing itself. To assert that something is "traditional" is to assert that it is valued enough to pass on. But in the case of second line parades, what is it that is valued? What is its meaning? The question guiding this research is: How and why have the distinctive parading practices of the city's Black working class reemerged in the postdisaster city?

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JOURNAL OF URBAN AFFAIRS, Volume 00, Number 00, pages 1–29.
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ISSN: 0735-2166 **DOI: 10.1111/juaf.12026**

FIGURE 1

A Second Line Parade in Tremé, a Neighborhood Bordering the French Quarter in New Orleans

The house in the background bears the marking by Katrina search-and-rescue crews on September 11, 2005. Photograph by Diane Grams © 2007.

By "public parade*," I refer to a processional activity, sponsored by a nongovernmental social or cultural organization, taking place on city streets, and involving costumed performers and live music from marching bands, brass bands, or percussionists with chanting choruses*. This definition includes the city's best-known form of public parade, that is, the annual spectacle parades associated with Mardi Gras and other official holidays, such as St. Patrick's Day, St. Joseph's Day, and Halloween.[1] Staged by predominantly white social organizations, or "Mardi Gras krewes," these spectacle parades are comprised of tractor-driven, thematically decorated floats interspersed with high school marching bands. A narrative of fictive aristocracy is perpetuated by each club (krewe) with its honorees fulfilling the roles of kings, queens, princesses, dukes, maids, and the like. Masked krewe members and their honorees ride high above street level on the floats, throwing beads, stuffed animals, or other mementos to the cheering crowds that line the streets. This definition of public parade also includes the semistructured weekly second line parades of the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs (SAPCs) held on 38 of the 52 Sundays in a year.[2] Staged by predominantly Black working-class clubs, such parades are distinguished by a narrative of fictive nouveau riche: club members dress up in matching tuxedo-like suits, with silk embroidered sashes across their chests, birds or other ornaments on their shoulders, and carrying fans, baskets, or walking canes. With a police escort, club members dance along a preplanned route followed by a brass band of 10–20 musicians and a "second line" of participants, including dancers, chanters, percussionists, and walking community members. This definition of public parade also includes those of the Mardi Gras Indian tribes. Staged by Black or multiracial African/Native American

men, women, and children, such parades are distinguished by a narrative of fictive Indian royalty meandering through the neighborhood backstreets on Mardi Gras and on St. Joseph's night. A tribe includes a spy boy, a flag boy, a big queen, and a big chief, each dressed in elaborately hand-stitched "Indian suits" of beads and feathers. These are followed by percussionists and chanting choruses of neighborhood and family supporters. Although the holiday spectacle parades and the Sunday second line parades are officially authorized by city permit, the parades of Mardi Gras Indian tribes are not; Mardi Gras Indians today maintain the historic practices of parading along unplanned routes without official parade permits.

Public parades in post-Katrina New Orleans provide an insightful case study in urban affairs because of the way in which the disaster shed light on the importance that local residents and authorities place on such collective cultural activities. This ritual form of public performance, not dependent upon the functioning of a city for its existence, reemerged in the months after Katrina before basic city services were restored (Dinerstein, 2009). Although the city council paved the way for the 2006 Mardi Gras (Koenig, 2005a,b,c,d), the public parades of the Black working class became subject to exorbitant permit fees (Blumenfeld, 2007), increased regulation, and legal contestation (Reckdahl, 2007), all fueling claims of structural racism reminiscent of "Negro removal" policies of midcentury urban renewal projects throughout the United States. Yet, these mass gatherings have not only persisted on public streets, they have become more frequent and have grown in participation as time since the disaster has passed.[3]

In this paper I focus on the weekly parades of the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs and the annual parades of Mardi Gras Indian Tribes—two forms unique to New Orleans—to understand how these activities remerged following Katrina, and how the meaning of these unique forms has persisted, generation after generation, from antebellum New Orleans to this postdisaster era. By investigating a largely understudied sector of cultural producers—that is, participants in Black working-class parades—this study brings to light how such distinctive cultural activities, although subordinated and often unseen, have been sustained through local social networks in spite of limited access to resources. Few other contemporary urban areas have sustained such culturally distinctive practices in robust economic times, let alone during disaster recovery.

This research demonstrates the value of participatory culture and symbolic display to the recovery and health of a postdisaster city. Policymakers in urban areas seeking to stem the tide of depopulation that followed industrial decline may see how temporal events animating local culture create meaning for a place, and how such meaning can motivate citizen action. By focusing on these events in the Black communities of New Orleans, we can see how the parades in New Orleans were a call to come home, an encouragement to residents in the Hurricane Katrina Diaspora to move back, rebuild, and recreate the civic structures necessary to support civic life.

THEORY

This paper contributes to a substantial literature on localized parading culture in New Orleans (Kinser, 1990; Lipsitz, 1990; Lomax, 1990; Berry, 1995; Mitchell, 1995; Regis, 1999; Roach, 1996; Shrum & Kilburn, 1996; Salaam, 1997; Gaudet & MacDonald, 2003), the growing literature on the city's post-Katrina culture (Woods, 2005; Nine Times Social Aid and Pleasure Club, 2006; Sakakeeny, 2006; Gotham, 2007; White, 2008; Kivland, 2008; Dinerstein, 2009; Porter, 2009; Spindt & Weiss, 2009; Breunlin & Lewis, 2009; Barrios, 2010), while also contributing to the broader sociological literature on the relationship of meaning to social action (Durkheim, [1912]1995; Goffman, [1967]1982; Alexander & Smith, 2001; Collins, 2004; Alexander, 2004).

The participatory forms of New Orleanian parades studied here have been traced back through the nineteenth century in a genealogy of practice and meaning of "circum-Atlantic" funerary tradition (Roach, 1996, pp. 56–63),[4] colonial street masking and informally organized public

FIGURE 2

Community Members Join In and Dance Alongside Members of a Social Aid and Pleasure Club Sponsoring a Second Line Parade

Photograph by Diane Grams © 2012.

revelry inspired by Parisian carnival (Kinser, 1990, p. 8), and the modern form of Mardi Gras spectacle parade first staged by the Mistick Krewe of Comus in 1857 (Kinser, 1990; Roach, 1996; Gotham, 2007).

There is little disagreement among historians, folklorists, and ethnomusicologists that these parades are rooted in African and Caribbean religious and festive practice (Lipsitz, 1990; Harrison-Nelson, 1996; Roach, 1996; Schindler, 1997; Gill, 1997; Regis, 1999; Hardy, 2001; Gaudet & MacDonald, 2003) and that they are intimately tied to the development of improvisational jazz (Berry, Foose, & Jones, 1986; Lomax, 1990; White, 2008). Yet outsiders, including visitors, tourists, and nonlocal media, often misrepresent them as folly and misinterpret these practices as evidence of moral abandon. The problem lies in the fact that some outsiders approach these parades only as spectacles to be watched. As a spectacle, the parade is defined by the subject/object dichotomy: a viewer places himself in the position of *knowing subject*, and through the act of looking at the parade as *object*, expects to understand its meaning and take pleasure from it through the act of looking (Foucault, 1970, 1974, 1980).

Performances by second liners and Mardi Gras Indians indeed provide “eye candy” for observers: the Mardi Gras Indians are draped in lavish suits of beads, stones, and ostrich plumes; the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs display their matching tuxedos, hats, fans, sashes, and baskets. The stunning beauty of the paraders’ apparel and the detailed imagery of their costumes are embedded with symbols that provide clues to the meaning of the paraders’ roles. In addition to understanding the symbols, one can experience the parade as ritual by joining it—that is, either by following the chanting big chief and joining his chorus or by dancing with SAPC members though their neighborhoods (Figure 2).

To investigate the meaning of such parades, I begin with the theoretical perspective of cultural sociology (Alexander & Smith, 2001). Public parades in post-Katrina New Orleans provide an insightful case study because of the way in which the disaster shed light on the autonomy of culture: The choice of action (*i.e., to dress up in costume and parade with music through the city streets*) the reasons for doing it ("*it's our culture,*" "*it's our tradition*"), and the context of the action (*the postdisaster city streets*) provide important clues to the relationship of culture to society and, in this case, to the city's postdisaster recovery.

As such, this case study addresses the theoretical debate in sociology that emerged in the late twentieth century over the relationship of culture and social structure. Framing the foundational logic of a "cultural sociology," Alexander and Smith (2001) see culture as "embedded within a horizon of affect and meaning" working as an "independent variable" that acts on the social world as it "possesses a relative autonomy in shaping actions and institutions, providing inputs every bit as vital as more material or instrumental forces" (Alexander & Smith, 2001, p. 3). This approach contrasts with the more positivist "sociology of culture" approach whereby culture is the product of some other social structure, and an instrument of the powerful.

> To believe in the possibility of a "cultural sociology" is to subscribe to the idea that every action, no matter how instrumental, reflexive or coerced vis-a-vis its external environments (Alexander, 1988), is embedded to some extent in a horizon of affect and meaning. This internal environment is one towards which the actor can never be fully instrumental or reflexive. (Alexander & Smith, 2001, p. 2)

Their framing exists within a Durkheimian ([1912]1995) tradition in sociology that theorizes the construction of symbol systems that structure social life. This tradition is evident through, for example, the works of Goffman ([1967]1982); Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985); Swidler (1986); and Collins (2004). Similar to Swidler's concept of culture as a "tool kit" (1986), Alexander and Smith see culture as an "an ideal resource that partially enables and partially constrains action" (2001, p. 2). By "culture" I refer to the "broad horizon of meaning" (Alexander & Smith, 2001) within which social action takes place. More specifically, as Geertz states, "Culture . . . denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (1973, p. 89). In this sense, "meaning" is a structure within which action takes place, not an outcome. By "action" I mean the ways in which Black working-class residents of New Orleans used culture to negotiate survival and rebuild their everyday lives.

By distinguishing between "performance" as cultural display/observation and "ritual" as participatory experience, I present a logic that challenges the portrayal of the city's culture as one characterized by the *moral abandon* displayed in touristic images.[5] In so doing, I extend modernist thinking, beginning with Goffman's ([1959]1973) dramaturgical theory of social life and Geertz's (1973) interpretative framework of culture, followed by a bevy of humanists and scholars (Turner, 1982; Kinser, 1990; Lipsitz, 1990; Fields, 1995; Roach, 1996; Shrum & Kilburn, 1996; Alexander, 2004; Collins, 2004) who have subsequently focused on the relationship of "performance" to "ritual" to theorize how meaning is constructed and communicated. For Turner, performance provides a conceptual link between the everyday experience and dramatic expression, where performance is a completion of something begun in everyday life. He writes: "An experience is itself a process which 'presses out' to an 'expression' which completes it. . . . A performance is the proper finale of an experience" (Turner 1982, p. 13). Similarly, theater historian Joseph Roach considers performance a form of "surrogation," by which he means to step-in for another, to fill someone else's shoes, or "to stand in for an elusive entity that it is not" (1996,

pp. 1, 3). Each definition of performance implies action embedded in meaning. In his theory of cultural pragmatics, Alexander frames cultural performance as "the social processes by which actors, individually or in concert, display for others the meaning of their social situation" (2004, p. 32). Meaning is understood through the connection of an underlying structure of "background representations," such as historic understandings or narratives, to "foreground scripts" enacted in the present. The ritual aspect is evident by shared understandings of the moral order of the situation (Goffman, [1967]1982, p. 6), the shared mood and emotional energy (Collins, 2004), or shared meanings that energize participants (Alexander, 2004, p. 527).

Following in this line of thinking, I argue that public parades, involving both performance and ritual, produce a shared reality; they create and perpetuate the symbols and the ideas through which the parading people define themselves and their social worlds. It is through the experience of "joining in" that the sense of community is experienced; by being part of the ritual one experiences what Durkheim referred to as "collective effervescence" or Alexander as "fusion" (2004). Such collective action results from rhythmic movement and participation of many people. Once a performance is staged through "episodes of repeated and simplified cultural communication" (Alexander, 2004, p. 527), the performance becomes ritual when the subject/object dichotomy of performers and observers dissolves into a nexus of participatory revelry. This is the shared experience that produces social catharsis. In this sense, the city's parading culture is its *moral center,* where "morality" is a symbolic world of the array of meanings that define a shared experience (Durkheim, [1912]1995, pp. 213–214, 224–225; Fields, 1995, p.lv; Collins, 2004, p. 6).

METHODS

I use traditional ethnographic approaches to develop an in-depth understanding of the distinctive social worlds responsible for activities of the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs and Mardi Gras Indian tribes. Participant observation is an inductive form of research (see Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Becker, 1988). As Anderson pointed out, "the ethnographer should enter the field armed with a certain sociological sophistication, even a theoretical perspective that, as the fieldwork proceeds, helps to formulate questions concerning the social organization of the subjects and their settings" (2002, p. 1536). This approach then seeks to understand the unfamiliar social world and in the process develop social theory that may help understand other social worlds operating in a similar manner.

I was introduced to the weekly parades in the Uptown neighborhood of Central City with the inaugural parade of the Good Fellas in 2007 (Figure 3) by Nasha, a security guard in my apartment building and a member of Ladies of Unity, another new Social Aid and Pleasure Club, whose inaugural parade was scheduled to occur later that year. Through my contact with her, her family, her club members, and members of 16 other clubs, I came to realize how important these parades were in structuring cultural life for their participants. Moreover, I began to regularly "see" many of the invisible service workers and laborers in the city, as they were among the highly visible participants in the city's parades.

Initially, I gathered data as a participant observer at public parades by showing up to the Sunday second line parades with a consumer-line digital camera that takes both pictures and short video. With this small camera, I was an unthreatening addition to the "third line" of parade photographers. I developed relationships with second liners and a variety of clubs through conversation at "stops," where the parade members would rest at various sites in the neighborhood. As parade participants came to know of my ethnographic interest in public parades, I was invited to more events beyond the Good Fellas club's annual parade. As part of my role as participant-observer, I provided club members with copies of pictures and videos on DVDs, and later began uploading low-resolution

FIGURE 3

The Start of the Good Fellas Inaugural Parade as a "Diva" and Club Member Dance Down a Staircase on to the Street

Photograph by Timothy D. Lace © 2007. Used by permission.

versions to YouTube and a Facebook page available to "friends only." This sharing of images led some club members to consider me their "personal photographer."

The regularity of weekly parades augmented by annual parades provided me the opportunity for ongoing data collection and analysis necessary for ethnography. I participated in 52 parades out of an estimated 140 parades staged by the Black community in the city over a 4-year period (August 2007–August 2011), and I conducted in-depth interviews with 43 parade participants.

(My consent form allowed informants the opportunity to decide if they wanted to be identified by name and organizational affiliation or by a pseudonym.)

As an outsider with no knowledge of these parading practices prior to 2007, I sought to understand the meanings assigned by the social worlds sponsoring public parades in New Orleans. Although I observed several Downtown and Ninth Ward parades, my focus was primarily on the Uptown parading activities in Central City. This is an area that has long been home to Black working-class African Americans, who were predominantly renters as opposed to being homeowners. This area contrasts to historic Faubourg Tremé and the (later) midcentury suburb of Pontchartrain Park, both home to middle-class and upper-class African Americans. In order to understand variations in social practice and meaning, I strategically built my research sample across the social group boundaries in Uptown that typically served to segregate and distinguish people by group affiliation. Among the specific research activities informing this paper:

- I followed all the activities of Ladies of Unity (LOU) over four years, including the planning of their first parade in 2007, the establishment of the men's auxiliary (Men of Unity), in 2009, and their subsequent annual parades.
- I attended the annual parades of 16 other Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs over 4 years (identified and discussed below).
- Through snowball sampling, I conducted in-depth interviews with club leaders and parading members of four newly founded SAPCs—the Ladies and Men of Unity, the Men of Class, and the New Orleans Bayou Steppers—and three of the oldest groups — Young Men Olympian (est. 1884), Zulu (est. 1909), and Original Prince of Wales (est. 1929).
- I attended the arrival by boat of Zulu Royalty at the French Quarter docks on the day before Mardi Gras (Lundi Gras), and then on Tuesday morning (Mardi Gras), I begged for coconuts and other "throws" during the annual parade of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club. In the afternoon, I walked a few blocks from the Zulu parade route to the intersection of Second and Dryades Streets in Central City to be among the Uptown Mardi Gras Indians as they arrived to this ritual meeting place.
- In 2009, the weekend after Mardi Gras, I joined thousands in the jazz funeral for Antoinette K-Doe, widow of rhythm and blues singer Ernie K-Doe. She died on the very day of Mardi Gras, February 24.
- In mid-March, I skipped the annual St. Patrick's Day (March 17) parades celebrating Irish ethnicity and the St. Joseph's Day (March 19) parades celebrating Italian ethnicity, and went to the St. Joseph's Night parades of Mardi Gras Indians (March 19) and the subsequent Uptown Mardi Gras Indian Super Sunday parade on the following Sunday involving approximately 30 Indian tribes, including the Golden Eagles, the Wild Magnolias, Cheyenne, the Wild Red Flames, the Carrolton Hunters, the Creole Wild West, the Creole Osceola, Yellow Pocahontas, Seminole, and the Geronimo Hunters.
- In contrast to the community-sponsored parades, I also documented a number of commercially staged parades, in which the clubs I followed were paid to parade. The Ladies of Unity, the Golden Eagles, Cheyenne, the Carrolton Hunters, the Revolution, the Original Prince of Wales, and other SAPCs and Mardi Gras Indian tribes were featured as spectacles to be observed at tourist-oriented events such as the National Basketball Association's All-Star Game and the New Orleans Annual Jazz and Heritage Festival.
- In addition to participating in parades, I attended planning meetings, fundraising events, and "after parties" that followed parades. I helped to make parade accessories, including fans, sashes, and baskets. I helped to stitch beaded patches for Indian suits, and I photographed and videorecorded activities for the promotional purposes of several clubs.

These activities begin to help me frame the extent and characteristics of public parading in New Orleans in the years after Katrina's devastation. Parading activity is more pervasive in New Orleans than anywhere else in the United States, and possibly in the world. Moreover, all the activities involved in the production of these parades extend into almost every aspect of daily life. As an ethnographer, I came to know participants, and in many cases I became part of their everyday lives. This meant doing things together (Becker, 1986) such as sharing lunch or dinner together, visiting relatives in prison, watching football games, attending a baby shower, a baptism, a wedding, funerals, birthdays, or other social gatherings. Through the use of this methodological approach, I was able to observe the fact that few activities among members of the parading groups are separated from the perpetual activities associated with public parading. For example, I watched the 2010 Super Bowl on February 7 with nearly 20 other people in the two-room shotgun home of a big chief. Eight of us sat in the middle room around his double bed, which served as a work table as we assembled parts of Indian suits for his tribe to be worn the following week on Mardi Gras Day.

FINDINGS

Public Space Is Transformed Into Mythopoetic Spaces

Participatory parades in New Orleans transform ordinary public space into extraordinary space, rich with meaning. Like Magnuson (2005), I find the term "mythopoetic" useful to draw attention to the symbolic content of parade performances that transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. For example, to "mask as Indian" is a transformative act of human agency; it is a process to make "pretty" one who has been disparaged and debased through most of human history. Similarly, to dress up in the finest clothes and accessories one can purchase and then to parade with your Social Aid and Pleasure Club on your anniversary Sunday, transforms the daily struggle of the city's Black, poor, and working classes into the sense of self imagined as rich. Observations and interviews help to identify descriptive terms reflective of the transformations occurring during performance (Table 1). The annual rituals of both the Mardi Gras Indians and the Social Aid

TABLE 1

Comparison of Terms Reflecting the Transformation Between Everyday Life and Festive Performance

Everyday Life	Festive Performance
Public street	Moving stage
Oppressed (enslaved)	Free
Common	Heroic
Cowardly	Brave
Insulted, disrespected	Respected
Ugly	Pretty
Dirty	Clean
Struggling	Triumphant
Lazy	Hard-working
Humble	Masterful
Shabby	Dressed-up
Casual	Formal
Plain	Fancy
Poor	Rich
Defeat	Victory
Subordinate	Royalty/wealthy citizenry

and Pleasure Clubs reify this complex transformation of being—from ugly to pretty, from a subordinate to superordinate, from poor to rich—through transformation of meaning from one side of a binary to the other.

Performing Freedom

"Masking as Indian" is how Black New Orleanians describe the elaborate ritual that has occurred for more than a century on Mardi Gras Day in the city's Black communities. These practices exist within a broad cultural context characterized by masking, dancing, singing, and meandering the city streets as part of Mardi Gras celebrations. "Masking as Indian" began in the late nineteenth century, when the only sanctioned role for Blacks in the city's main street spectacle parades was to carry flambeaux as torch-bearers for white businessmen enthroned as royalty for the day. Wearing an "Indian suit" made of feathers and beaded patches of narrative imagery continues today as unauthorized parading on the back streets of the city.[6] These parades are performative acts of collective memory of a precolonial freedom; the narrative patches detail both victory and defeat in imagined battles and draw association to contemporary struggles to resettle in post-Katrina times.

According to the big chief of the Carrolton Hunters, masking as Indian began as "as a way to show respect to our Indian brothers for helping us in times of need" (2010 street performance). This broadly shared narrative refers to a bond in freedom between Indians and Blacks attributed to the interaction of escaped African slaves, who turned to Native Americans in the swamps and bayous for survival.[7] Precolonial and colonial New Orleans was a place where Africans and Native Americans from many different tribal groups coexisted among a relatively unseemly population of militia, mariners, slave merchants, expatriates, criminal deportees, pirates, colonists, missionaries, and, later, industrialists and financiers.[8] Although the original colony was established by the French, the city had shifting national governance as it was passed from Spanish to French to American rulers before the U.S. Civil War.

Within this shifting governance came varied proclamations and legislative acts intended to regulate race relations. The "code noir," initially decreed in 1685 by Louis XIV for French subjects, provided for manumission of slaves, emergence of a free Black population, and intermarriage between slaveholders and slaves (CN 1685 in Roach 1996, pp. 56–57). Although the code adopted in the Louisiana colony (1724) was more restrictive, prohibiting miscegenation even between mulattos and Negroes (CN 1724, Article 6), as Roach points out it failed to address the existence of "mixed-blood" French subjects, which it simultaneously forbade and acknowledged (1996, p. 57). Spanish rule of Louisiana (1762–1802) legitimized manumission by allowing slaves to purchase their own freedom and the freedom of their children and other family members, an opportunity repealed during a brief period of French rule in 1803 (Schafer 1994, pp. 2–3, 6–9), before the Louisiana Purchase by the United States in the same year.

Within this context, establishment of a Black/White dichotomy was complicated by customs and practices dating back to the seventeenth century. Free Blacks (gens de couleur, gen de couleur libres) had been among the city's wealthiest—and had also often been slave-holding citizens—as had an elite biracial class of free people of color and freed slaves.

One of my informants, Big Chief "Monk" Boudreaux, acknowledged his multiracial identity by sharing details of his family's "choice" to claim "Black" over Indian when the Choctaw were removed to Oklahoma. "I am Choctaw and I am Black. We mask as Indian to celebrate that part of who we are. This is our tradition. When the Indian had to leave, was being moved to reservations, we took the Black. We said we *Black*, so we could stay. This is our home" (interview with author 2010). Boudreaux acknowledged the fluidity of racial identity and the consequences of Blackness when he said, "Many of my relatives were your skin tone. [We called it] High Yella. They lived

downtown. They wouldn't talk to me because I was too dark. They didn't want to be associated with us. But they come from the same place" (interview with author 2010). Boudreaux's reference to his relatives living "downtown" refers to the geographic divisions that traditionally segregated African Americans by skin color and class. To assert the identity of *Black* rather than *Indian*, when the Choctaw were being "removed" to Indian territory in Oklahoma, was to assert a racial identity that had a legitimate place among New Orleanian citizenry, albeit one subordinate to those of lighter skin. The ritual of parading on the back streets without the ordering mechanism of a parade permit—an act that still on occasion leads to arrest—reinforces this assertion of freedom from constraint by governing authority of the city.

Performing Respect

The ritual interactions between tribes of Mardi Gras Indians on Mardi Gras begin when each big chief reveals his suit for the first time in the year. The artistry of hand-stitched beadwork is a skill mastered by the Big Chief and carried out through much of his own handiwork during the preceding year. Interaction on the street is framed as respect for the craft of making the suit, for the status of each member of the tribe, and for the big chief. At a tribal meeting on the streets during Mardi Gras, respect can be an unspoken, symbolic exchange, as stated by Big Chief Monk Boudreaux:

> Mardi Gras day is when all the Indians come out, ramble around the city to meet each other, to show off their beauty, you know, the work that they put in. It's to show the next tribe that you put in your homework. You know [you did your sewing]. They see who they most like. They get together and they dance, when they meeting each other. It's like [in the interaction one person might be impressed and think], "He did his homework." [I might think] "My suit looks better than yours." But you don't have to tell him that because they look at you and they see. (Interview with author 2010)

The competition among the Black Indian tribes is for status and among individual Indians to be considered "the prettiest."

> "Pretty" is about making a masterful piece, [so that] when you look at it, it takes your breath away. It has its way of working into your system [and makes you believe that] it doesn't matter how dark I am or how light you are . . . . [Through playing Indian] some of us were able to escape the net [of oppression and racism] that said, "You an ugly nigger. You a Black ugly nigger." (Fred Johnson, former Spy Boy for Yellow Pocahontas tribe, quoted in Katzman 2007)

At these interactions "pretty" and "clean" are two terms shouted among Indians and can be heard coming from the crowd. According to Aaron Atkinson, a grill chef who regularly helps his nephew run a smoker grill at parade stops, both terms recognize and evaluate the creativity brought to sewing the narrative patches and assembling them with feathers and ruffle to make a spectacular suit:

> "Clean" is when you start your suit [each year], you break it down, and you want to make it as neat and as perfect as possible. And all this is from handsewing, the creativity comes from the individual himself when he's sewing that suit. Nobody else can duplicate what you do, and that's where you get your recognition. You might have two horses, he might have five horses, plus a chariot or whatever goes with it [and] that would make that go a little bit better. [On Mardi Gras day, Indians show each other the layers of work covered by each flap of art.] Once

> an Indian knows his suit is prettier than another, and then he'll put his flap down, and he'll go and challenge the next guy. (Interview with author 2008)

On Mardi Gras, tribal members emerge onto the street from a designated location, such as the home of the big chief, and are introduced by the song "Indian Red," which names each member. Once all are on the street, the subordinate members of a tribe—the spy boys, flag boys, and lower chiefs—move in advance of the big chief and the big queen. According to Big Chief Monk Boudreaux, the percussionists and chanting followers of the "second line" provide the music to "bring us down" the street, while announcing their presence to the neighborhood. The big chief and his tribe parade throughout their territory to the various gathering spots in each section of the city.

Boudreaux's status as an elder means that he is unlikely to receive any direct challenge to his status when he meets Indians from other tribes. Yet, he acknowledges that street battles among Mardi Gras Indians on Mardi Gras day were prevalent until the 1990s, when the establishment of the Mardi Gras Indian Council shifted the focus to an aesthetic competition. And although street fights still occur today on occasion, interaction among Indians more typically involves symbolic interaction that concludes with a show of respect. Competition for who is the "cleanest" or "prettiest" can lead to confrontation among Mardi Gras Indians of lesser status:

> When James, a Cheyenne spy boy, met the spy boy of another tribe, the two entered into a series of gestures and exchanged insults, each demanding the other let him pass. James agreed to display his suit, and in effect engaged in a competition. He dramatically opened one arm then the other. Both arms had long ostrich plumes and beadwork to look like his wings; his gesture of arms open wide revealed the quality of beadwork covering his entire body. The crowd, now surrounding the two, expressed appreciation for his work by shouting "preeetty, preeetty," but the competitor refused to let him pass. James responded by demanding he show his suit, charging: "you ain't got nuttin' under that," to highlight he had no layers of bead work to show. The competitor's response, "you got that out of your mamma's drawer," was intended to insult James's fine beadwork patches bordered with lace and ruffle. In a series of symbolic gestures, James had his crown of ostrich plumes removed. He jumped back and forth at his competitor like a boxer might, but swiping the ground and then his competitor with the plumes extending from "his wings." Onlookers gasped in anticipation of a fist fight, when another onlooker assertively declared "the meetin' over with, the meetin's over!" ending the interaction between the two. (Author's field notes, Feb. 16, 2010)

Respect can also be overtly stated. Big Chief Waddie of the Gert Town Hunters allowed onlookers in the crowd to lift his flaps of beadwork layered on his suit. The crowd cheered and expressed "ooh" and "aah" at layer upon layer of beaded imagery. Seeing the renown Big Queen Rita standing next to Bo Dollis, Big Chief of the Wild Magnolias, who was sitting in a motorized wheel chair without Indian regalia, Big Chief Waddie introduced himself and sang an impromptu chant to honor Big Chief Bo. As the crowd all around him chanted in the background "Way up town, We way up town now, Way up town," he sang:

> God have Mercy. Go tell Percy.
> We on our way now.
> Way up town, for the gold crown
> Have you seen
> Big Chief Waddie of the golden crown?
> I'm on fiya. Meet 'em on baya.
> Speak through the needle.
> Pretty white eagle. Pretty Magnolia.

> You Mr. Big Chief. You are the big chief.
> Are you ready? My heart feels heavy.
> God have mercy. Go tell Percy.
> (Author field notes Mardi Gras, Feb. 16, 2010)

Through his chant, he introduced himself, highlighting his identity as a big chief known for his sewing as he "speaks through the needle," then acknowledged his heavy heart, seeing one of the greatest chiefs of all not masked on Mardi Gras day.

A big chief raising his arms to display the detail of exquisite craftsmanship of his suit is a gesture of transcendence that signals movement from one side of the binary to the other (Figure 4). The first time one comes face to face with such a masked Indian in the middle of a busy intersection is otherworldly. Rather than "take" pleasure in the sight of the Indian, one is compelled to bow, and "give" praise and deference at the glory of such overwhelming beauty. The following field notes describe one such encounter:

> The big chief of the Seminole positioned himself in the middle of the intersection of Martin Luther King Drive and Claiborne Avenue, blocking passage through two four-lane boulevards. He stood with his big queen beneath a portable arch topped with ostrich plumes and large beaded lettering, SEMINOLE 9, referring to Ninth Ward Seminole. The image covering the "apron" of his suit was of a mourning Indian warrior, kneeling in a graveyard, arms raised, looking upward, entreating a spirit image outlined in the sky. The image of the beaded warrior is surrounded by gravestones each inscribed with "R.I.P." and the names of lost love ones including "Baby Dekyra," "Joe Pete," "Dick," "Taju," "Ed," and more. I asked him who he was memorializing; he said, friends and family members lost to urban violence. The sight of a big chief and big queen standing below the feathered arch in matching suits so intricately beaded was astonishing. (Author field notes, March 16, 2008)

The participatory nature of the Indian parade on the back streets on Mardi Gras day was evident at the arrival of Big Chief Monk Boudreaux and the Golden Eagles at Second and Dryades Streets in 2010. One of the most highly regarded of the Uptown Indians, he has over the years gathered crowds of up to 100 costumed revelers to join him, chanting and playing percussion instruments as they proceed from his Uptown home to the gathering place of Second and Dryades (Figure 5). On this day, there is a chorus of costumed "skel-e-kins" (people in skeleton suits), "moss men" (men covered in tree moss), baby dolls (grown women dressed as babies), and musicians playing percussion instruments. From afar you hear the chanting chorus: "Somebody's got to sew, sew, sew. Somebody's got to sew, sew, sew." As the group approached, one could see the Golden Eagles tribe, including the big chief, big queen, three spy boys, and a flag boy. Between these choral chants, the big chief narrated a tale of sewing skill and bravery fighting battles on Mardi Gras day.

> I sewwwed all night long
> I sewwwed all night long
>
> (chorus—Somebody's got to sew, sew, sew)
>
> I sewed that point gonna carry on
> Gonna meet them boys on the battle field
>
> (chorus—Somebody's got to sew, sew, sew)
>
> I was ready to die but I did not kneel
> I die fa ca-hoo-na on Mardi Gras day
>
> (chorus—Somebody's got to sew, sew, sew)
>
> Spy say, "Indians commin and I know their way.
> India-a- ans here they come!

FIGURE 4

Big Chief Al of Cheyenne Mardi Gras Indian Tribe at Second and Dryades on Mardi Gras Day 2010

Photograph by Timothy D. Lace © 2010. Used by permission.

> India-a- ans here they come!
> [I said,] "Let em come. Let em come.
> My queen's got the hatchet but I got the gun."
>
> (Author field notes, Mardi Gras Observation 2010)

Such a narrative brings into consciousness not only the capacity of Blacks to resist oppression, but also to create narratives of freedom and self-determination through hard work and bravery.

FIGURE 5

Big Chief Monk Boudreaux and Big Queen Mary of the Golden Eagles with Costumed "Skel-e-Kins" and Other Costumed Followers on Mardi Gras 2010

Photograph by Timothy D. Lace © 2010. Used by permission.

As Boudreaux pointed out, it is a day of celebration and triumph. The victory "is in being who you actually are" (interview with author, 2010). Children are socialized into the culture of the Mardi Gras Indian as a way to engage them in positive social activities. According to Wynoka, daughter of Big Chief Monk Boudreaux, whose son is a spy boy for the Golden Eagles and in line to be chief one day, "It's our way of keeping the world from eating them up. After school, they might play a little sports and do their homework, but then they have to get to their beadwork" (interview with author, 2007). Images of the warrior who "will not kneel" or "won't bow down" reinforce the cultural consciousness of free people in an oppressive environment. Parading freely as Indians throughout the backstreets of the city on Mardi Gras day is as much ritual defiance of historic prohibitions to parading on Mardi Gras (Gill. 1997; Gotham, 2007) and resistance to ascribed subordinate status, as it is a way to retain cultural identities from both African and Native American pasts (Lipsitz, 1990; Berry, 1995).[9]

Exuberance on the Street

> When I asked the members of Ladies of Unity what it felt like to dance out the door at the start of their parade, in a chorus of enthusiastic chatter, they said, "Freedom. You are just so free." As the group quieted, Wynoka, the club's founder and CEO, clarified, "This is your day. This is the day that the whole city has set aside for you. That is why it is so special." (Author field notes, Ladies of Unity, Club Meeting, December 3, 2007)

The acts of being on the street, following, dancing, and singing are experiences shared among participants involved in weekly second line parades. But it is the feeling of exuberance that sets

the second line parade apart from the Mardi Gras day competitions among Indians. The tone of exuberance is established from the moment celebrants enter on to the street. "Comin' out the door" is when club members, as celebrants, dance out of their favorite club house onto the street, employing as many spectacular moves as they can to the music of a brass band and the cheers and hollers of the gathered crowd. This exuberance increasingly spreads from the dancing celebrants and their brass band to the "second line," as the massive moving street festival progresses from destination to destination attracting joiners, like the Pied Piper attracted children. This movement through the city is not a typical parade in the sense of observing a display, but instead serves to reconstitute its territory as it gathers a crowd for ritual celebration.

Club members attribute part of the exuberance of the day to the music. According to the Ladies of Unity President, Coco:

> It's our bass drum, that and the sound of a tuba, that will draw the most attention in the world. For locals, you know, we're a music city; give me a tuba and a bass drum and, I guarantee, I could start a parade right now with just those two instruments. What happens is you get up, you start walkin', and before you know it, you have a whole crowd. (Interview with author, 2007)

People know what to do because of the repeated series of actions that connect to the past and are intended to continue in the future. According to grill chef Aaron Atkinson, this is the essence of culture:

> It's knowledge that we try to spread. And for the young kids [we do it] so they can follow the family traditions and values in the families. Head chiefs of the families, the presidents of the second line groups and all, [teach the children] from babies, you'll see the little children's division, and with the Indians, you'll see the children's division; they're spreading the knowledge and that wealth and that culture to these kids so they can keep the tradition going later on in life, for all of us. (Interview with author, 2008)

Atkinson's insights are echoed by theorists of performance who assert that such knowledge is rooted in collective memory and expressed through the individual movement of the second line dance and in the structure of the second line parade itself. Evidence exists in diaries of colonists and slave traders noting the importance of music and dance in preslavery cultures in Africa (Southern [1971]1997, pp. 7–8). Collective performances continued in times of prohibition in New Orleans during slavery, through permitted forms of religious expression, such as at funerals and on the variety of "free days" prescribed by Catholic religion and legislated in New Orleans. From the earliest *code noir* (CN 1685) decreed by Louis XIV in 1685, owners were required to "see to Catholic baptism, instruction, and burial of slaves ... owners were also enjoined from making their slaves work on the Sabbath or on feast days" (CN 1685 Articles 2, 6, 14, in Roach, 1996, p. 57). Freedom on Sundays enabled enslaved men and women from different African and Caribbean cultures to gather at what became known as "Congo Square"— today's Louis Armstrong Park on the edge of Tremé—to play percussion instruments, to dance the communal dances of the Bamboula or Calinda,[10] and to buy, sell, and trade their own goods.

One of the most detailed pieces of historical evidence of such ritual is an account of a funerary ritual in the diary of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, dated May 4, 1819 (Latrobe, 1980). Joseph Roach interpreted such historic documents as evidence of unauthorized performances hidden in the "interstices of the dominant culture's public discourse of legitimacy and legality" (Roach, 1995, p. 56). In his view, knowledge of banned cultural practices was preserved in collective memory only to reassert itself through permissible behavior, such as in funerals.[11]

Second line participants, like Atkinson, routinely rely on Louis Armstrong's account of jazz funerary procession (Armstrong, [1954]1986, pp. 89–92) to explain the symbolism of the contemporary second line parade. According to Armstrong's narrative, the second line parade is derived from the practice of the jazz funeral. Jazz funerals were sponsored by neighborhood-based mutual aid societies (which came to be known as Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs) for a deceased member. The jazz funeral procession took place in two parts. The first part was the sorrowful procession, for which a collection of musicians played funeral dirges and a mournful crowd followed as the horse-drawn hearse made its way to the burial site. After the body was interred began what Armstrong termed the "second line," a procession also led by the brass band, but this time, the tear-filled handkerchiefs and sun-blocking umbrellas became dance accessories as mourning turned into celebration and rapture. The spirit and format of this second part of the funeral procession provided the format for annual "anniversary" parades sponsored by SAPCs and for the creation of the free form dance that would become known as "second-lining." This kind of dancing is characterized by individual improvisational movement to upbeat and inspirational spirituals, such as "I'll fly away" or "Glory Bound."

If, following Roach (1995), the second line is a performance of "reliving," then culture is an act of remembering, and ritual is the practice of gathering among the living and stepping in for those who are absent. The feeling of exuberance is the celebration of the living among the spirits of the dead. According to Roach, catharsis at a funeral occurred as a spiritual melding:

> Their celebration begins at a point along the trajectory of mourning that must be sensed collectively by those present on the occasion, a moment in which the community joyously affirms its renewal in the very act of marking the passing of one of its own. . . . The moment of transformation is called "cutting the body loose." It initiates a burst of joyous music, dance and humor, often ribald, in which there is no impiety, though there may be some quite pointed irreverence. (Roach, 1995, pp. 61–62)

Although second line parades are now largely decoupled from their original role as the return route or second part of a funerary procession, such practices draw reference to this background culture. Such narrative is useful to help explain the kind of symbolic objects such as handkerchiefs, umbrellas, and baskets, or birds on shoulders (Figure 6), all of which can be observed among contemporary parade accessories. The "burst of joyous music, dance and humor" also captures the format and meaning of the weekly second line parades of today.

Meaning in Post-Katrina New Orleans

For poor and working-class Black New Orleanians who survived poverty and disadvantage through the interpersonal networks created through these weekly events, the disaster that followed Hurricane Katrina not only destroyed property and displaced community members; it also untethered people from the ties that enabled them to function in daily life. Although many outsiders did not understand how the city and its people could start parading before the return of most other aspects of "normal" daily life, the insiders interviewed for this research lay the groundwork for such understanding: second line parades have reconstructed community ties and social interaction necessary to rebuild lives. In doing so, they are tapping the resilience that has been a product of these rituals. Such leadership is acting in the character of the "second line," that is, setting activity in motion so that the rest would follow.

Critics assailed the changes seen in contemporary second line parades even before Katrina. Some critics point out that the "social aid" part of the Social Aid and Pleasure Club has been replaced by the "pleasure" part of being on the street; others point out that the mourning part of

FIGURE 6

Mr. Jack, Co-Founder of Men of Unity, Dancing with Handmade Fans in his Gloved Hands and a Bird on His Shoulder

Photograph by the Diane Grams © 2011.

the jazz funeral has replaced by the celebration part of the second line (White, 2008, p. 99). Such change is indeed part of the anniversary parade format of SAPCs. I argue that contemporary second line anniversary parades have an important place in identity formation and in the competition over space and place within the sociocultural-political landscape in post-Katrina New Orleans. According to Joe Stern, president of the Original Prince of Wales, clubs used to be neighborhood-based, but “now people are spread all over. Clubs are formed by people who want to hang

together" (author interview, 2008). Nearly every club I interviewed had members who left New Orleans after Katrina and did not move back, but they continued to participate in club activities, including the annual parades. The contemporary practice of SAPCs formed through a desire of friends to be together sharing a bond in brotherhood or sisterhood is distinct from the historic, neighborhood-based mutual aid societies established in the late nineteenth century. Unique to this post-Katrina period, the SAPCs provide a conduit for those living outside of the city to remain connected to local culture and community.

Efforts to suppress parades of the Black working class in post-Katrina New Orleans (2006–2007) required club members to assert their right to exist as both freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. Such efforts to control the lower-class penchant for public festivals has been a modernist preoccupation, part and parcel of European enlightenment and centralization of power within the state (Hunt, 1984, pp. 205–206). According to Joe Stern, second line parade permit fees used to be in line with the $500 permit fee for Mardi Gras parades. "It used to be $500, then it was $550, then right before the hurricane, it was $1,200. Then, after Katrina, there was shooting. It happened in January 2006 at the end of the 'ReNew Orleans' parade sponsored by the Social Aid and Pleasure Club Task Force and involving a coalition of clubs. The police used that as an excuse to raise the fee for second lines to $4,000" (author interview 2009). The move by civic authorities to increase the parade permit fee from under $1,200 to $4,000 after Katrina was, according to Stern, an attempt to price most clubs off the street. Stern, president of Prince of Wales, and Michele Longino, president of the New Orleans Bayou Steppers, were among the coalition of local parading groups that challenged the fee increase in court claiming—and succeeding in their argument— that such cultural expression was a protected right (author interview with Longino, 2009). Civic authorities wrongly claimed they could treat second lines as private events, which would allow the police to set fees at their discretion. Such events, attorneys for the police argued, are distinct from holiday parades such as Mardi Gras parades, which are "public" and are governed and protected under the city's Mardi Gras Code—chapter 34 of the Municipal Code (Troeh, 2006). The 2007 judgment in favor of the SAPCs paved the way for weekly second lines to play their cathartic role in the renewal of these neighborhoods and of the city. Although reduced from $4,000, the present day fee of $2,000 has led some clubs to pool their resources and stage a single parade involving several clubs each having their own division and their own brass band.

Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs today are gender-separated entities that maintain a cultural consciousness and identity for their male and female members. This begins when club members select a name that is expressive—even outlandish—for the group's self-image. For example, Zulu (and Lady Zulu), which first paraded in 1909, is among the oldest and largest of the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs still operating in New Orleans. It is named after the rebellious South African tribe that slaughtered British troops in 1879 when the British sought to "civilize" Zulu Natal. The costumes of the Zulu SAPC have always satirized Hollywood representations of African warriors: paraders wear black tights, grass skirts and paint their faces in blackface paint. In counterpoint is Original Prince of Wales (and Lady Wales) named after a royal visit to New Orleans around 1929 when the club was founded. In contrast to Zulu, the club dresses in matching formal suits to evoke the scene of British royalty in official regalia, setting the style for generations of SAPCs to come.

Among the other SAPCs observed during this study were Young Men Olympian, Men of Class, Women of Class, Good Fellas, Pigeon Town Steppers, Uptown Swingers, Perfect Gentlemen, Lady Buck Jumpers, Sudan, Mahogany Ladies, Original Four, Versatile Ladies of Style, Nine Times, Ladies of Unity, and Men of Unity. The names provide a sense of identity that often challenges existing racial stereotypes as well as the norms of the SAPC clubs that have come before. Satirical exaggeration is expressed through costuming and posturing during the Sunday parade. These identities are also the basis for aesthetic competition among the clubs.

The parade takes place along a route that is often tied to the club's own history, but is preapproved on a parade permit. The route begins and ends in the home neighborhood of its original members, but can extend as much as four miles across numerous other neighborhoods. Local participants maintain oral accounts of the order of parades. Dates, times, starting points, and stops are publicized largely through word of mouth. Route sheets, handed out the week before a parade, remind participants of the sponsoring club and its parading members, the parade starting place and time, the direction of travel, interim stops at bars, restaurants, and homes of honorees, and ending places—all chosen to generate commerce for club supporters and inscribe a record of the club's territory.

The spectacle of an entire club in matching outfits asserts an identity that is beautiful in the present and sets the terms of competition for the future. Tony Hookfin, president of Men of Class, sells refreshments at parade stops throughout the year to raise the $7,000–$10,000 necessary for his club to parade on the third Sunday in October. This money covers costs of permit fees ($2,000), band ($2,500), suits, shoes, hats, gloves, fans, and sashes for each member (about $300–$1,000 per person). Hookfin designs his club members' outfits and makes all the accessories himself. His designs are intended to place his club above the rest and "send the other clubs back to the drawing board" every year:

> Next year is our fifth anniversary, and I have got something for them [referring to the other parading clubs]. I'm going to make them all go back to the drawing board. The colors I am doing for next year are going to make them all start over. Last year, I did yellow, blue, and coral (Figure 7). After they see me, they will have to rethink their colors and designs for the next year. That's what it means to "send them back to the drawing board." So next year, our fifth anniversary, we will change everything again. All together I am doing five colors. One will be my first-year color, lime. Then I am adding. I will do three colors for the first half [of the parade] and three colors for second half [of the parade]. They ain't going to be ready for me this year. (Author interview, 2009)

The creativity and competition of the weekly second line parades draw connections between past, present, and future. The desire to outdo other clubs sets in motion a purpose for working, raising money, and showing up at the weekly meetings and the parades of other clubs. Just as each club renews the way things were done in the past, it is also changes that way, making the ongoing reenactment and transformation something for each subsequent club to recognize and reckon with.

Anniversary second lines are set apart from the demands of ordinary life by an array of rich sensory experiences that at once symbolize the uniqueness of the sponsoring club, its inner circle of family and friends, the broader community of second liners, and their connection to each other and a shared history. As Tyrone, a Saints football fan who is often torn between Sunday football and the second line parades says, "I've been going to second lines since I was boy. I can't miss 'em. I feel like I have to be here. I can catch up on the games at the stops" (author interview, 2007).

The celebrants are distinguished by an air of elegance established in brightly colored suits shining with appliqués of silk, beads, and feathers and handmade sashes draped across the chest (Figure 8). The outfit is accented by gloved hands carrying handmade fans; a formal hat atop the head, and hand-dyed 'gaters [alligator-skin shoes] on the feet. An inner circle of family and friends extends the artistry of the club by wearing ribbon boutonnieres, t-shirts emblazoned with photos of club members, scarves, bandanas, and hats with matching color schemes.

In contrast to the sponsoring club, members of other clubs wear casual garb such as matching cotton or rayon shirts, reminiscent of vintage bowling team shirts, stitched with club insignia

FIGURE 7

Tony Hookfin (Center), Founder and President of Men of Class, 2009 Second Line Parade

Photograph by Diane Grams © 2009.

FIGURE 8

Portrait of Ladies of Unity Social Aid and Pleasure Club With Their Parade Grand Marshall

Photograph by Diane Grams © 2012.

FIGURE 9

Uptown Swingers Wear "Casual" Matching Shirts With Their Club Insignia to a Sunday Second Line Parade of Another Club

Photograph by Diane Grams © 2007.

and member titles and names (Figure 9). According to Noland, a longtime member of Original Prince of Wales, who always sports an umbrella, "We are regular people. We work six days a week, so we can't work out at health clubs. We do it for exercise, to get out and have fun, but most important, we want to see what the other clubs are wearing" (author interview, 2007).

Unlike float riders in Mardi Gras, who float along the parade route perched high above an observing crowd, the sponsoring celebrants of second line parades exist on the same plane as the following crowd, physically set apart by only a rope (Figure 10). This is the only structuring device to control the movement of the crowd; it is carried by four ropers (two in front and two in back) who walk alongside the mainline celebrants, keeping the dancing second line off the moving stage. The separation between inside versus outside the roped-off area signifies the temporary distinction in status between the mainline celebrants and the second line. The format of a moving stage as the structuring element reinforces the expectation of collective participation.

Moments of heightened enthusiasm occur as the mainline celebrants move through the neighborhood. Friends wearing shirts emblazoned with their favorite celebrant's image might wave from a porch, cheer from some grassy median referred to as "the neutral ground," or might jump momentarily into the moving stage to dance a series of spectacular moves in unison or competition with one of the main celebrants. Other moments might occur as the mainline celebrants lay their fans on the ground to dance around them, or to watch one of their own break dance, jump into a cheerleader toe-touch, balance on heels and fall into splits, or shake from their shoulders to their toes all in double time to the music. When a parade has two or more divisions, a culminating battle of the bands at a parade stop or at the end of the parade (Figure 11) also leads to heightened emotion:

FIGURE 10

Supporters Carry Ropes to Separate the Dancing Club from the Second Line as Ladies of Unity Social Aid and Pleasure Club Move Through the Neighborhood in Their 2011 Second Line Parade

Photograph by Diane Grams © 2011.

FIGURE 11

Battle of the Bands at Second and Dryades Streets at the End of a 2012 parade

Photograph by Diane Grams © 2012.

> Collective emotion moved through the crowd during a battle of the bands at the Ladies and Men of Unity's 2009 parade. The rhythmic movement of the crowd transitioned between two different conflicting sets of beats as competition to control the rhythm ensued between the two divisions of the same parade. The competition began as the second division band, the Young Pinstripes, moved the Men of Unity on to the sidewalk passing the first division, the Ladies of Unity and their band, the Hot 8 Brass Band, which had stopped on Louisiana Avenue in front of the Sand Piper Lounge. The horns from the Young Pinstripes blared a recognizable "ta da daaaa daa, ta a daaaa daa," to which the crowd jumped with arms raised shouting an affirmative "Yeah." All the time the drums and symbols of the Hot 8 beat out a different rhythm from a well known Indian chant, "ta ta da da," a musical phrase eliciting a chant chorus "Let's go get 'em! Let's go get 'em!" on the off beats of the Young Pinstripes. The crowd literally moved back and forth between the beats of the two conflicting bands and choruses like a wave until a crescendo occurred, the music stopped, and the crowd cheered. (Author field notes, January 24, 2010)

Similar moments of collective participation and crescendo occurred in rhythmic chanting or callouts for various wards during the Sudan Parade in Fall 2009. Callouts for individual wards morphed into competition between the Uptown and Downtown areas of the city: "Sixth Ward, Seventh Ward, Eighth Ward, Ninth Ward, We Down-Town" is answered by chants for Uptown, "Way Uptown Now, Way Uptown Yeah." By the end of the parade, such competitive enthusiasm merged into a unified joyousness as the parade culminated at the home of one of the celebrants and the crowd gathered to sing the spiritual "Glory Bound": "When I hear that trumpet sound, I will lay my burdens down, I will lay them deep into the ground, then I'll know that I am glory bound . . . " (author field notes, November 8, 2009)

The spirit of exuberance ripples through the club's "mainline" of dancers and the music of the brass band, through the improvisational dance and collective chanting of the extended "second line," and into adjoining neighborhoods as smoke wafts into the air from the street vendors selling hamburgers, smoked sausage, and pork chop sandwiches. Spectacular dress, rhythmic music, improvised dance, collective song, aromatic smells, and refreshing cold drinks, all on a hot Sunday afternoon, provide rich sensory experiences etched into memory until the next parade.

CONCLUSION

Alexander's theory of cultural pragmatics (2004) provides a model for understanding the importance of performance and ritual to everyday life in the postdisaster city. As a form of postmodern ritual, public parades involve exaggerated social performances and cathartic moments of heightened experience. Public parades take place in a cultural space, in which actors reference past events through symbol and performance. Because they happen on the city streets, parades invite broad participation and enable participants to distinguish present day existing relationships with heightened experiences connected to the past. Within their performances, they compete for new status positions for the future. The affective content of these experiences creates a sense of belonging and social connection not available to the displaced residents elsewhere in the United States. The staging and participation of parades in the aftermath of Katrina was as much a call to come home for residents in the post-Katrina diaspora as they were rituals that gathered community members together. As such, they have been effective in providing the logic and momentum for returning and rebuilding individual and neighborhood lives as well as the city. These public parades, seen as reoccurring temporal events in the post-Katrina landscape, have provided a sense of a stable reality within a complex, fragmented, and unpredictable postdisaster environment.

I draw the important distinction between performance and ritual to develop an understanding of the city's public parades. New Orleanian public parades are performance; their meaning can be analyzed though descriptive language associated with the performance. I see the performance as symbolic exchange between a performer and an observer that constitutes the starting point for communication necessary for a meaning-making interaction to occur. Terms like "pretty" and "clean," and gestures, such as the open-arm displays of a big chief, provide clues to understanding the transformation of meaning that takes place during these parades. These parades are also a participatory form of contemporary ritual involving the collective assembly of participants in the same public space. Social catharsis occurs when the subject/object dichotomy dissolves into a unified emotional experience among participants.

My research on the cultural rejuvenation of post-Katrina New Orleans provides an insightful case study in urban affairs. The recovery of the city's parading culture took place in spite of and in the midst of the city's destruction. How and why it did so, is answered by this paper. The impetus to parade amid the destruction of the city is rooted in a cultural consciousness tied to meanings established in precolonial and colonial times. In the post-Katrina present, parading has been a way to reestablish individual and collective identity in a place that seemingly was up for grabs.

I focus on the ritual aspect of "masking" and "second lining" among Mardi Gras Indians and Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs. The performative aspect of "dressing up" as the SAPCs do, and "masking" as Indians do, creates heightened experience; the act of being on the street provides a conduit for broad participation in the shared experience of joy, exuberance, or triumph. Such heightened moments of communication renew ideas that define a group and recreate memories important to individual and collective identity that demonstrate the value of rebuilding the city.

The public parades discussed in this paper have been central to the postdisaster recovery of the city's Black neighborhoods and the city as a whole, not because of their capacity to stimulate economic activity or their exotic appeal to tourist interests, but because of the meaning they have for participants. Participants in these rituals create mythopoetic spaces rich with reinvented symbols of the past, making possible distinctive individual and group identities for a present that exists nowhere else in the United States and that set forth future relationships of tribal and club members to each other, to the larger community of tribes and clubs, and to outsiders.

While outsiders are struck by the resilience of the city and its culture, insiders understand the enduring power of ritualized collective effervescence. The perpetual calendar of parades provides a stable reality within a complex, fragmented, and unpredictable world. Individual identities associated with such a culture extend into everyday life and sustain the meaning of the experience. These meaning-filled experiences help to explain how the impetus to parade can, even momentarily, upstage the work of rebuilding a city.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: I thank the participants in two workshops—Yale University's Center for Cultural Sociology Workshop (Fall 2010) and Tulane University's Seminar on Historical Change and Social Theory (Spring 2011)—who provided valuable suggestions on early working papers. This paper was presented at the 2011 Urban Affairs Association's (UAA) annual conference in New Orleans, and named "Best Conference Paper of the Year 2011." I thank UAA Award Committee members Jocelyn DeVance Taliaferro, Greg Andranovich, Robert Beauregard, Edward Goetz, and Sugie Lee for their support. I am grateful for comments and encouragement from Laura Reese, two JUA anonymous reviewers, and faculty at the 2011 Sociology Colloquium whose insights helped to shape the paper into a publishable article. I also thank Michael Warr and Susan Allan whose diligent copy editing and insightful comments are deeply appreciated. Finally, I thank Timothy D. Lace, my occasional parade partner, for his support and the use of his photographs.

ENDNOTES

1 The New Orleans Municipal Code allows for 34 parade permits to be issued to nonprofit "Carnival Organizations" or "krewes" to parade the two weeks prior to and during Fat Tuesday, or Mardi Gras Day. In 2011, there were 32 such permits issued for Mardi Gras Parades for Orleans Parish, which includes the City of New Orleans and several towns on the "West Bank" of the Mississippi River. Similar spectacle parades are staged for St. Patrick's Day, St. Joseph's Day, and Halloween (New Orleans Municipal Code, Chapter 34).

2 Second line parades held in 2008–2009 established a post-Katrina annual schedule that has been largely sustained. It included 45 clubs parading on 38 Sundays between the last Sunday in August and Fathers Day in mid-June. The weekends not having a second line parade include: Sundays that fall in the heat of summer (mid-June through August), two weeks before Mardi Gras, and the last weekend in April and first in May when the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival takes place. During Mardi Gras many SAPC members mask as Indian; during Jazz Fest, many clubs and tribes are paid to parade through the festival grounds.

3 The total number of parades has grown from an estimated thirty parades in the parade season following Katrina's landfall (September 2005–mid-June 2006) to an estimated 150 parades in 2011. This estimate is calculated from the weekly emails from the Backstreet Museum and Pat Jolly's Community Digest; the list of second line parades published by the Social Aid and Pleasure Club Task Force; the Mardi Gras parade schedule as approved in Chapter 34 of the New Orleans Municipal Code; and published announcements of additional parades in association with festivals, sporting events, political events, holidays, and funerals. Parading SAPC clubs and Mardi Gras tribes are represented by two advocacy groups, the Social Aid and Pleasure Club Task Force and the Mardi Gras Indian Council, as noted in the amended Municipal Code in 2007 (New Orleans Municipal Code, Chapter 34-1).

4 Joseph Roach's formulation of cultural history is as "a critical genealogy" that "aims to excavate the past that is necessary to account for how we got here and the past that is useful for conceiving alternatives to our present condition" (Roach, 1996, p. 25). He developed a theory of circum-Atlantic culture as "geohistorical locale" that "insists on the centrality of the diasporic and genocidal histories of Africa and the Americas, North and South, in the creation of the culture of modernity" (Roach, 1996, p. 4).

5 According to Gotham, "Touristic culture denotes a process by which tourism discourses and practices increasingly frame meanings and assertions of local culture and authenticity" (2007, p. 20). Images often proliferated through touristic outlets characterize the city's culture by a sense of moral abandon or abandonment of shared communal values. The core argument of this paper is quite the opposite: that the city's culture, particularly its parading culture, creates the structure for the kind of meanings that are shared among people who are part of it.

6 Arrests of Mardi Gras Indians occurred as recently as 2005; incidents of police harassment of Indian tribes who block traffic by walking or standing on the streets on Mardi Gras day has continued to occur sporadically.

7 There is historic evidence of interaction, cohabitation, and intermarriage between the Indians and Blacks in oral histories of life in the Indian territory (Perdue, 1980, pp. 12–13), in census data (Unser, [1989]2006), and in documentary photography (Jackson, 1877).

8 Midlo-Hall (1992, pp. 38–87) frames the settlement of New Orleans as the cultural intermixing of African culture, slave culture, native American cultures, and European culture to create a "permeable society and culture" (p. 63).

9 The theme of resistance is developed by Berry (1995) who studied spiritualist churches in New Orleans that honor the spirit of Black Hawk, the Sauk warrior who rebelled against his chief's treaty with the United States in the early nineteenth century and waged war against the expansion of American settlers into Illinois. Berry drew connections between the rituals of spiritualist churches that honor Black Hawk to the practices of Mardi Gras Indians.

10 For descriptions of Bamboula and Calinda see Kinser (1990, pp. 36–39) and Sublette (2008, pp. 271–288). Roach also provides extensive detail in his discussion of the *code noir* (1996, pp. 56–63). See also Berry,

Foose, and Jones (1986) for a discussion of the importance of Congo Square to the development of the jazz idiom.

11 According to Roach, “Death often provided the occasion for the public performance of semisecret memories, for the Catholic rites in and through which they could emerge demonstrated their own adaptive capacity to accommodate as well as to transforms African retentions. Into the *Code noir’s* requirements for the proper observance of holy days, feasts days and the rites of Christian burial, for instance, which contradict the proscription of assemblies [by slaves], restored behavior inserts the living memory of African mortuary ritual. And into the unenforceable spaces between the words of imposed litanies, reinvented communities substitute themselves for living memories” (1996, p. 59).

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